

Frank's Monthly Tech Tip

January Edition

These tips are based on questions I often receive and/or address issues I feel you may be interested in, such as security and productivity.

Computer Maintenance, Part I: Speed

Is your computer *slower than it used to be?* The answer is... yes. You're always welcome to contact me for help, or if you're into some do-it-yourself work, here are the things I usually try to clean things up...

Disable unneeded startup items

Many applications run in the background unnecessarily and hog up system resources. If there are programs that automatically startup with Windows, you can disable this "feature" in some...

1. Dig around the program menus for "Preferences", "Options", "Settings", or anything else that implies "You can change stuff about the program here"
 - o If the program has an icon in the tray (lower-right part of the screen), right-clicking the icon may reveal a menu
2. Look for and uncheck any option that indicates "Run this program at Windows startup" or anything similar

Contact me if you can't find the option or if you're interested in disabling other startup/background items using alternative methods.

Run Disk Cleanup Disk Cleanup

This frees up some room on your hard drive by emptying the Recycle Bin and removing unneeded temporary and setup files.

1. Start the program from *Start => Programs => Accessories => System Tools => Disk Cleanup*
2. Select the default drive, C:, and hit *OK*

- The program may take a few minutes to process. Enjoy a light snack.
3. Check all options **except** the last two (“Compress old files”, “Catalog files...”)
 4. Hit *OK* and confirm the prompt
 - The program may take a few minutes to delete files. Enjoy another light snack.

Run Disk Defragmenter Disk Defragmenter

Over time, your hard drive increasingly becomes “fragmented”. Without getting too technical, I’ll just say “defragmenting” your hard drive makes it run more efficiently.

1. Start the program from *Start => Programs => Accessories => System Tools => Disk Defragmenter*
 - a. Make sure the default drive, *C:*, is selected.
2. Click the *Defragment* button

The process may take around an hour, so you may want to enjoy a meal or teach a class meanwhile.

Check for viruses and spyware

Viruses and spyware (aka “malware”) can slow down your computer by monitoring activity and/or communicating with other computers. I’ll cover this more in-depth in the next edition... *Computer Maintenance, Part II: Security!* :oO