

Re: Not sure where to start troubleshooting XP

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 - *Date:* Sun, 19 Mar 2006 18:14:34 -0800
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On Sun, 19 Mar 2006 17:06:26 -0800, meilani
<meilani@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I need help troubleshooting a PC with various 'strange' problems that I've never seen before. It is a friends PC and god knows who was doing what with it to cause these problems. I figured it was an XP issue (corrupt files?) since the problems do not appear to be application specific. I am seeing problems with different programs though the majority issues I found in IE. Here are a few examples of the problems I am seeing:

- 1) IE will not allow me to do a Windows Update. If I use the option under Tools/Windows Update OR if I manually visit the updates page – I get a blank web page. It's like the page never finishes loading. In other words, I cannot access the page that allows me to do an update. No hourglass cursor, no error page, or anything indicating a problem.
- 2) I cannot tell what version of IE I is running. Clicking Help/About brings up the dialog box but nothing is listed under Version Number, Cipher, and Product ID.
- 3) While checking mail from an ISP's web page, the links (buttons) available to Reply, Delete, Send, etc do not work. I can access the mail box with no problems but clicking these options does nothing – not even an error message.
- 4) McAfee antivirus is installed and seems to be running. However, if I do a manual scan I get a blank options page. In fact, if I try to do anything with the program it brings up a blank dialog box. This problems seems similar to the blank web page I get in IE. This is why I think this is an XP problem and not an IE problem.
- 5) I cannot restart a Stopped service. I noticed there were a couple application services that were not running. I could not right-click and restart any of them.

I was told someone was doing some "house cleaning" on the PC. Uh-oh. I have a feeling some system files may have been deleted or perhaps the registry was tampered with. The XP System restore feature was turned off so there is no

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help there.

Any suggestions on how to troubleshoot? I really don't want to reinstall the O/S unless it's the absolute last resort.

I have been handed several very similar situations in the past number of years that I have been fixing people's computers.

Frankly, with the multitude of issues you are describing, I'd probably spend an hour or two MAX (which I think you've already done) running spyware, adware, and anti-virus software. The ones that come to mind would be AVAST4 (AV), AdAware Pro, and Spybot 1.4. Those are the best I am aware of and they are free.

Likely, unless you have a computer you can download them from, you can't get them to download on the suspect machine.

In the short run, it's probably best to pull the hard drive, put it in another computer as the 2nd drive, and then download any data the friend hasn't backed up.

Once the hard drive is backed up,

I'd strongly recommend a de-partition (to essentially wipe the hard drive, re-partition, format, and reinstall the OS.

Sometimes "the monster re-install" is truly the way to go.

In spite of all the cat-calls I've received in here, I like to keep my system clean, I'm not a "tekkie", and so I've never learned how to "create an iso image" and "copy my hard drive."

The reinstall only takes a couple of hours, and then you KNOW you have a properly installed system.

Let us know how that goes!

Good luck!

Tallahassee

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