Windows Registry Clean up

A Guide to Cleaning the Windows Registry for Vista, XP, 2000 and Windows 98

Preface

Warning this book is not for novice users. If at anytime you are having trouble following my instructions, click on the following link and read the registry repair tool tutorial for your version of Windows. These tutorials are designed to walk you through the process using software as an alternative to the registry editor.

Who should read this book?

…Anyone who would like to learn how to use the Windows Registry Editor to fix issues with their operating system quickly and safely. And for those who wants to learn how to use registry repair tools to clean and maintain their Windows Registry. I am going to skip wordy technical explanations. My tutorials will be short, direct and to the point yet very specific and easy to understand. Make sure to read my instructions carefully but more importantly take your time. Remember! Always create a restore point and export a copy of your registry before you begin. With that said I really hope that after reading this tutorial you will have the basics building blocks needed to clean and maintain your Windows Registry.

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Chapter 1

Creating a system restore point and Exporting your Windows XP/Vista Registry

It is very important to remember to always export a copy of your Windows Registry and create a restore point before making any attempts to edit your Registry.

Step 1: **Windows Vista Users**- Creating a System Restore Point

Right Click on my computer and select Properties
Click on **System Protection** on the tasks menu

You should see a Window with your hard drive/s in it. Your C: should be already checked.

Click on the **Create Button**
Name your restore point appropriately by date

Now Click on the **Create Button**

A conformation screen should appear when your restore point is completed

Windows XP Users- Creating a System Restore Point

The best way is to 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

Step 2: **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 and or course select import. In case importing the registry file doesn't work you can always revert to the system restore point.

Chapter 2
Removing start-up items from your Windows Registry

Don't forget to create a **system restore point** and **export a copy of your registry**. See chapter 1 for help.

Note: *The process of removing start-up programs in your registry is the same in every version of Windows.*

Step 1: open the registry editor

Click start then run (search in Vista) then type in regedit

Step2: Deleting the keys in run the folder

A Quick note on the Registry
Now don't let yourself get intimidated here. The registry is a huge directory so it can be easy to get lost but at the same time it's well organized. On the Left is the directory structure which in most cases is broken up into 5 folders called hive keys. There are some folders that could be open so if this is the case scroll up to the top and close the open folder. Now the only Hive we care about is hkey_ local_machine. Lets go ahead and highlight this key. Now on the Right hand side are the values for this particular key. It is this pane we will be making our changes. With this in mind let's get started

Let's start with opening 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. Instead of scrolling through these various folders we are going to click on the very first one and type in M. This will get you pretty close to the **Microsoft key** which will be the next key we need to open. Next using the same technique type in W and find **Windows**. Make sure you click on a key in that folder. Open the Windows key and find **current version**. After opening current version find and highlight **run**. 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 of 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 pull it to the right. As far as deleting these keys here my take. If you're not sure don't do it. In all reality you can't hurt yourself here but 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 your performance. Once you are done just close the registry editor. Your changes will take place once the system reboots.

Chapter 3

How to delete unneeded Registry keys old programs leave behind

All programs you install modify your registry in some way. Unfortunately most programs don't fully clean up after themselves when you uninstall them. This causes your registry to get bigger which in turn makes your system run slower. It's rare but some applications will not even remove themselves from your programs list. I want to start this chapter out by showing you a cool trick that will wipe old entries in your add remove programs list for good.

First off export a copy of your registry

Before I start….. I want to teach you how to search through your registry. In the registry editor highlight computer. Select the edit menu option then find. Type in Microsoft and press find next. You should see a value highlighted. Go ahead and press f3 on your keyboard. Notice how it found another Microsoft value? The function 3 button will keep repeating the search until it is completely through your registry. This is why it is very important to have the computer key highlighted when you search otherwise your search maybe confined to one hive key.

Ok…Lets get rid of those old entries in add/remove programs
Find the key **hkey_local_machine\software\microsoft\windows\currentversion\uninstall**

You will see a list of hexadecimal values. Now double check to make sure uninstall is highlighted and Search for the program you want to remove. It is very important that you **do not delete the folder** just its contents. After a reboot that entry will be gone.

You are starting to learn what a powerful tool the registry editor is. I am sure you want to learn some more cool tricks but I want to hold off on that for now. I will be addressing this issue in chapter 5 Registry Hacks

I recommend doing an inventory of applications and programs you use. Uninstall all programs you aren't using and reboot. Once that is complete pull up your list of installed applications and make sure they are all gone? Use the above hack to get those programs off the list.

Next step is to scan the registry for keys related to these applications you recognize and you know you don't use. Start by highlighting the computer icon and keep pressing f3 while deleting all references to the program. Do this for all your uninstalled programs. This will decrease the size of your registry and as a result your computer will run faster. I sure by now you're starting to realize how tedious this process is. Personally I let a registry cleaner program do all the dirty work for me. I own registry easy so I can say with confidence that it gets the job done. But I have heard goods things about Regcure and Registry Mechanic. Actually this is a perfect time to learning about these registry cleaners and how they work.

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