Increasing Your Computer's Performance the Easy Way

For Windows Vista/2007 and XP

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Take Back Control of Your Computer

Would you like your computer to run as fast as it did the very first day you brought it home? I have created an easy to follow step by step tutorial that will get your computer running great again. Through out this tutorial you will learn basic system maintenance tasks, how to clean and edit your windows registry, boost internet explorer's performance, and optimize your system. If at any time you feel these tasks are too difficult or time consuming then read ahead to **Chapter 5**. I have provided links to the most reputable yet affordable all in one software options that are capable of completing these tasks for you.
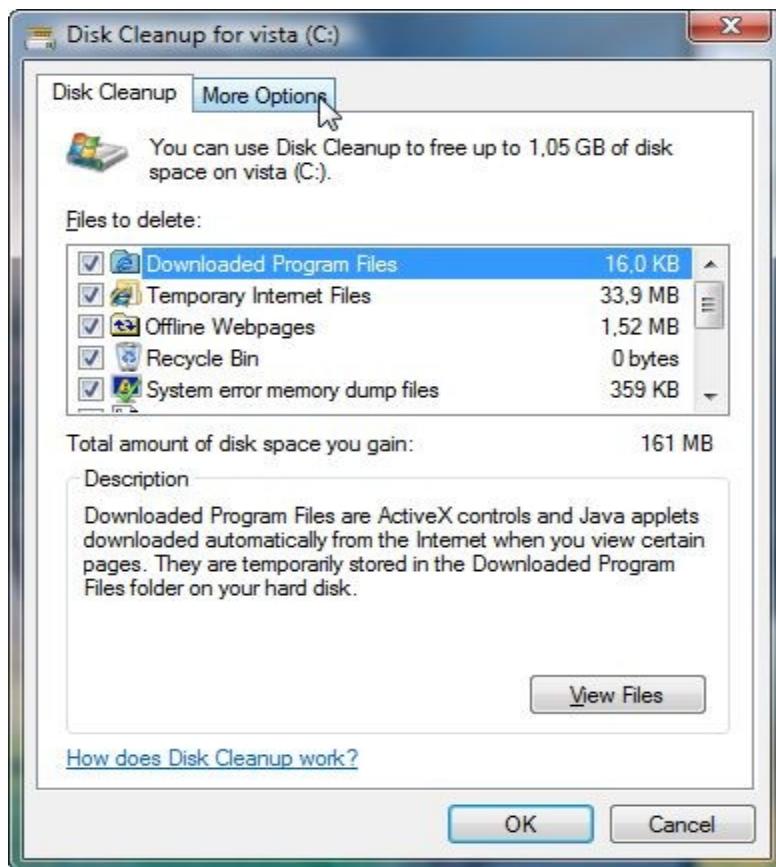
Chapter 1-Taking out the trash

(1) Remove old programs-The simple fact is the more programs you have installed the worse your computer will run. Programs take up space on your hard drive and make changes to your operating system for better or for worse. It makes no sense to have applications installed on your computer that aren't serving a purpose. So if you are not using them they have to go.

Open your **Control Panel** and click on **Add/Remove Programs** or **Programs and Features** if you are a Vista user. Uninstall all the programs you are not using.

(2) Running Disk Clean up-Life is busy enough and this book is all about doing things the easy way. With that in mind let me introduce you to **Disk Clean up**. In **My Computer** right click on your **C drive** and select **Properties**. Now select **Disk Clean up** then the drive you would like to clean.
Disk Clean up removes temp files, Downloaded program files as well as optional components you are not using, and even empties your recycle bin. To start **Disk Clean up** just click **OK**

System Maintenance

Don't be fooled you don't need a super fast processor and tons of memory to surf the internet and do word processing. A properly maintained but out dated system will most always out perform a newer more modern system that is not properly maintained. Not knowing how to take care of your computer eventual leads to buying a new computer when it is not necessary. Invest either your time in learning how to maintain your system or your money in purchasing software to do the job for you. **(See chapter 5)**

Clean out the start up folder -Too many programs loading at start up is one of the most common causes of lackluster computer performance. Learn how to control what software is running on your computer behind the scenes. This is one of the places that control what programs load at start up.

In your **Start Menu** select **Programs** then **Start up**. Now **Right Click** and **Delete** each short cut.

Keep unnecessary services from loading at Start up-The services control panel dictates what services load at start up. Some services are required for Windows to run while others are 3rd party applications that are not.

Hop on over to your **Control Panel**, Select **Administrative Tools** now click on **Services**

This is a complete list of all your services. Some are manual while others are automatic. You can change the start up type from automatic to manual by right clicking on an entry and choosing **Properties**. Look for a text box label **Start Up Type**. You can stop, start, disable or change the service from automatically loading to manually loading. In most cases you shouldn't need to do much of anything here. But it doesn't hurt to pay this screen a visit. You could find some unneeded items running and shut them down. Every little bit helps. Read the description carefully before doing any modifications though and if you are not sure what the service is leave it alone.

There is one more place I like to check for start up items and that is the Windows Registry. We will cover this topic in the next chapter.

Scan disk- Scan disk will find and repair data errors on your hard drive. Make sure to close all programs before starting. Right click on your **C drive icon** in **My Computer** and select **tools**. Click on check now.

Disk Defrag- Over time data stored on your hard drive gets scattered around. Windows needs a continuous block of free space to store data for fast access or in other words to cache from. You most likely noticed **Disk Defrag** in the same window as **Scan Disk**. Again make sure to close all programs before starting

I recommend running **Scan Disk and Disk Defrag** at least every other month.
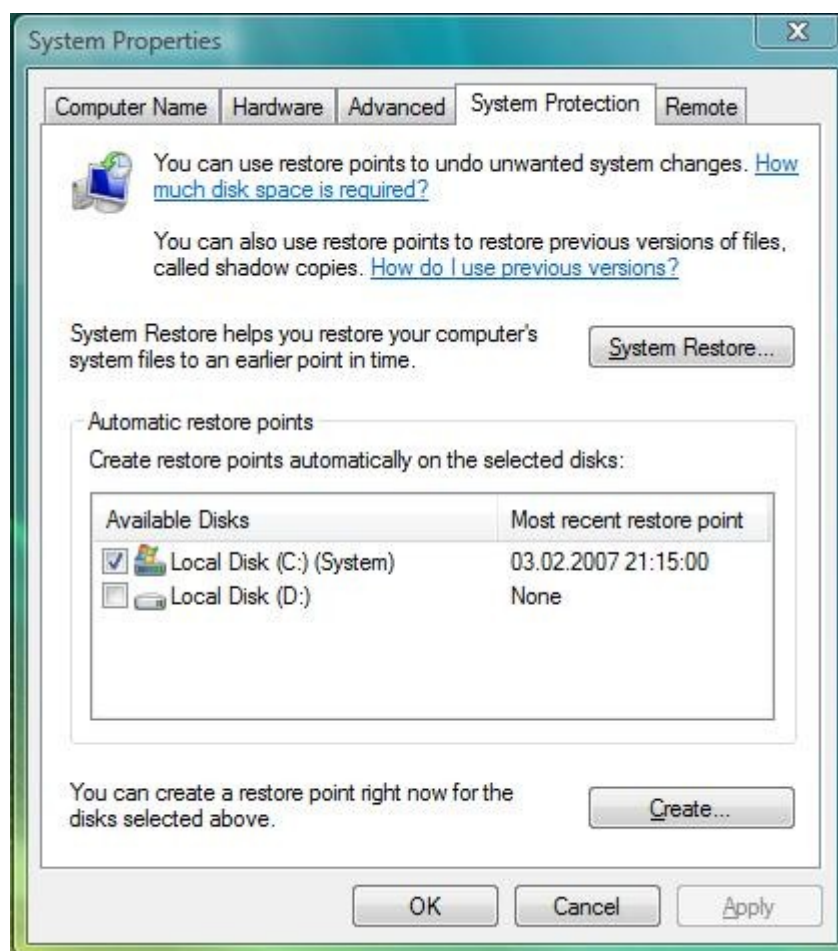
Chapter 2-The Registry

The **Windows Registry** is the place where all your configuration settings are stored. The Registry is huge because every setting from the background of your desktop all the way to what programs load when your computer starts are stored there. The registry accounts for it all. Every time you install a new program it makes changes to your **Windows Registry**. The longer you have your computer the bigger your registry gets and the bigger your registry is the slower your system will run. It pays to thin it out a tad by deleting unnecessary data and defragging it (See Chapter 3 for defragging). It is also important to keep your Windows registry error free. Errors in your registry can cause your system to crash. Because of its size finding and eliminate all these items by hand can be a daunting task. This is why I strongly recommend you invest in a Registry Repair Tool (See Charter 5). With that said I still think it is very important to have some basic knowledge on how to navigate and edit your Windows Registry.

Always create a system restore point before making any attempts to edit your Windows Registry.

Creating a System Restore Point- Windows Vista Users
Right Click on **My Computer** and select **Properties.** Now Click on **System Protection** in the tasks menu. Click the **Create** button

Creating System Restore Point- Windows XP Users

Find **help and support** in your start menu and type**: system restore wizard.** Find and run the **system restore wizard** under run tasks. From here it's the same process as Vista

Exporting your Windows Registry (all versions)
Follow these steps for every version of Windows
Click **start then run** (search in Vista)
Type in **regedit**
Now select file then **export**
Name your file appropriately and save
Now you have a **system restore point** as well as a copy of your registry.
If for some reason you delete or edit the wrong key you can simply repeat the exporting process
But select import instead. In case importing the registry file doesn't work you can always revert
to the system restore point.
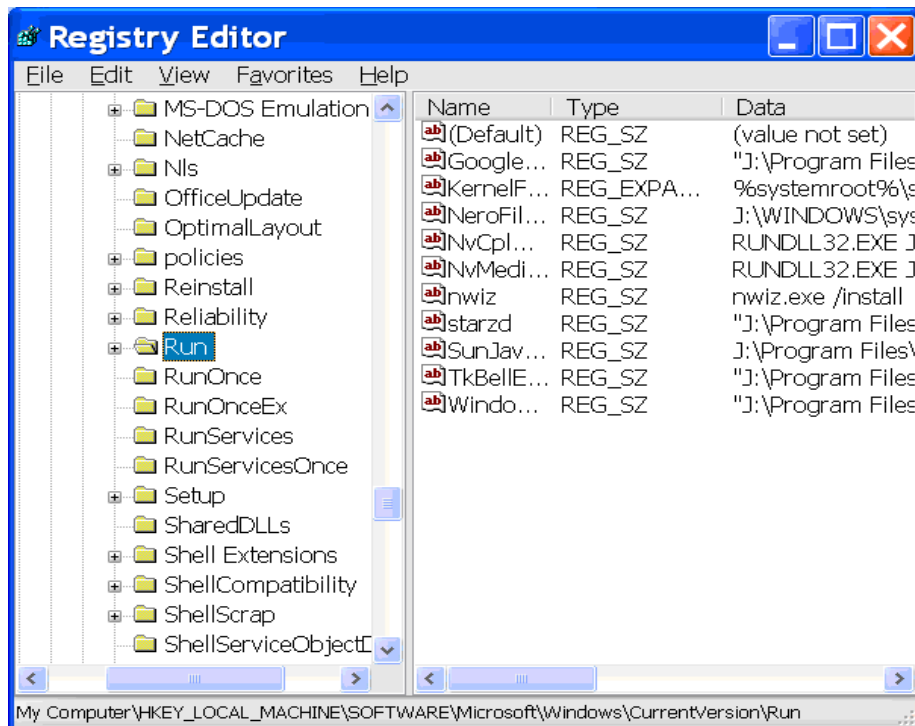
Removing start-up items from your Windows Registry

Open the registry editor. Click **Start then Run** (search in Vista) type in **Regedit**
Open hkey_local_machine by clicking the plus sign or triangle.
You should see several folders drop down. We are looking for the **Software Key**. Locate the software key and open it.
Now you will see a huge list of folders drop down. Open the **Microsoft folder** .In the **Microsoft folder** find **Windows**. In the **Windows Folder** find **Current Version**. After opening **Current Version** find and highlight **Run**.
It's very important to make sure you are in the right key because at this point we are going to start making some changes. Look at the contents in the right pane. It shows a column for **Name, Type, and Data**. If you need to expand the name column click on the divider and hold while pulling it to the right. From here just highlight the entry and simple press delete. You may want to keep programs such as Virus protections, firewall, and other vital software running so **choose carefully**. Most of the time there is quite a bit of junk you don't need in here so cleaning this key out most always significantly boosts performance. Check the **Run Once** key as well**.** Once you are done just close the registry editor. These changes will take affect after a reboot.

Removing Start up Items from Hkey_Current_User

Using the same process as before; Run **Regdit**, Open Hkey_Current_User\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Current Version\Run
Don't forget the **Run Once** Key if applicable.

Removing Items from Context Menu

Run Regedit
Open hkey_Classes_Root\Folder\Shellex\ContextMenuHandlers
Too many programs will bog down your system
Delete the folders of the programs your rarely use
Depending on how many you delete you may experience a performance boost.

Using the Search Function to Delete Keys

Not all programs are responsible and clean up after themselves when you uninstall them.
You can use the search function to find and delete these unnecessary registry entries.
This process is tedious and can be done a lot quicker and safer with a Registry Cleaner (*I will cover Registry Cleaners in Chapter 5*.) but I do still think it is good to know how to use the search function. So let's do a test run.

Run **Regedit**. Make sure you are highlighting **Computer** otherwise your search will be confined to the key you have selected**.** Now click on **Edit** then **Find** and type in **Microsoft** as your search term. You will be directed to the first Microsoft entry in the registry. Press **F3** to continue searching. This is a good exercise in learning how to find all entries related to a specific program and deleting them in the most efficient way.

Chapter 3- Increasing Your Performance

System optimization and tweaks for Windows Vista/XP

Turn off Visual Effects (Vista)-Ask yourself this question…Do I want my computer to look great or run great. Visual effects can really bog down your system and it's not like you can't change it back if you don't notice a difference.

Open **Performance Information and Tools** in your **Control Panel** and then click on **Adjust visual** effects.
Now select **adjust for best performance**. If you haven't noticed yet you can manage your start up programs here with out hacking the Registry. You can also run Disk clean up

Adjusting for best performance in Windows XP-Click **Start** then Right click on **My Computer** select **Properties** then **Advanced.** Under **performance** click on the **Setting** buttons. Select the option to **Adjust for best performance.**

Make sure you have up to date drivers for your hardware. A driver is a software program that interfaces between your hardware and Windows. A bad or outdated driver can really slow you down. Find out what model of driver you have by **Right Clicking** on **My Computer** and selecting **Device manager**. Next find and open the device you are interested in**.** This should tell you the Brand and model name of your hardware**.** Visit your manufactures web site and download their latest drivers. If you need help try using [Driver Robot](#)**.** Driver Robot software is designed to quickly locate the most current drivers specific to your computer system. [Download Driver Robot](#)

Upgrade your memory- Buy more memory if you have less than 1 GB. Memory is cheap and easy to install and can make a huge difference. To find out how much memory you have **Right Click** on **My Computer** and choose **Properties.**

Upgrade your hard drive- Open **My Computer** and right click on your **C drive** icon. If you don't have at least a couple of Gigs of free space you might want to invest in a new hard drive
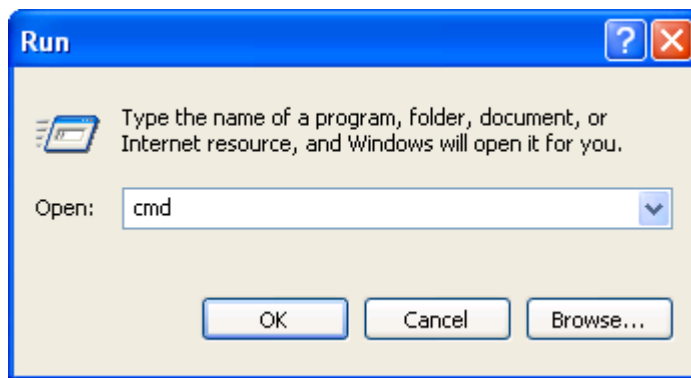
Chapter 4-Internet Explorer

Tips and tricks to boost Internet Explorer's performance

Run Disk Clean up- **Disk Clean up** will remove internet temporary files, downloaded program files, and offline web pages. If you need help running **Disk Clean Up** visit Chapter 1.

Clean out your History-Open up **Internet Explorer**. Select the menu option **Tools** then **Internet Options**. Depending on your version of Windows will depend on where the option to clean out your History file will be located.

 Update your Internet Explorer to the Latest Version-An upgraded version of **Internet Explorer** will have fixes and new features that should improve Internet Explorer's performance. You can find it for free at **Microsoft.com**. You can also find out which version you are running by selecting **Hel**p then **About**. If you are running the latest version then **check for updates** by selecting **Tools** then **Windows Update**.

Tweak Your Internet Explorer-Try this performance tweak for **Windows XP** and **Vista**. Select **Start** then **Run** (Search in Vista) and in the run box type in **CMD**. Now hit **OK**

You will get a black screen. Type in this command: **regsvr32 actxprxy.dll** and hit **Enter** Changes will be effective after a restart.

Spyware-Last but certainly not least is spyware. Spyware is the #1 cause of slow internet performance. If you have spyware software make sure to keep it up to date and scan your system at least once a month. Make sure your software is capable of removing adware, pop-up generators, keyloggers, Trojans and hijackers.

If you don't have an up to date Spyware program **Download XoftSpySe**
It's a lesser known spyware removal tool *(Not For Long)* But non the less very effective

Chapter 5-Software

All in one utilities for System maintenance, Registry Cleaning and Optimization

RegCure

RegCure has sold over 60 Million copies and for many good reasons. It is the must sophisticated Registry Repair tool out there but very easy to use. RegCure will remove Registry keys that have no value, sweeping out the useless entries that clog up your system. RegCure will also remove Invalid shell extensions, COM/ActiveX programs, Uninstall Entries, and repair errors in your Windows registry. As you can see Regcure has a straight forward user interface. There is also a back up and restore feature. Every time you use RegCure it automatically backs up your registry so any changes made can be reversed. RegCure will also allow you to customize your start up items. **Download RegCure**

SpeedyPC

The Windows Database contains a vast amount of information about your computer, with details on every setting, option, control, and operation. SpeedyPC scours the Windows Database for waste and junk files, clearing them out of the way so that your computer runs faster. SpeedyPC addresses common problem areas such as DLL files, fonts, start up, file associations, uninstalls, and more. SpeedyPc has a fully functional back up and restore option. SpeedyPC is a easy way to get your computer running great and keeping it running great. Compatible with Win98, ME 2K,XP and Vista.
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