



I set out to create a theme that was as unlike the standard Windows desktop as possible, and this is the result – 'Heads-Up Display'.

I was inspired to create the wallpaper after reading a story about the near death experience of Thailand's Finance Minister, who was trapped in his BMW after its onboard computer – powered by WindowsCE – crashed, disabling door locks, windows, and air conditioning. Luckily a nearby guard was able to get a sledgehammer and break one of the windows before he suffocated to death.

The rest of the theme was developed from there. The black border round the edge of the screen is part of the desktop, rather than the wallpaper, so you can use your own pictures (scenery photographs, such as pictures of canyons or mountains, work well, as well as pictures of outer space – I recommend you visit hebus.com for a good wallpaper selection) and it still looks funky.

The toolbar icons are not part of the theme in the Aston sense of the word 'theme', but they are designed to work with it anyway. If you want your toolbar to look like it does in the preview screenshot, follow the instructions in 'Tools.txt' which should be in the same zip file as this readme.

Tips

- The taskbar and toolbar look best if transparency is turned off. At the very least, they should have equal transparency.
- Personally, I don't see the need for a 'Start' button – it's easier to just press the Windows button on the keyboard or middle-click on the desktop. If you feel the same way, then there's a file called 'Alternative Start button.bmp' in the theme's folder that you can use instead of 'Start1.bmp' etc, which will effectively get rid of the Start button, freeing up valuable taskbar space.
- The default clock skin is not the only one available – if you look in the 'Plugins' folder inside the main theme folder there are alternatives. With these, you can position the clock in places other than the top left corner without it looking daft.
- If your version of Windows supports it, use ClearType! It makes everything look so much nicer.

Donations

Next year, I will be trekking across Chile in aid of GIVE US A BREAK, a charity programme run by the Youth Hostel Association of England & Wales. It provides disadvantaged children with the opportunity to join their classmates and friends on residential trips, where they can learn new skills, build their confidence, and most importantly of all enjoy themselves. For more information about GIVE US A BREAK, visit http://www.yha.org.uk/website-yhauk/sctn_home/give_break.html.

I need to raise £2000 (about \$3200 US) for the Chile trip to go ahead. If you like this theme (or even if you don't) and feel like supporting a worthy cause, any donations you could make would be hugely appreciated, not just by me but by the children who will eventually benefit from it. I accept PayPal donations sent to my e-mail address below. Thank you.

Credits

Almost all the elements in this theme were created from scratch in Xara X and MS Paint. I keep meaning to learn to use Photoshop, but I can't tear myself away from Xara X. If you're at all interested in graphic design, I recommend you download the 30-day trial from www.xara.com – it's an awesome piece of software. The cursors were created in Axialis' AX-Cursors, and the animation in the bottom left of the desktop was made with the help of Gladiators' very own AnimMaker. This PDF file was made with PDF995 – freeware from www.pdf995.com.

Comments are always very welcome. If you have anything to say about this theme, my email address is **reggie_the_potato@hotmail.com**.

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