

Last week we covered how to organize your files, folders and shortcuts. This week in the basics of using your windows PC, how to Clean out and clean up files will be the topic.

The more you use your PC, the more it will collect junk files that you no longer need, taking up unnecessary disk space. It is good to regularly clean out your system, getting rid of the files you no longer need to make space for new ones.

You can also run maintenance programs which can 'defrag' your files – in other words clean up and arrange them in a way which makes it easier for your PC to find. By doing this, you can improve the speed at which Windows runs programs.

The Recycle Bin

When you delete a file, usually this just means it has been moved to the Recycle Bin. If you do not regularly empty your Bin, the files inside may take up valuable disk space. Double click the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop to see which files are currently stored in there. If there are any files in the Bin that you want to keep and put back in the original place you deleted them from, right-click on the files and select Restore. If you are happy you no longer require any of the files in the Recycle Bin, you can remove them from your computer completely by right-clicking the Recycle Bin icon and selecting Empty recycle bin.

You should empty your Recycle Bin regularly, at least once a week..

Remove Temporary Files

Temporary or junk files are left over by programs and are usually no longer needed. They waste space and that may eventually slow your PC down.

Internet Explorer stores many of the files used on the web pages you visit so that next time you go to a site it doesn't have to download the same files again. However, this can build up over time and take up a lot of disk space.

If you have Internet Explorer 6, click on Tools then Internet Options. Under the section Temporary Internet Files on the General tab, click Delete Files. Click Delete all offline content and click OK. When finished, click OK to exit the Internet Options window.

If you have **Internet Explorer 7** click on Tools then Internet Options and look for the section Browsing History and click the Delete button underneath. Next Click the Delete Files button next to Temporary Internet Files.

The System Restore utility is a useful safety feature but it can also use up a lot of space, so occasionally it is worth clearing out the old restore points.

To do this, go to Control Panel, click on System then on the System Restore tab. Check to turn off System Restore and click Apply, this will clear out all old restore points. Now un-check to turn System Restore back on and use the slider to specify the amount of disk space you want it to use for future restore points.

Disk Cleanup

The **Disk Cleanup** system tool allows you to clean out Windows components and programs you no longer need, and remove temporary files.

From the Start menu, click on Programs> Accessories> SystemTools> Disk Cleanup.

The main Disk Cleanup window shows two tabs - Disk Cleanup and More Options. In the Disk Cleanup tab window, put a tick in the following boxes if you wish to clean out these unnecessary files:

- - Downloaded program files
- - Temporary internet files
- - Recycle bin
- - Temporary files

Click on the More Options tab and you can choose to get rid of unwanted Windows components, remove installed programs you no longer use, and remove all but the most recent System restore point.

When you have selected everything you want to clean up, click on OK then Yes to confirm you want to begin the Disk Cleanup process.

Defragmenting Your Hard Disk

Disk Defragmenter helps Windows arrange files on your Hard Disk in a way that makes it easier and faster for it to find your programs.

From the Start menu, click on Programs> Accessories> SystemTools> Disk Defragmenter.

It is recommended that you read the Defragmenter Help manual before beginning the defragmentation process. Click on Help from the menu at the top of the Disk Defragmenter window.

Defragmenting can take anything from a few minutes to several hours depending how fragmented the disk is, during which time you should not run any other programs.

Disk Defragmenter requires 15% of free space on your hard disk to work with. If you do not have enough space you will need to delete some files. To start the defragmentation process, click the volume that you want to defragment, and then click Defragment.

That is it for the basics of using your windows PC series article. Next week I will be covering Web Tips.

Hometown Computer Services hope you have enjoyed this weeks computer article. Please stop by my shop or call/email anytime if you have questions. Our hours are 10am-7pm M-F and 10am-3pm Sat.