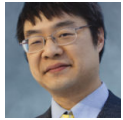


# Suggestion Box 3, short answers (part 1 of who knows how many)

 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20071001-00](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20071001-00)

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Some suggestion box topics turn into daily entries. Others deserve just a sentence or two. Here are the short answers.

## **Can you shed some light on RPC\_E\_CANTCALLOUT\_ININPUTSYNCCALL?**

This one is kind of bizarre, because the person who asked the question [linked to the answer!](#)

## **What form do application hacks usually take in Windows?**

They take many forms, depending on the situation, but checking a window caption is definitely ill-advised, since that creates the opportunity both for false positives (what if an unrelated program happens to have the same caption?) and false negatives (will the German version of the program have the same caption?). On a related note, [Chris Jackson](#) writes about [the shim proces itself](#), which you might find interesting.

## **Why doesn't PathFileExists support UNC's?**

Actually, it does. What the documentation is trying to say is that it doesn't work is for things like `\\server`. That will return `FALSE` even if the server exists. (I've sent a clarification to the documentation team. Who knows whether they'll accept it.)

## **A series of remarks (but no question) about Kennedy-Western University**

This wasn't a topic suggestion, just somebody who wanted to take what I said and argue against it with made-up facts. "I to enjoy people that display their ignorance in front of all of us." You can get a mirror at Ikea for just a few dollars.

## **How do I put focus on a window without raising it?**

One of the window manager's design principles is that the active window comes to the top.

## **Some really long list of complaints**

Um, I didn't see a topic suggestion in there. (Not that I really had much incentive to look hard for one.) It looks like just a bunch of ranting.

## **On tooltips that get stuck behind other windows (Question was duplicated. How hard is it to search the Suggestion Box page to see if somebody already asked**

### **your question?)**

If you set your owner correctly and don't play weird games, everything will be just fine. The problem is that the taskbar has to play weird games because of all the other applications that play even weirder games. When you play weird games, things get weird.

### **Is there a way to send input other than SendInput?**

No. You can try to fake it but you're going to run into problems.

### **Why doesn't AltGr+Del act like Ctrl+Alt+Del?**

I don't know but I can guess, and so can you. Hint: Component layering. Low-level components vs. higher-level components.

### **Why do some MSDN samples use the goto statement?**

That's a coding style issue. Believe it or not, different people have different styles, and there is no mandated "MSDN coding style". Some people are more averse to the goto statement than others.

### **A question putatively about WS\_TABSTOP**

Something is horribly wrong with your program design if each edit control in your dialog has its own message pump! Fix that first, then the tab stop issue should fix itself.

### **Why can't you call SetFocus(.) on a window in another thread?**

I covered this in my PDC 2005 talk.

Another category is people who ask a question I've already answered or ask a question that has already been asked.

I already discussed the feature process. I happen to know the person responsible for Start menu and taskbar features in Windows Vista. The list of design changes and feature requests was over 200 items long and obviously not all of them could be addressed. (And that list was just of the design changes and feature requests that overcame the starting point of minus 100 points.)

### **What are these mystery folders in my Program Files directory?**

Answer.

### **What is the deal with the time zone map?**

This question was asked over two years after I answered it. What's particularly baffling about this one is that the time zone article is one of the most frequently-linked entries I've written! How could the person not have found it?

### **Is there way to get the current full path from an Explorer window?**

I answered this over a year previously and then again three months before the suggestion was posted.

## **Why do some files come up strange in Notepad?**

I answered this [over two years previously](#).

## **Why does the resource compiler complain about strings longer than 255 characters?**

I answered this [over two years previously](#).

And then there are the people who ask questions on things that I explicitly listed as topics I am not inclined to cover.

- Comments on the blog software itself. (Like [this one about how the categories are browsed](#). Or [this one saying that search doesn't work](#). Or [this one complaining about the layout of the navigation area](#). The blog software determines the layout of the navigation area. [Somebody else is having trouble subscribing via email](#). Remember, I don't control this stuff.)
- Internet Explorer. (Such as [this one about Internet Explorer context menu extensions](#) and [this one about the Microsoft Virtual Machine](#).)
- Visual Studio. (Such as [this one complaining that a project built with Visual Studio 2003 behaves differently from one built with Visual Studio 6](#). Or [this one asking a question about the C runtime stat function](#).)
- Non-software Microsoft topics, such as product support policies, marketing tactics, jobs and careers, legal issues. (Such as [this one asking for career advice](#) or [this one asking about the same thing but much more verbosely](#).)
- Microsoft software that isn't Windows. (Such as [this one that asks about a bug in Access 97](#). Or [this one that appears to be rant about Small Business Accounting](#). [This one asks about the Outlook New Mail sound](#). [This one complains about Windows Installer](#). [This one complains about MSDN search](#).)
- Windows topics outside user interface programming. (Such as [this one about power management](#), which would be better-posed to the power management folks on the [Tablet PC blog](#) and the [Mobile PC blog](#), though from what I can tell, the feature you're asking for is already in Vista since it was the power management team's #1 issue! [Here's another misdirected power management question](#). [This person wants me to discuss OpenGL 2.0](#). [This person wants me to discuss the network redirector](#). [This person wants details on BeginUpdateResource and the PE loader](#).)
- User interface programming in anything other than Win32. (Such as [this one about some application framework that is probably MFC](#) although the person didn't say so explicitly. Here's [another one that is probably using MFC though they didn't say so explicitly](#).)
- Debugging a specific problem. (Such as [this one asking me to debug something on a forum I don't have access to anyway](#). Or [this one from somebody having trouble with pattern brushes in some scripting language I've never heard of much less have any degree of expertise in](#).)

- Predictions for the future. (Such as this one that asks me what I think about two acronyms I've never heard of. Or this one that asks me to predict the future of dual core machines.)

And then there are the suggestions that are so wildly off topic I don't even know why they bothered to ask me, such as this person who wants me to discuss a VB6 language feature and another who wants me to discuss non-short-circuit evaluation in Visual Basic. I have no idea why they chose me to ask these questions. In my experience, VB doesn't even stand for Visual Basic! Another person asked a long, rambling question about Unicode IME that I got tired of reading. I'm kind of baffled by this comment asking how to post a comment. Other topics I am unlikely to cover are personal biography since that just leads to WikiStalking. Don't ask the same question to multiple people. It duplicates effort. (Another example.) And then there are people who just like to natter on about their uneventful lives, yammering repetitively about how nothing is going on and that they are bored. Hey, don't take your boredom out on me. I'm trying to get some work done here. If you want to chatter, go start your own blog. Generic viagra credit cards ringtones. The ideal length for a topic suggestion is a single paragraph between two to four sentences. If it's too short, there isn't enough context. If it's too long, I will lose interest and not bother reading the suggestion.

That's all the short answers for this year. (You may have noticed that I've generally been using Mondays to following up on topics posted to the suggestion box or in blog comments.)

Raymond Chen

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