

Tips for Maintaining Your Computer

*These instructions are for computers running the Windows XP operating system.
To check, right click on the My Computer icon and go to the General tab .*

Defrag your Hard Drive - This should be done on a quarterly basis *but the newer PC's with the SATA drives only need this done twice a year!*

The more you use your machine, the more fragmented your data gets and you might begin to see performance issues if this isn't done regularly.

How to do:

Go to Start| Programs| Accessories| System Tools| Disk Defragmenter

Disk Cleanup – This should be done on a quarterly basis.

Even though most newer computers have large hard disks, these can fill up fast if you are placing pictures from your digital camera or downloading music onto your hard disk. I recommend that you save/burn these types of files to a CD and then delete them off your computer. If the default setting of every 60 days is left on, you should see an icon in the lower right hand corner of your screen talking about unused icons. Simply follow the prompts.

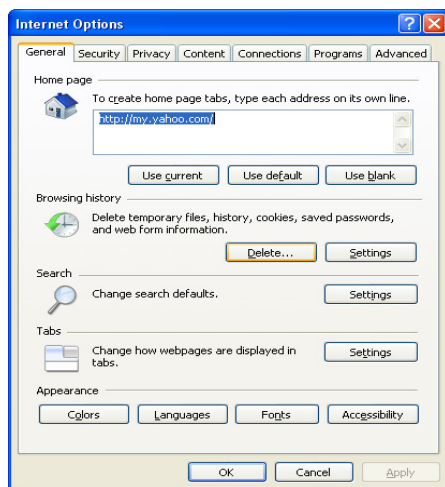
To run disk cleanup manually:

Go to Start| Programs| Accessories| System Tools| Disk Cleanup

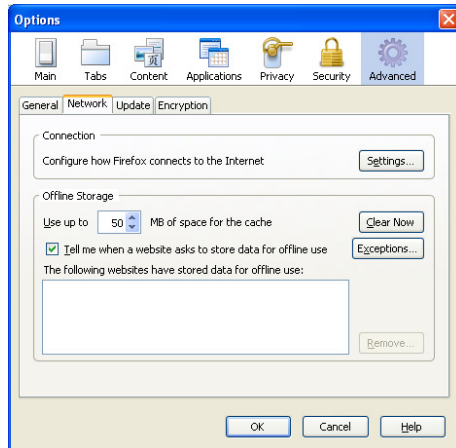
Clean out your Browser Cache – This should be done on a monthly basis.

Browsers often maintain a local copy of the stuff you view on the Internet so that pages load more quickly. After a while, this adds up to a lot of files. Typically, a menu item in your browser will clear the cookies or offline files for you.

Internet Explorer – Click on Tools| Internet Options| General| Delete button and click on Delete files and Delete cookies



Firefox – Click on Tools | Options| Advance Tab | under Offline Storage section click on Clear Now



Scan for Viruses – This should be done weekly and set up to run automatically

ALL Computers should have an updated anti-virus program. The program should be set up to get its updates everyday, this can only be done when connected to the Internet. Your anti-virus program should also have the ability to schedule full system scans. I recommend scheduling it to do a scan once a week.

Scan for Spyware – This should be done monthly.

There are various programs that can do this. None of them are 100% effective and some can even cause more damage if used incorrectly. The following link is for a program that I use:

<http://www.malwarebytes.org/mbam.php>

If you want to use it once then get the trial version otherwise if you're downloading lots of stuff from the internet or using mini apps within Facebook and other social networking sites then you should buy this software.

Follow the prompts to download and install. Follow the prompts to install the program will automatically and go out and get its updates.

Add/Remove Programs – This should be done on a Quarterly basis

Sometimes malicious programs can find their way onto your computer. So I recommend that users check their Add/Remove programs for any programs that they don't recognize (be careful you're not uninstalling your scanner/etc. software) or that they never use. This will free up disk space too.

How to do:

Start| Control Panel| Add/Remove Program

Keep an eye on Startup – This should be done on a quarterly basis

Sometimes malicious programs want to launch themselves every time your computer starts and the poorly written ones will place themselves into your startup.

To check:

Start| Programs| Startup| right click any programs you don't want to automatically start and choose delete. Be careful that you're not deleting a program that you're used to seeing automatically startup like your Hot Sync program for your handheld device.

Keep it Clean!

Keep your computer in a well ventilated area and dust it off on a regular basis. For those who feel comfortable doing it, I recommend opening up the box and cleaning the dust out of there too, using canned air. DO NOT use vacuum cleaners or any other device that could put off an electric charge.

If you do not feel comfortable doing any of these tasks, please call Arianne. I also recommend you have a system tune-up on a yearly basis. It typically costs about a \$120.00

Brought to you by

Arianne's Computer Service

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