

Re: System Completely Freezes or Spontaneously Reboots

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http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2008-05/msg01951.htm

- *From:* "C. M." <shadowlord1972@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 19 May 2008 20:51:22 -0400
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Aloha Gerry,

Again, I'll insert my replies in the quoted text.

Mahalo,

—

C. Mitchell

"Gerry" <gerry@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:ezoyA32tIHA.1772@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

There are two schools of thought on managing the pagefile. The majority advocate letting Windows manage the pagefile. The disadvantage is a multi-fragmented pagefile. The problem as I see it is that this fragments free space and a direct result causes any new files of any size to immediately fragment. There are two ways to avoid this problem. You either set a large pagefile on a minimum=maximum basis in the Windows partition at a time when the free disk space is 60% or more or you place it in a dedicated first partition on a second drive. If you have less than 60% free disk space you can be frustrated trying to get a contiguous pagefile because the pagefile is normally placed in the middle of the partition and other files already there cause the pagefile to be non-contiguous. If you have the main pagefile on a second drive you need a small pagefile in the Windows partition -say 200 mb. I rely on the Microsoft Disk Defragmenter and appreciate that third party Disk Defragmenters offer other alternatives.

If you create partitions, you can move files that rapidly fragment (because they are constantly being written to) out of the Windows partition. My Outlook Express mail and news folders are in a dedicated partition as are my general data files. It simplifies housekeeping and backing up.

Defragmenting helps to create better performance, especially if you run cCleaner and Disk CleanUp to trim System Restore points first. You only see, however, dramatic improvements if the partition was overfull and has

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not been defragmented for some time.

I was aware of both schools of thought (and others).. I am not familiar with how Windows manages its pagefile to choose which option is best, however. Unix-ish or based OSes, such as Linux, are generally better well-known.. In case of my Linux partition, I do keep the pagefile on its own, dedicated partition. I would be happy if I could do the same with Windows. (Notably, my 350GB disk is the fastest disk I have, and I have it on its own controller to cut down on conflicts when the system tries to access more than one disk or DMA channel.) I will continue looking into what I can do to better manage and defrag the Windows' pagefile, and am appreciative of your advice.

Your WCI file presents an issue I have not seen before. You are unlikely to be able to defragment a file that is 1.33 gb. The corresponding file on my system, with the indexing Service turned on, is 45 mb. You need to deal with it before reducing the size of the System Restore allocation. The link below (5 pages) contains suggestions.
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/05/10/tattletale_convenience/

I agree. That's way too much space for something I do not even use. I'd rather just delete it completely.. I'm just not familiar enough with Windows to know what I can safely delete without causing problems. Same with the Google Desktop. It installed as part of Google Earth and other Google tools, but I do not use the Desktop or search features.If I can eliminate both without adverse effects, I will.

In Outlook Express place the cursor on Local Folders and select File, Work Offline followed by File, Folder, Compact All. Do not attempt to interrupt or stop the process until it has completed.

I have done this (both before you suggested it, and again just now to make sure all my p's and q's are in order..), but have seen little or no effect. It might be something with my settings (for instance, I only download headers--I do not know why that one file is so big and won't reduce) and the way my free space is so fragmented, keeping it from being able to compact it effectively. However, I've not noticed any adverse effects to date on system performance with the way things are. I'll keep trying to "tune" my settings, though.

You have over many System Restore points. Restore points more than 7 /14 days old are not worth retaining.

The default allocation to System Restore is 12% on your C partition which is over generous. I would reduce it to 700 mb. Right click your My

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Computer icon on the Desktop and select System Restore. Place the cursor on your C drive select Settings but this time find the slider and drag it to the left until it reads 700 mb and exit. When you get to the Settings screen click on Apply and OK and exit.

Select Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk CleanUp, More Options, System Restore and remove all but the latest System Restore point.

I will try that.. Note that I usually archive all the backups and such (that I know of) whenever I do updates, since updates like to eat up a lot of disk space and I rarely uninstall one. I am not sure if this is the "system restore" points you mention. I am just not familiar enough with Windows' way of doing some things..

You do appreciate that closing a programme that has a memory leak does not always result in the release of the memory. You can only be sure the memory is released when you shutdown and restart the computer.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_leak

On the contrary, I'm very aware of that. I've been programming since the DOS 3.3 days, and cursed many a time when Windows 3.x software would lock up because of improperly allocated and unreleased resources. I was even among the first to jump on the 32-bit Windows (95 and NT) bandwagon, and it's promise to eliminate such issues by putting every process in it's own virtual machine and process space. (I still have fully operational 95 and NT4 boot partitions on my other PC.. Even a DOS6+WF3 partition!)

Anyhow, I am quite aggressive in monitoring how my system is used, and I often run several tools and utilities that try to insure that when I close or shut something down, it forces everything to be reclaimed. I often simply reboot as well, to insure that resources don't continue to leak and get lost. In truth, my initial troubleshooting was along the same lines as you seem to be thinking now, but excepting that I may have missed something you or others might think of, I've pretty much eliminated that avenue.

BTW, when I say I leave my PC on 24/7, I'm referring to the power switch. I reboot almost daily, especially since I need to switch to my Linux partition from time to time. Likewise, even while experiencing all these problems, I would reboot often to make sure the problem continued even when everything was relatively "clean and fresh."

I'm also aware of the "issues" with Apache and MySQL, but to date, I've only encountered the Apache problem once, and restarting it solved that instance. Most of the time, between the two, my system resources used by them are very low (especially since I have very little traffic with either. Only periodic updates for the backups.), and I do monitor them carefully. Whether or not the monitoring tools report resources properly, however, is something I am

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still looking into.. But so far, I've not had any noticeable or significant issues, except when it comes to those few games. Those had continued to cause freezes even when I did a clean reboot (even after disabling Apache, MySQL and some other services, removing them from the startup folders and registry, etc.)

I still think the problem is in the video drivers and/or Direct-X (most likely one of those), or even possibly a hardware issue with the GFX card (less likely since it occurs with both cards but only on XP, not 2K. But I'm still not ruling anything out..) I just don't know the right places to _look_ in Windows for clues, hints and other tell-tale signs of what the exact problem might be.

I cannot help with nVidia problems.

It was more that I was hoping you (or someone else here) has an idea on how I can restore the basic Windows property pages, (and even preferably) without any of the additional junk nVidia, ATI, MSI, or whatever, likes to add to them. I've peeked around the registry and other system files, but I'm careful not to modify anything that I'm not fully aware of what it does or how it works. Since this is my only XP PC, I am not even sure that the WMI snap-ins, control panel apps/dlls, etc, are original and unmodified—I have nothing to compare them to.. And I've not been as good at making proper backups as I should be. :-)

I will continue to try the things you suggested, as well as that HD Tune (I still have not had time, and I did not get the chance to get a new GFX card this past weekend as I'd planned..) Thank you for your continued efforts to help!

Cas

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