# WINDOWS TASK MANAGER – MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW*
Galen Garretson

Task Manager shows you the applications, processes, and services that are currently running on your computer. You can also monitor your computer's performance, close a program that is not responding, identify system resource hogs, check network performance and other users on the same network.

Access the Task Manager by right clicking on the Task Bar and left clicking on Task Manager. Or, Ctrl-Shift-Esc.

WORKING WITH THE APPLICATIONS TAB
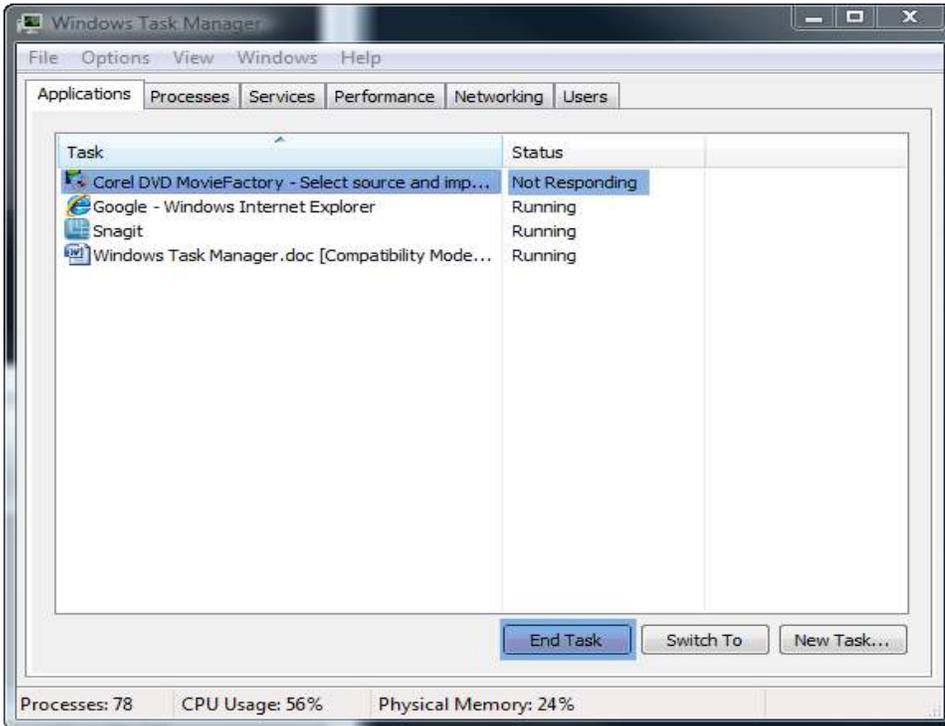
The **Applications** tab displays a list of applications you have started. You can force an application to close if it is not working properly by selecting it and clicking on the **End Task** button.

However, you should be careful when closing an application with the *End Task* option because you might lose important data that hasn't been saved.

The *End Task* should be used only when an application is not responding. When that happens, Task Manager will show **'Not responding'** in the Status column.
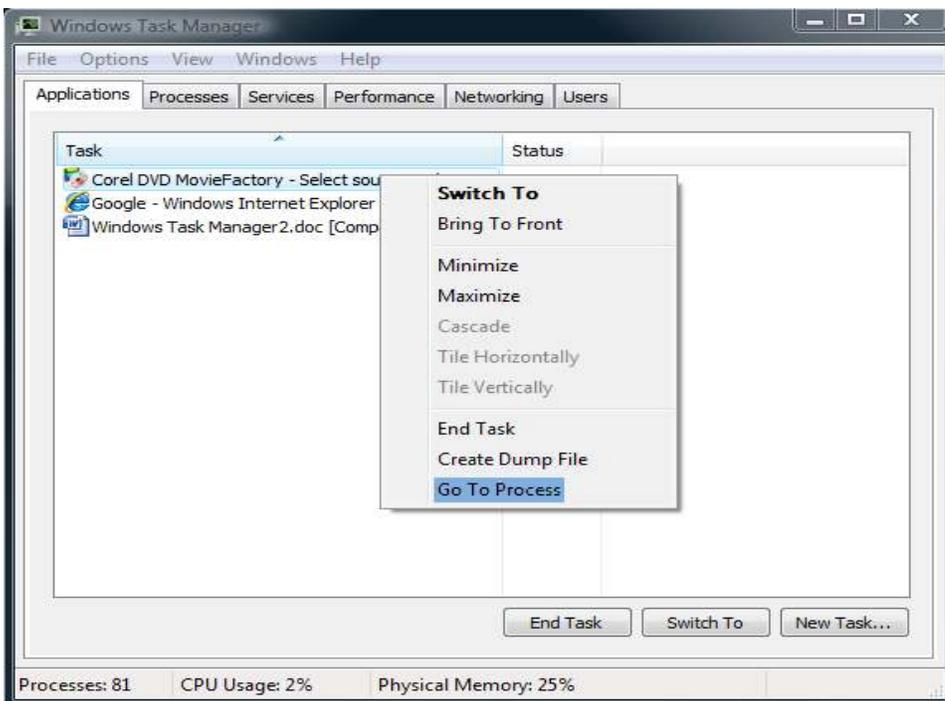

When you right click on an application you will see several options including **'Switch To'** and **'Bring to front'**. Choosing *'Switch To'*, will make that application be the active one instead of the current one and it will be brought to the front of your Desktop. Choosing *'Bring to front'* will also bring the selected application to the front of your Desktop. However, it won't work if there is another program that has the property **Always on top** set.

To see what process an application is using, just right click on the desired application and, in the context menu, click on **'Go To Process'**. This will automatically send you to the *Processes* tab, where you will see the process(es) associated with the selected application

At the **Applications** tab you can use the New Task button to start an application. It is similar to the Run command. The number of Processes running, CPU usage and Physical Memory used is also displayed.

WORKING WITH THE PROCESSES TAB
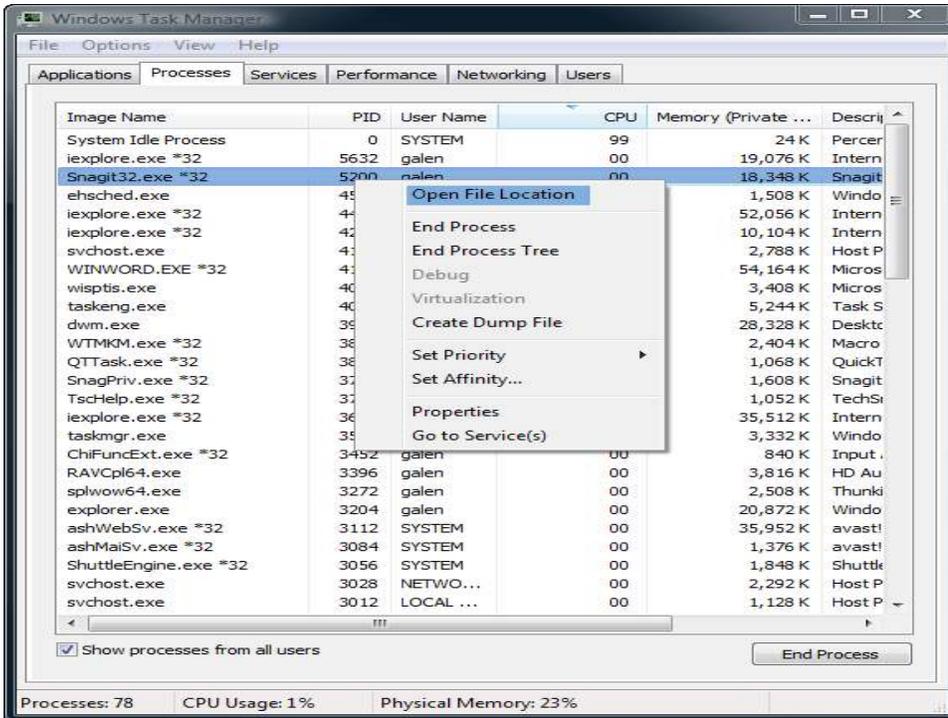
The **Processes** tab gives you information about the processes that are running on your PC. The list is dynamic and will change depending on the CPU usage of each process. You can sort the Processes by clicking on the column headers.

If you want to know where the exact location of a certain process can be found on the hard disk, select it with the mouse, right click on it and select **Open File Location**. *Task Manager* will open a *Windows Explorer* window which shows the folder from where the process is running.

If you want to know more about a certain process, select it with the mouse, right click on it and select **Properties**.
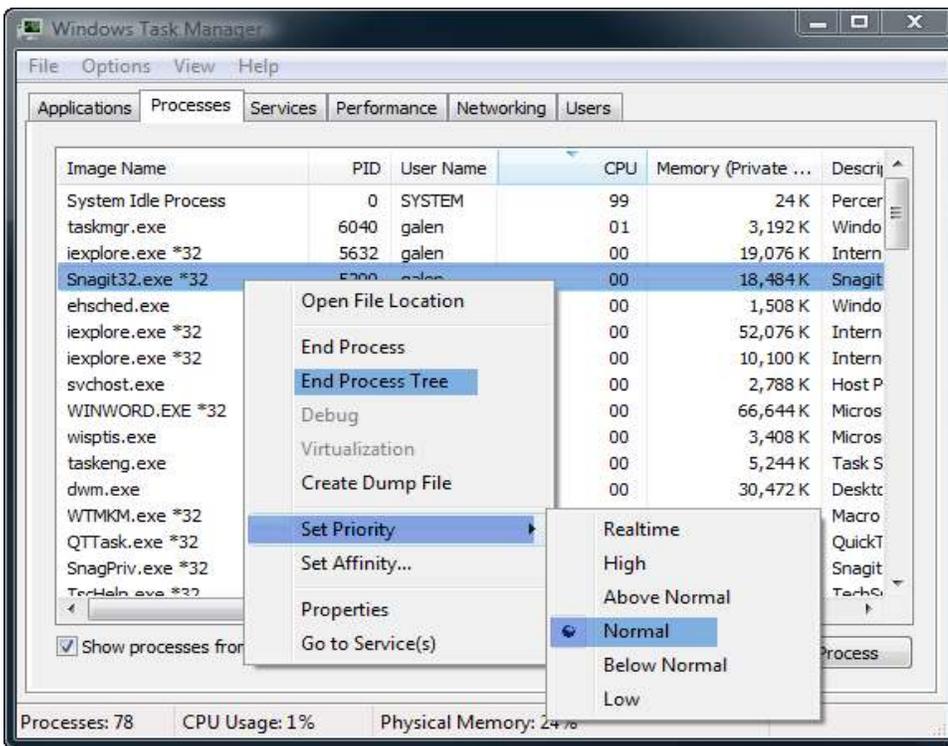
Sometimes a process can be supported with more than one process. To end all related processes right click on the process you want to end and, in the context menu, click on the **End Process Tree**.

Be careful as you might also end a process that you still want to have running.

A useful option in the *Processes* tab is **Set Priority**. This option allows you to set which application will receive more attention from the operating system. The more attention a process receives, the faster that process is completed. However, if one process gets too much attention, the other ones will get less. So caution is needed. To change the priority of a process, right click on a process and go to **'Set Priority'** and select one of the available options
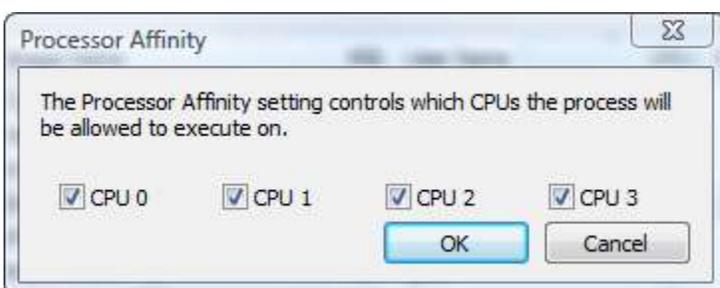
A powerful feature of Vista is the **Set Affinity** option and is useful if you have a multi-core processor. You can set a process to run on specific cores. For example, you can dedicate specific cores for your video editing program. Just right click on the process, left click on Set Affinity and select the cores.

WORKING WITH THE SERVICES TAB
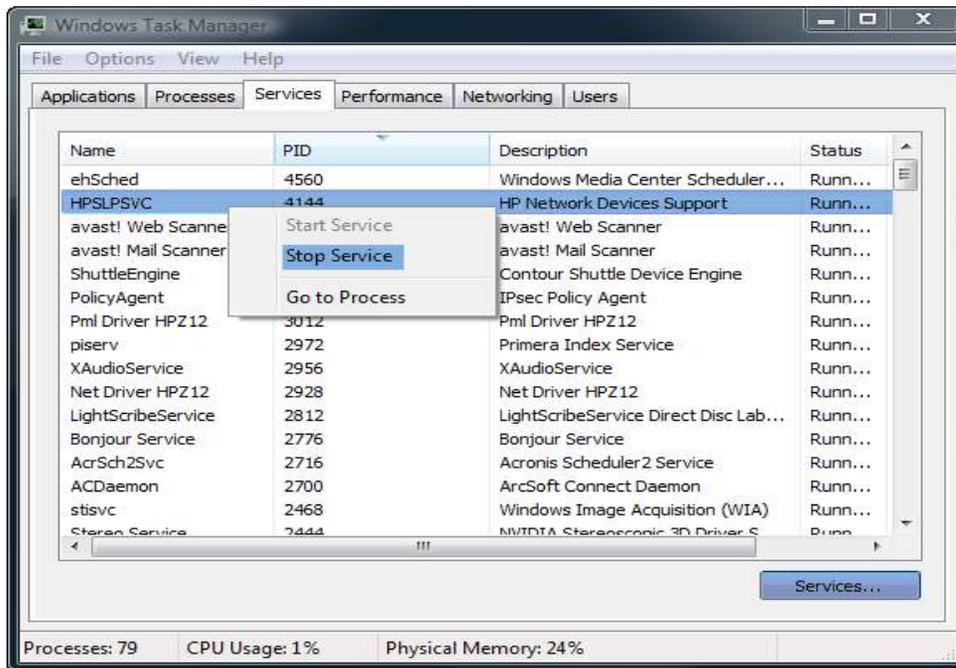
A service is an application or process that is tied to the operating system. For example, you can find services related to the printer, the network, Windows Defender, Event Log and much more. It is best to leave these services unaltered unless you are having a problem. In the *Services* tab, right click on a service and click to *Stop* or *Start* the selected service.

For more details about the service(s) running you can click on the *Services* button.

WORKING WITH THE PERFORMANCE TAB
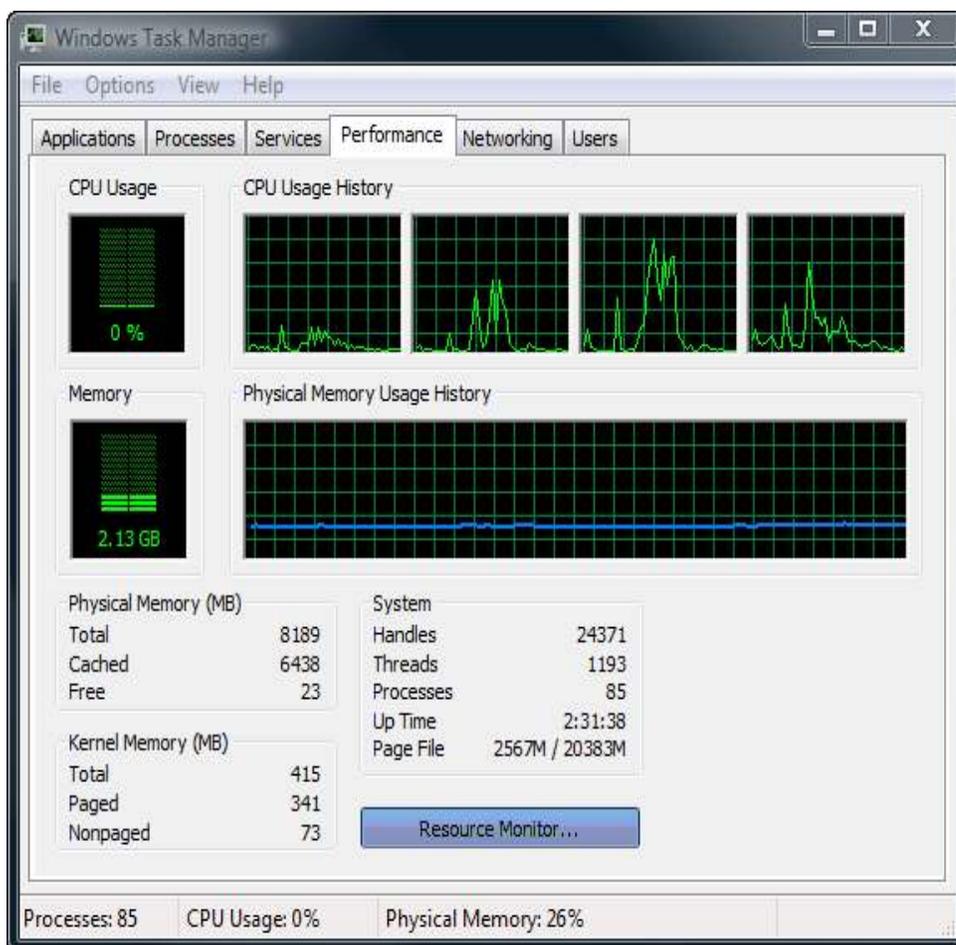
The **Performance** tab displays the performance of your computer with the help of graphs and numbers. The lower the lines in the graphs, the fewer resources are being used.

The **Physical Memory** section shows the total amount of physical memory installed in your computer, how much of that is also cached, and available free memory. The **LESS** free memory shown the better.

Kernel Memory is memory used by the operating system and cannot be used by other applications.

The **System** section provides totals for the number of handles, threads, and processes currently running.

A **handle** represents a specific input/output (I/O) instance. A process may have multiple threads, each of which in turn may have multiple handles.

A **thread** is an object within a process.

A **process** is a single executable program.

You can click on the **Resource Monitor** button to get even more information about how the resources in your computer are being utilized.

WORKING WITH THE NETWORKING TAB
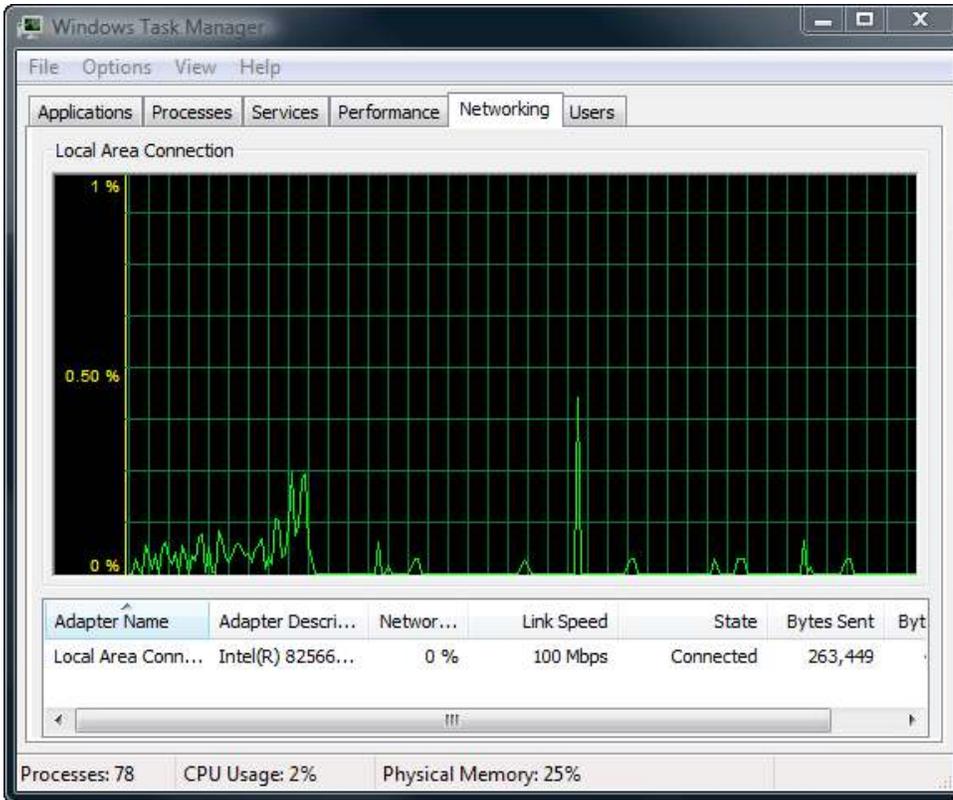
If you are connected to a network, you can monitor details about its connection in the **Networking** tab. For more details you can use the **View** menu, go to **'Select columns'** and add more columns to thoroughly examine your network traffic. Another way to see details about your network connection is to open the *'Resource Monitor'* from the *Performance* tab.

WORKING WITH THE USERS TAB
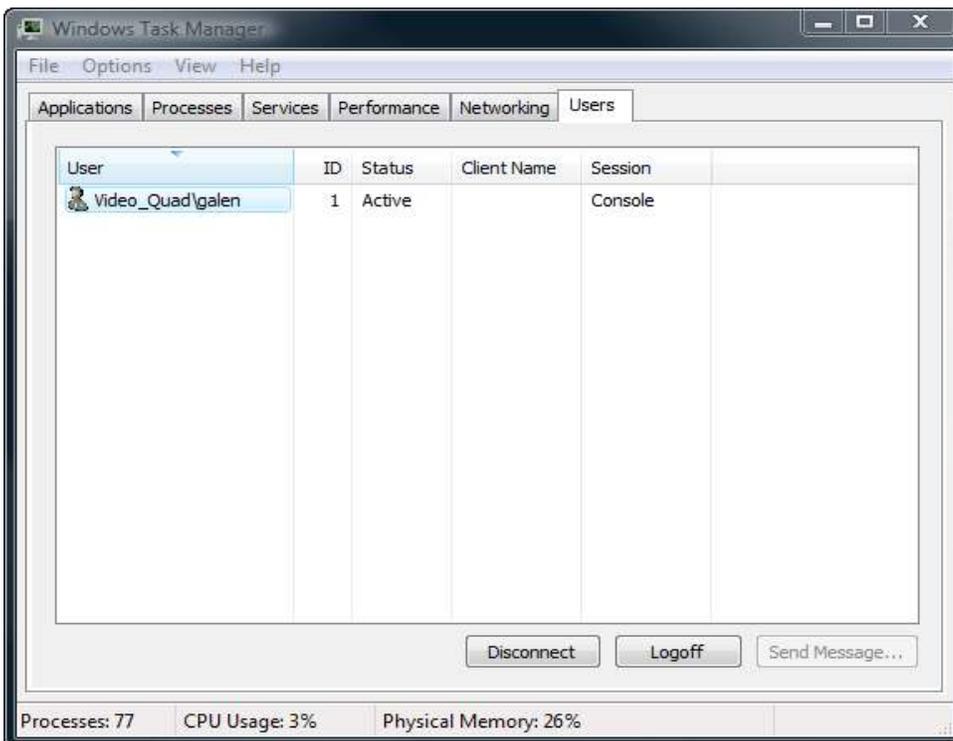
The **Users** tab shows who is currently connected to your computer. If you want to know the location of a user connected to your computer or to the network, click on **Options** in the top menu bar. Under *Options* click on **'Show Full Account Name'**. In the User column you will now see the full location path of that user.

You can also send a message to a user that might not be around at the time by right clicking on the user's name and left clicking on '**Send Message'**.

*Portions of this paper were obtained from the publication series "Springboard – Vista" because there is no way I already knew all this stuff!!