

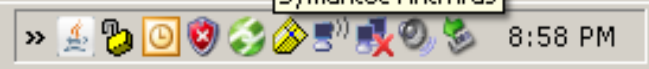


Tune Up your PC – Part 2 2008-10

In May 2007 (<http://home.att.net/~kai/html/ct0705.html>) we shared some tips on how to tune up your Windows XP pc. If you are like us, you probably noticed it's a losing battle trying to keep your system clean and running efficiently. The three major causes of PCs running slow can be attributed to Spyware/virus (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virus>), unnecessary programs running in the background, and fragmented disk drives.

Spyware/Virus not only slow down your system, they are also dangerous. These unwanted software can be used to steal your identity. (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/>) No matter how diligently we practice "safe computing", our computer may still get infected by spyware/virus. To cleanse your system, you will need anti-spy-ware / anti-virus software such as McAfee's VirusScan Plus <http://us.mcafee.com/root/package.asp?pkgid=276> and Symantec's Norton360 http://shop.symantecstore.com/DRHM/servlet/ControllerServlet?Action=DisplayProductDetailsPage&SiteID=symnahho&Locale=en_US&ThemeID=106300&Env=BASE&productID=81884500. These convenient to use commercial products require you pay a yearly subscription fee to keep receiving updates. You can also get the similar protection from freeware such as AVG Free <http://free.avg.com/ww.download-avg-anti-virus-free-edition>.

Software that runs on your PC that you are not aware of can be a major contributor to slow running computers. When you look at your computer's system tray, do you recognize all the

icons?  If not, you probably have programs running that doesn't need to. You can follow the information provided in our May 2007 (<http://home.att.net/~kai/html/ct0705.html>) article and use MSCONFIG to determine which program you need to keep running, which ones you can do without.

The last source of slow PCs is caused by fragmented disk drives. Think of disk drives as a large file cabinet and imagine a 10-pages Word document stored 1 page per drawer in 10 different drawers. Every time you open the Word document to work with it, the computer has to go to ten different drawers to get all the page for you. Windows has a build-in disk-defragmenter that you should run frequently. The disk defragmenter will place all ten pages in one drawer for easy access. For Windows XP, go to Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Defragmenter

Alternative, you can use commercially available software to check for needless running programs and fragmented disk drive. The major security software vendors such as Symantec (<http://www.symantec.com/index.jsp>), Largesoftware (<http://www.largesoftware.com/>), and McAfee (<http://www.mcafee.com/us/>) have products that will satisfy the needs. There are free software such as CCleaner <http://www.ccleaner.com/> that will do the same work as well. The Benefit of using third party software is it provides a comprehensive tool to clean your PC.

Regardless which method you chose, keep in mind, the best medicine is prevention. Practice safe computing!