

Preventative Maintenance For Your Computer

By Bob Brolhorst

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A-1 Internet Marketing Newsletter <http://www.wave5marketing.com/newsletter.htm>

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Do you have a regular preventative maintenance schedule for your computer? If you don't then you should start immediately. In a way your computer is no different than your car. It needs periodic maintenance just like your car to make sure it is running efficiently, and to give it some longevity and keep it out of the shop for repairs. If you are using your computer for your business as I am, then your computer is getting used daily and should be put on at least a weekly maintenance program. There are many maintenance duties you can do yourself without having to buy extra software or having to take it to the computer shop.

If you have a Windows keyboard it has a button in the lower left-hand corner of the main keyboard between the Ctrl and Alt keys. You will be able to identify it by the logo of the flying window. Some people have preferences between using the keyboard or mouse to get to where they want to go on the computer, so I am going to show you two ways to perform this first task.

Hold down your windows key and then press F to open. A window will open up and at the top of the window you will see the name of the window (Find: all files), or go you can go to the start button on the lower left-hand of your desktop and left click your mouse button you then you will see a number of items. Go to find and there you are back at the (Find: all files).

Once you are at the (Find: all files) Type in ~*.tmp and click on Search. All of these files can be safely eliminated from your hard drive. They are temporary files saved when you were printing and not deleted from the cache for some reason or files that remained when you shut your computer down without going through the correct procedure. The second method to get to these files is going to the Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup feature.

Another type of file that can be safely eliminated, if you're not in the "Oh, no! I deleted the file and can't find it" mode is the *.chk files. You can identify these files by their these sample file names: File00010.chk, File0050.chk, etc.

These are recovered files when your system crashed and restarted, causing lost clusters that the system then converted to files. Any files that you are unsure as to whether delete them should be stored in a backup file or external disk

If you use the browser the internet frequently you should delete your temporary internet files and cookies. Go to windows Explorer, make sure you are in the "C" drive, scroll down to the windows folder. Double click on the windows folder and scroll down to the cookies folder, single click to open it up. Once the folder is open, go to edit and when it opens up click on "select all". Once everything is highlighted hit your delete button.

To delete the unnecessary temporary internet files do the same as above, only this time scroll down your windows file to temp internet files and select and delete them as well.

Once a week I defrag my hard drive. A fragmented hard drive can cause a great deal of memory errors and can freeze programs. When this happens it will take the computer some time to put all the fragments back together and you will be able to tell that your computer is running slower.

When a hard drive becomes fragmented it will look for files, it searches the entire hard drive for every piece of the file. When this happens some parts of certain files may be scattered throughout your hard drive, causing it to freeze up. Windows has a utility called Disk Defragmenter, that can also be accessed through Programs, Accessories, System Tools.

I suggest that when you defrag your hard drive, make it the last thing you do at the end of the day. The last time I ran the defrag program it took me 6 hours, so I did while I was sleeping. If you defrag on a weekly basis it will not take near as much time.

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