

Simple Maintenance of your System



Computers are complex systems of hardware and software that have to interact properly with each other to work correctly. **Getting useful, problem-free work from your computer system over an extended period of time is not "maintenance free!"** With a little effort on your part, you CAN make it all work better. I suggest that you use the following simple techniques-they will prevent most common problems you might encounter with your Windows system. The same general rules apply to Macs except the terminology is different.

- 1. Make sure that the hard drive has AT LEAST 2000MB or 2Gigabytes of free space, the more the better!** -this is a common cause of "Out of Memory" errors and bizarre behavior on older systems-. Windows needs the "working room" for all its operations.
- 2. Clean out your C:\Windows\Temp folder and Internet Explorer "Temporary Internet Files" at least once a month.** The best time to do this is as soon as you get to the Windows Desktop on start-up, before you run any applications. You should also use the built-in tool [Disk Cleanup] found in the [Accessories] folder in your start-up-flag or in the [Control Panel] if using Windows 8 or newer.
A build up of either the number of total files in this folder or the total drive space taken by files in this folder can cause:
 - A. Printing/spooling problems.
 - B. Erratic browsing behaviour.
 - C. Other bizarre, unpredictable behavior.
 - D: Slower system response.
- 3. Run Scandisk and Defrag on the hard drive(s) every month, this program is found** in the [Accessories] folder in your start-up-flag or in the [Control Panel] if using Windows 8 or newer.
- 4. Only load the software you need at Start-up:** Most new Windows systems these days load a ton of little junk programs at system start-up-that's why the "tray" in the lower right hand corner of your screen is just chock full of little icons! All those icons represent programs running **all the time**, in the background. Check your Start-up Folder-get rid of the applications you don't need. By all means, if you ever find something called "Find Fast" (installed by some versions of MS Office) remove it.
- 5. Installing new software: Never buy and install "Version 1.0" of anything!** Wait until the new software (or the latest version of existing software) is out there a few months before you take the plunge!. Take care with what software you install. Be skeptical and conservative-don't assume all new software in easy to install or problem free. If some hot, new software program you've purchased does not install correctly or causes ANY adverse or odd side effects on your system-remove it immediately then call the tech support for the program. If, after a reasonable amount of effort, you can't make it work-give us a call and we will fix it!! **Always remove all programs via Control Panel/Add Remove Programs or use the "Uninstaller" that came with the program itself**-that way you not only delete the files the program installed BUT you also delete any Registry entries the program installation made.
- 6. Remove any old software, via the above technique, that you do not need or use anymore!** Then run Scandisk/defrag. Less complexity, less clutter=better performance, far less problems!
- 7. Installing new Hardware:** Same basic rule as above-if it does not work remove it! Call the tech support for this hardware. Stick with "brand name" hardware-Asus, Lenovo, HP, Western Digital,

Intel, Dell- etc. These brands tend to have better tech support and help websites. Again, if after a reasonable amount of effort, you can't make it work- call us.

8. **Keep your system virus free:** The main virus threats come from these sources: a) EMail-if you use MS Outlook; removable disks passed to you by someone else or shared network files. To better protect your system, install and regularly update your antivirus software Windows 8 and later comes with a pre-installed antivirus "Microsoft Security Essentials" that is good enough for most people. Turn on the "autoprotect" feature. Run a full antivirus scan on any removable disks/sticks that are passed to you by others (before you use the files on the disks) and on your hard drive periodically. If you use MS Outlook, keep up with the MS security patches via this website: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/downloads/default.asp>. If you don't have an antivirus program , Avast, Adaware, Kapersky, AVG, Spybot, and McAfee offer good antivirus solutions.
9. **Keep your system updated:** Microsoft releases periodic changes to most versions of Windows and Office; go to <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/> and click on [Product Updates] for Windows or [Microsoft Office Product Updates] for Office. This site contains **security patches, bug fixes** and other useful utilities that you can add to your system.
10. **Avoid** things like: **Free Software (not regularly free), Movies, Music** or other "too good to be true" offers.

ABOVE ALL

Be conservative and humble in how you treat your system.

Install just what you need, not every last "cool" piece of software you find out on the internet

If you're not sure how -don't do it-get professional help!

Don't trust your system to a friend, neighbor or relative that claims they "know something about computers!!!"

There are far too many "computer" people out there that can "talk the talk" but can't "walk the walk"

Would you get your car repaired by just anyone? Then don't treat your computer that way!