

PC Maintenance and Improving Performance

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Once you bring your personal computer home from the store or receive it in the mail there is no one around to offer basic personal computer maintenance tips for cleaning up and improving performance of your computer. Maintenance and cleaning up of your PC should be part of a regular routine to ensure that you don't have any long-term problems with the computer. Unfortunately most basic computer users may not understand the mechanics of a computer or may feel intimidated with the maintenance. There are really simple steps anyone can take to ensure that your computer will continue working at the level it did when you first pulled it out of the box.

One of the first files to become acquainted with on your computer is the System Tools, located under the Start Menu, then Programs, and Accessories. The System Tools houses basic maintenance tools like Disk Defragmenter, Disk Cleanup, Backup, Scheduled Tasks, and System Information and Scandisk on some Microsoft Windows computers. Strange that these files are located in Accessories because they really are the key to keeping your system running correctly and helping to improve performance as the computer ages.

On a regular basis you want to go to My Computer and then right click on the Local Disk (C Drive) and open up the Properties. This allows you to see how much space you are using and how much you have left to use on your computer. Under Tools in this area you can usually perform a scan of the disk. If you cannot run a disk scan from here, your Microsoft should have a disk scan available under the System Tools. It is important to run this disk scan to determine if there are any errors or problems running on your computer and the disk scan will repair those potential problems. Some experts recommend doing a thorough disk scans the first time and then a basic disk scan up to once a week to keep your computer performing at top conditions.

After this it is important to regularly perform a disk cleanup, which is located either under Properties under the C Drive, or under System Tools. Be aware that both the disk scan and the disk cleanup can take quite a bit of time and it is best to before these maintenance tools when you will not be using the computer. Set a routine with yourself like performing the disk clean up and disk scan on Saturday night while you are watching movies with your family. After a disk cleanup, it also helps to regularly perform a disk defragmentation. A computer hard drive will begin to fragment over time, which means that programs that once worked in conjunction have become separated over time and may not be in the proper place to work well on your computer. This can slow down processes or make using certain programs difficult. Using the disk defragmenter can pull together those pieces again and return things to working order.

Basic maintenance routines that will ensure your computer runs at peak performance start with simply getting rid of files you do not use. If you have old word documents, software programs you have not used in a long time, or pictures and music you are not using, delete them from your computer. Remember that once you delete them, they do not automatically disappear, but instead go to the recycle bin and it is just as important to empty the recycle bin as it is to delete old files.

Old internet files can also cause your computer to slow down. Often with a Disk Cleanup there will be an opportunity for you to get rid of temporary internet files, but you can also get rid of them on your own by going to your Temporary Internet files in Microsoft Explorer. Click on Tools then Internet Options, General Tab, Temporary Internet Files, and Delete Files. As well, take time to clean out any other temporary files you may have acquired, like downloads from the internet. Depending on the model of your computer, the temporary files could be in different locations, but most often when you go to Disk Cleanup and scan there will be an option to get rid of temporary files as well.

One of the other helpful and easy ways to maintain your computer's performance is to always run your protection programs, use a personal firewall when accessing the computer, and always install software updates available for Microsoft and protection programs. Keeping up on regular maintenance and setting a routine for updates on the computer will ensure that your computer performs the way it was intended to when you first brought it home.

