

## Re: Slow computer

**Source:**

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2004-10/20039.html>

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**From:** Jeff ([jeff\\_at\\_falsepart.com](mailto:jeff_at_falsepart.com))

**Date:** 10/19/04

Date: Tue, 19 Oct 2004 16:46:33 -0400

Thank you very much. Very helpful indeed.

--

Jeff Williams

Email address deliberately false to avoid spam

[jeff@phony.com](mailto:jeff@phony.com)

Shenan Stanley wrote:

> Jeff wrote:

>> 4. Clean up the programs running at start up. Dump anything not  
>> absolutely needed to run the system.

>>

>> That is where a lot of us are not sure what services, startup  
>> programs are needed and what are not. Advice?

>

> Jeff,

>

> The last section of this text has links to pages that describe the  
> normal services and startups on a system. Also, GOOGLE can be useful  
> in finding a program or service name and a description to go with  
> it. Yes - it takes effort, but it is the same effort the person you  
> will pay \$75/hour would do/has done in the past.

>

> \*WARNING\* This is a LONG spill, all in plain text and simplified so  
> that even non-techs should be able to understand it. Hopefully this  
> will

> assist some people in not only repairing their systems, but in making  
> them faster and more stable tools for them to use. It contains advice  
> on many things, many considered "common knowledge" to 'IT' people  
> everywhere. It is split into major sections, hopefully this will make  
> it easier to navigate. \*WARNING\*

>

> Suggestions on what you can do to secure/clean your PC. Every attempt  
> has been made to be general and an assumption of a "Windows" operating  
> system is made here as well - although in some ways, this could be  
> adapted to any OS.

>

>

> GENERAL UPKEEP AND CLEANUP

> -----

>

> You should periodically defragment your hard drives as well as check  
> them for errors. Only defragment after you have cleaned up your  
> machine of outside parasites and never defragment as a solution to a  
> quirkiness in your system. It may help speed up your system, but it  
> should be clean before you do this one.

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>  
> How to Defragment your hard drives  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=314848>  
>  
> How to scan your disks for errors  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=315265>  
>  
> How to use Disk Cleanup  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=310312>  
>  
> You should also empty your Internet Explorer Temporary Internet  
> Files and make sure the maximum size for this is small enough not to  
> cause trouble in the future. Empty your Temporary Internet Files and  
> shrink the size it stores to a size between 10MB and 360MB..  
>  
> - Open ONE copy of Internet Explorer.  
> - Select TOOLS -> Internet Options.  
> - Under the General tab in the "Temporary Internet Files" section, do  
> the following:  
> - Click on "Delete Cookies" (click OK)  
> - Click on "Settings" and change the "Amount of disk space to use:"  
> to something between 10MB and 360MB. (Betting it is MUCH larger  
> right now.)  
> - Click OK.  
> - Click on "Delete Files" and select to "Delete all offline contents"  
> (the checkbox) and click OK. (If you had a LOT, this could take  
> 2-10 minutes or more.)  
> - Once it is done, click OK, close Internet Explorer, re-open Internet  
> Explorer.  
>  
> Uninstall any software you no longer use or cannot remember installing  
> (ask if it is a multi-user PC) - but only if you are sure you do not  
> need it and/or you have the installation media around to reinstall if  
> you need to. <http://snipurl.com/8v6b> may help you accomplish this.  
>  
> If things are running a bit slow or you have an older system  
> (1.5GHz or less and 256MB RAM or less) then you may want to look into  
> tweaking the performance a bit by turning off some of the memory  
> using Windows XP "prettifications". The fastest method is:  
>  
> Control Panel --> System --> Advanced tab --> Performance section,  
> Settings button. Then choose "adjust for best performance" and you  
> now have a Windows 2000/98 look which turned off many of the annoying  
> "prettifications" in one swift action. You can play with the last  
> three checkboxes to get more of an XP look without many of the  
> other annoyances. You could also grab and install/mess with one  
> (or more) of the Microsoft Powertoys - TweakUI in particular:  
>  
> <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>  
>  
> You should also verify that your System Restore feature is enabled and  
> working properly. Unfortunately, it seems to have issues on occasion,  
> ones that can easily be avoided by turning off/on the system restore  
> and make a manual restoration point as one of your periodic  
> maintenance tasks. This is particularly important right before  
> installing something major (or even minor if you are unsure what it  
> might do to your system.) (This, of course, will erase any previous  
> restore point you have.)  
>  
> Turn off System Restore.  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=310405>  
>

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> Reboot.  
>  
> Turn on System Restore.  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=310405>  
>  
> Make a Manual Restoration Point.  
> <http://snipurl.com/68nx>  
>  
> Also, you should look into backing up your valuable files and folders.  
> <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=308422>  
>  
> And keep your original installation media (CDs, disks) safe with their  
> CD keys and such. Make backups of these installation media sets as  
> well and always use strong passwords. Good passwords are those that  
> meet these general rules (mileage may vary):  
>  
> Passwords should contain at least six characters, and the character  
> string should contain at least three of these four character types:  
> - uppercase letters  
> - lowercase letters  
> - numerals  
> - nonalphanumeric characters (e.g., \*, %, &, !)  
>  
> Passwords should not contain your name/logon name.  
>  
>  
> UPDATES and PATCHES  
> -----  
>  
> \*\* Side Note: \*IF\* you are about to install Service Pack 2 (SP2) for  
> Windows XP, I suggest you clean up your system first. Uninstall  
> any applications you do not use. Update any that you do.  
> Download the latest drivers for your hardware devices. Defragment  
> and run a full CHKDSK on your hard drives. Scan your system and  
> clean it of any Spyware/Adware/Malware and for Viruses and  
> Trojans. Below you will find advice and links to applications  
> that will help you do all of this. If this advice helps you,  
> please - pass it on. Print it, email it, forward it to anyone you  
> think it might help. A little knowledge might help prevent lots  
> of trouble.  
>  
> This one is the most obvious. There is no perfect product and any  
> company worth their salt will try to meet/exceed the needs of their  
> customers and fix any problems they find along the way. I am not  
> going to say Microsoft is the best company in the world about this  
> but they do have an option available for you to use to keep your  
> machine updated and patched from  
> the problems and vulnerabilities (as well as product improvements in  
> some cases) - and it's free to you.  
>  
> Windows Update  
> <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>  
>  
> Go there and scan your machine for updates. Always get the critical  
> ones as you see them. Write down the KB##### or Q##### you see when  
> selecting the updates and if you have trouble over the next few days,  
> go into your control panel (Add/Remove Programs), match up the latest  
> numbers you downloaded recently (since you started noticing an issue)  
> and uninstall them. If there was more than one (usually is), install  
> them back one by one - with a few hours of use in between, to see if  
> the problem returns. Yes - the process is not perfect (updating) and  
> can cause trouble like I mentioned - but as you can see, the solution

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> isn't that bad - and is MUCH better than the alternatives.  
>  
> Windows is not the only product you likely have on your PC. The  
> manufacturers of the other products usually have updates as well. New  
> versions of almost everything come out all the time - some are free,  
> some are pay - some you can only download if you are registered - but  
> it is best to check. Just go to their web pages and look under their  
> support and download sections. For example, for Microsoft Office  
> update, you should visit:  
>  
> Microsoft Office Updates  
> <http://office.microsoft.com/>  
> (and select "downloads")  
>  
> You also have hardware on your machine that requires drivers to  
> interface with the operating system. You have a video card that  
> allows you to see on your screen, a sound card that allows you to  
> hear your PCs sound output and so on. Visit those manufacturer web  
> sites for the latest downloadable drivers for your hardware/operating  
> system. Always (IMO) get the manufacturers hardware driver over any  
> Microsoft offers. On the Windows Update site I mentioned earlier, I  
> suggest NOT getting their hardware drivers - no matter how tempting.  
> First - how do you know what hardware you have in your computer?  
> Invoice or if it is up and working now - take inventory:  
>  
> Belarc Advisor  
> [http://belarc.com/free\\_download.html](http://belarc.com/free_download.html)  
>  
> Once you know what you have, what next? Go get the latest driver for  
> your hardware/OS from the manufacturer's web page. For example,  
> let's say you have an NVidia chipset video card or ATI video card,  
> perhaps a Creative Labs sound card or C-Media chipset sound card...  
>  
> NVidia Video Card Drivers  
> <http://www.nvidia.com/content/drivers/drivers.asp>  
>  
> ATI Video Card Drivers  
> <http://www.atitech.com/support/driver.html>  
>  
> Creative Labs Sound Device  
> <http://us.creative.com/support/downloads/>  
>  
> C-Media Sound Device  
> [http://www.cmedia.com.tw/e\\_download\\_01.htm](http://www.cmedia.com.tw/e_download_01.htm)  
>  
> As for Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Windows XP, Microsoft has made this  
> particular patch available in a number of ways. First, there is the  
> Windows Update web page above. Then there is a direct download site  
> and finally, you can order the FREE CD from Microsoft.  
>  
> Direct Download of Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Windows XP  
> <http://snipurl.com/8bqy>  
>  
> Order the Free Windows XP SP2 CD  
> <http://snipurl.com/8umo>  
>  
> Microsoft also have a bunch of suggestions, some similar to these,  
> on how to better protect your Windows system:  
>  
> Protect your PC  
> <http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/>  
>

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>  
> FIREWALL  
> -----  
>  
> Let's say you are up-to-date on the OS (operating system) and you have  
> Windows XP.. You should at least turn on the built in firewall.  
> That will do a lot to "hide" you from the random bad things flying  
> around the Internet. Things like Sasser/Blaster enjoy just sitting  
> out there in Cyberspace looking for an unprotected Windows Operating  
> System and jumping on it, doing great damage in the process and then  
> using that Unprotected OS to continue its dirty work of infecting  
> others. If you have the Windows XP FW turned on - default  
> configuration - then they cannot see you! Think of it as Internet  
> Stealth Mode at this point. It has other advantages, like actually  
> locking the doors you didn't even (likely) know you had. Doing this  
> is simple, some helpful tips for the SP2 enabled firewall can be  
> found here:  
>  
> <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/community/columns/cableguy/cq0204.mspx>  
>  
> If you read through that and look through the pages that are linked  
> from it throughout - I think you should have a firm grasp on the  
> basics of the Windows XP Firewall as it is today. One thing to note  
> RIGHT NOW - if you have AOL, you cannot use this nice firewall that  
> came with your system. Thank AOL, not Microsoft. You HAVE to  
> configure another one.. So we continue with our session on  
> Firewalls...  
>  
> But let's say you DON'T have Windows XP - you have some other OS like  
> Windows 95, 98, 98SE, ME, NT, 2000. Well, you don't have the nifty  
> built in firewall. My suggestion - upgrade. My next suggestion -  
> look through your options. There are lots of free and pay firewalls  
> out there for home users. Yes - you will have to decide on your own  
> which to get. Yes, you will have to learn (oh no!) to use these  
> firewalls and configure them so they don't interfere with what you  
> want to do while continuing to provide the security you desire. It's  
> just like anything else you want to protect - you have to do  
> something to protect it. Here are some suggested applications. A  
> lot of people tout "ZoneAlarm" as being the best alternative to just  
> using the Windows XP FW, but truthfully - any of these alternatives  
> are much better than the Windows XP FW at what they do - because that  
> is ALL they do.  
>  
> ZoneAlarm (Free and up)  
> <http://snipurl.com/6ohq>  
>  
> Kerio Personal Firewall (KPF) (Free and up)  
> [http://www.kerio.com/kpf\\_download.html](http://www.kerio.com/kpf_download.html)  
>  
> Outpost Firewall from Agnitum (Free and up)  
> <http://www.agnitum.com/download/>  
>  
> Sygate Personal Firewall (Free and up)  
> [http://smb.sygate.com/buy/download\\_buy.htm](http://smb.sygate.com/buy/download_buy.htm)  
>  
> Symantec's Norton Personal Firewall (~\$25 and up)  
> <http://www.symantec.com/sabu/nis/npf/>  
>  
> BlackICE PC Protection (\$39.95 and up)  
> <http://blackice.iss.net/>  
>  
> Tiny Personal Firewall (~\$49.00 and up)

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> <http://www.tinysoftware.com/>  
>  
> That list is not complete, but they are good firewall options, every  
> one of them. Visit the web pages, read up, ask around if you like -  
> make a decision and go with some firewall, any firewall. Also,  
> maintain it. Sometimes new holes are discovered in even the best of  
> these products and patches are released from the company to remedy  
> this problem. However, if you don't get the patches (check the  
> manufacturer web page on occasion), then you may never know you have  
> the problem and/or are being used through this weakness. Also, don't  
> stack these things. Running more than one firewall will not make you  
> safer - it would likely (in fact) negate some protection you gleamed  
> from one or the other firewalls you run.  
>  
>  
> ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE  
> -----  
>  
> That's not all. That's one facet of a secure PC, but firewalls don't  
> do everything. I saw one person posting on a newsgroup that "they had  
> never had a virus and they never run any anti-virus software." Yep -  
> I used to believe that way too - viruses were something everyone else  
> seemed to get, were they just careless? And for the average joe-user  
> who is careful, uses their one to three family computers carefully,  
> never opening unknown email attachments, always visiting the same  
> family safe web sites, never installing anything that did not come  
> with their computer - maybe, just maybe they will never witness a  
> virus. I, however, am a Network Systems Administrator. I see that  
> AntiVirus software is an absolute necessity given how most people see  
> their computer as a toy/tool and not something  
> they should have to maintain and upkeep. After all, they were  
> invented to make life easier, right - not add another task to your  
> day. You  
> can be as careful as you want - will the next person be as careful?  
> Will someone send you unknowingly the email that erases all the  
> pictures of your child/childhood? Possibly - why take the chance?  
> ALWAYS RUN ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE and KEEP IT UP TO DATE! Antivirus  
> software comes in so many flavors, it's like walking into a Jelly  
> Belly store - which one tastes like what?! Well, here are a few  
> choices for you. Some of these are free (isn't that nice?) and some  
> are not. Is one better than the other - MAYBE.  
>  
> Symantec (Norton) AntiVirus (~\$11 and up)  
> [http://www.symantec.com/nav/nav\\_9xnt/](http://www.symantec.com/nav/nav_9xnt/)  
>  
> Kaspersky Anti-Virus (~\$49.95 and up)  
> <http://www.kaspersky.com/products.html>  
>  
> Panda Antivirus Titanium (~\$39.95 and up)  
> <http://www.pandasoftware.com/>  
> (Free Online Scanner: <http://www.pandasoftware.com/activescan/>)  
>  
> AVG 6.0 Anti-Virus System (Free and up)  
> <http://www.grisoft.com/>  
>  
> McAfee VirusScan (~\$11 and up)  
> <http://www.mcafee.com/>  
>  
> AntiVir (Free and up)  
> <http://www.free-av.com/>  
>  
> avast! 4 (Free and up)

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> <http://www.avast.com/>  
>  
> Trend Micro (~\$49.95 and up)  
> <http://www.trendmicro.com/en/home/us/personal.htm>  
> (Free Online Scanner:  
> [http://housecall.trendmicro.com/housecall/start\\_corp.asp](http://housecall.trendmicro.com/housecall/start_corp.asp))  
>  
> RAV AntiVirus Online Virus Scan (Free!)  
> <http://www.ravantivirus.com/scan/>  
>  
> Did I mention you have to not only install this software, but also  
> keep it updated? You do. Some of them (most) have automatic  
> services to help you do this - I mean, it's not your job to keep up  
> with the half-dozen or more new threats that come out daily, is it?  
> Be sure to keep whichever one you choose up to date!  
>  
>  
> SPYWARE/ADWARE/POPUPS/HIJACKS  
> -----  
>  
> So you must be thinking that the above two things got your back now -  
> you are covered, safe and secure in your little fox hole. Wrong!  
> There are more bad guys out there. There are annoyances out there  
> you can get without trying. Your normal web surfing, maybe a wrong  
> click on a web page, maybe just a momentary lack of judgment by  
> installing some software packages without doing the research.. And  
> all of a sudden your screen starts filling up with advertisements or  
> your Internet seems much slower or your home page won't stay what you  
> set it and goes someplace unfamiliar to you. This is spyware. There  
> are a whole SLEW of software packages out there to get rid of this  
> crud and help prevent reinfection. Some of the products already  
> mentioned might even have branched out into this arena. However,  
> there are a few applications that seem to be the best at what they  
> do, which is eradicating and immunizing your system from this crap.  
> Strangely, the best products I have found in this category ARE  
> generally free. That is a trend I like. I make donations to some of  
> them, they deserve it!  
>  
> Two side-notes: Never think one of these can do the whole job.  
> Try the first 5 before coming back and saying "That did not work!"  
> Also, you can always visit:  
> <http://mvps.org/winhelp2002/unwanted.htm>  
> For more updated information.  
>  
> Spybot Search and Destroy (Free!)  
> <http://www.safer-networking.net/en/download/index.html>  
>  
> Lavasoft AdAware (Free and up)  
> <http://www.lavasoft.de/support/download/>  
>  
> CWShredder (Free!)  
> \*\* No longer updated as of July 29, 2004 - however, still a great  
> product and should still be ran \*\*  
> [http://www.softbasket.com/download/s\\_8114.shtml](http://www.softbasket.com/download/s_8114.shtml)  
>  
> Hijack This! (Free)  
> <http://mjcl.com/mirror/hjt/>  
> ( Tutorial: <http://hjt.wizardsofwebsites.com/> )  
>  
> SpywareBlaster (Free!)  
> <http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/sbdownload.html>  
>

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> IE-SPYAD (Free!)  
> <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ehowes/www/resource.htm>  
>  
> ToolbarCop (Free!)  
> <http://www.mvps.org/sramesh2k/toolbarcop.htm>  
>  
> Bazooka Adware and Spyware Scanner (Free!)  
> <http://www.kephyr.com/spywarescanner/>  
>  
> Browser Security Tests  
> <http://www.jasons-toolbox.com/BrowserSecurity/>  
>  
> Popup Tester  
> <http://www.popupstest.com/>  
>  
> The Cleaner (49.95 and up)  
> <http://www.moosoft.com/>  
>  
> That will clean up your machine of the spyware, given that you  
> download and install several of them, update them regularly and scan  
> with them when you update. Some (like SpywareBlaster and SpyBot  
> Search and Destroy and IESPYAD)  
> have/are immunization utilities that will help you prevent your PC  
> from being  
> infected. Use these features!  
>  
> Unfortunately, although that will lessen your popups on the  
> Internet/while you are online, it won't eliminate them. I have  
> looked at a lot of options, seen a lot of them used in production  
> with people who seem to attract popups like a plague, and I only have  
> one suggestion that end up serving double duty (search engine and  
> popup stopper in one):  
>  
> The Google Toolbar (Free!)  
> <http://toolbar.google.com/>  
>  
> Yeah - it adds a bar to your Internet Explorer - but its a useful  
> one. You can search from there anytime with one of the best search  
> engines on the planet (IMO.) And the fact it stops most popups - wow  
> - BONUS! If you don't like that suggestion, then I am just going to  
> say you go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and search for other options. Please  
> notice that Windows XP SP2 does help stop popups as well. Another  
> option is to use an alternative Web browser. I suggest "Mozilla  
> Firefox", as it has some great features and is very easy to use:  
>  
> Mozilla Firefox  
> <http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>  
>  
> One more suggestion, although I will suggest this in a way later, is  
> to disable your Windows Messenger service. This service is not used  
> frequently (if at all) by the normal home user and in cooperation  
> with a good firewall, is generally unnecessary. Microsoft has  
> instructions on how to do this for Windows XP here:  
>  
>  
> <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/using/howto/communicate/stopspam.asp>  
>  
>  
> SPAM EMAIL/JUNK MAIL  
> -----  
>  
> This one can get annoying, just like the rest. You get 50 emails in

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> one sitting and 2 of them you wanted. NICE! (Not.) What can you do?  
> Well, although there are services out there to help you, some email  
> servers/services that actually do lower your spam with features built  
> into their servers - I still like the methods that let you be the  
> end-decision maker on what is spam and what isn't. If these things  
> worked perfectly, we wouldn't need people and then there would be no  
> spam anyway - vicious circle, eh? Anyway - I have two products to  
> suggest to you, look at them and see if either of them suite your  
> needs. Again, if they don't, Google is free and available for your  
> perusal.  
>  
> SpamBayes (Free!)  
> <http://spambayes.sourceforge.net/>  
>  
> Spamihilator (Free!)  
> <http://www.spamihilator.com/>  
>  
> As I said, those are not your only options, but are reliable ones I  
> have seen function for hundreds+ people.  
>  
>  
> DISABLE (Set to Manual) UNUSED SERVICE/STARTUP APPS  
> -----  
>  
> I might get arguments on putting this one here, but it's my spill.  
> There are lots of services on your PC that are probably turned on by  
> default you don't use. Why have them on? Check out these web pages  
> to see what all of the services you might find on your computer are  
> and set them according to your personal needs. Be CAREFUL what you  
> set to manual, and take heed and write down as you change things!  
> Also, don't expect a large performance increase or anything -  
> especially on today's 2+ GHz machines, however - I look at each  
> service you set to manual as one less service you have to worry about  
> someone exploiting. A year ago, I would have thought the Windows  
> Messenger service to be pretty safe, now I recommend (with addition  
> of a firewall) that most home users disable it! Yeah - this is  
> another one you have to work for, but your computer may speed up  
> and/or be more secure because you took the time. And if you document  
> what you do as you do it, next time, it goes MUCH faster! (or if you  
> have to go back and re-enable things..)  
>  
> Task List Programs  
> [http://www.answersthatwork.com/Tasklist\\_pages/tasklist.htm](http://www.answersthatwork.com/Tasklist_pages/tasklist.htm)  
>  
> Black Viper's Service List and Opinions (XP)  
> <http://www.blackviper.com/WinXP/servicecfq.htm>  
>  
> Processes in Windows NT/2000/XP  
> <http://www.reger24.de/prozesse/>  
>  
> There are also applications that AREN'T services that startup when  
> you start up the computer/logon. One of the better description on  
> how to handle these I have found here:  
>  
> Startups  
> [http://www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup\\_content.php](http://www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup_content.php)  
>  
>  
> That's it. A small booklet on how to keep your computer secure,  
> clean of scum and more user friendly. I am SURE I missed something,  
> almost as I am sure you won't read all of it (anyone for that  
> matter.) However, I also know that someone who followed all of the

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> advice above would also have less problems with their PC, less  
> problems with viruses, less problems with spam, fewer problems with  
> spyware and better performance than someone who didn't.  
>  
> Hope it helps.  
>  
> --  
> <- Shenan ->