

Problem with windows focus and dialog boxes

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Hi all,

in the last weeks I'm dealing with a strange problem on a notebook running Win XP Pro SP1.

When an application creates a modal dialog box, sometimes it doesn't appear.

The desktop seems to freeze, waiting an input on a non visible windows: I cannot open the Start menu and even if I hit the appropriate key for the dialog which is supposed to be visible, I cannot proceed.

Hitting ctrl/alt/del I can open the dialog to change password, shutdown, launch Task Manager, etc (sorry, using an italian version I don't know the exact name of this dialog).

If I choose to open the task manager I can see the CPU usage varying, the icons in the tray area are flashing (network activity, utilities, etc.) and the clock works normally.

If I try to open the task manager, I can see the appropriate windows but it doesn't receive any input, neither from keyboard or mouse.

Trying to switch with alt/tab doesn't work, neither appears the running applications icons.

With some applications, after 5 or 6 minutes the situation unlocks by itself, returning to the desktop and the PC returns to works smoothly, while with other applications I need to do a PC hard reset.

There is another 'symptom' of this problem (well... I don't know if it is related, anyway it appeared at the same time).

When an application creates a non modal dialog windows which remain in foreground, and from this windows I launch an external application, Windows seems undecided on which application should have the focus.

Example: from my email client I open an email message and double click on the attachment icon.

The client opens a non modal dialog box which remain in foregorund to

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the application itself, asking me if I want to save, delete or open the attachment.

Supposing it is a TIFF file, the Microsoft Office Document Imaging application starts, the focus switches very quickly 2 or 3 times between the email client and the TIFF visualizer and finally the focus remains on the application just launched (its icon remains lowered in the applications bar) but I cannot see its windows.

I cannot switch to any other application already launched, I need to close the email client non modal dialog box to see the attachment or the other applications.

Beside a small utility which I already removed, I didn't installed any new software.

I already checked for viruses, ad-ware and spyware, but I didn't find any.

No manual changes to registry, no drivers updated, the PC was working smoothly as always did in the last three years.

I really don't know in which direction investigate, any idea?

Thank you.

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Glider

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