

Optimize Your Hard Drive

CONSISTENCY INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY

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These days we're all demanding faster service from everything around us. Technology has to move move MOVE and we want the same from our computers. With computers, however, the problem so often is that the hard drive is cluttered with old, unorganized files, unnecessary programs and in most cases, spyware. Below are some helpful methods to clean up and make space on your packed-to-the-max hard drive.

Steps to Organize

Be consistent about where you save your files and how you name them. This will aid your review and clean-up efforts. As you save files, use folders with unique naming strategies to organize your documents. Your file should also be named uniquely. I often use dates at the beginning of certain documents, like contracts, Estimates and invoices, to keep track of when it was made. This makes locating and cleaning up so much more efficient.

Steps to Optimize

- Get Rid of Unnecessary Files (application data for uninstalled software, temporary internet files, cookies, and recent document lists).
- Run an anti-spyware program like Malware to locate and delete spyware that is taking up space and slowing you down.
- Run/Automate Windows Updates.
- Run Compression (compression frees up space but beware that those files will take longer to open and resave).
- Defragment your Drive(s).
- Check for Disk Errors (whenever a program crashes or you experience a power outage, your computer may create error and recovery files on the hard disk which over time can slow down your computer).

Hands-On Optimization

- Back Up Your Files to CDs, DVDs, External Hard Drives, etc.
- Periodically review files one by one and discard unnecessary documents, images and programs.
- Clean out your recycle bin (when you delete files, rather than being erased from your hard drive, they relocate to your recycle bin - deleting your files from your recycle bin PERMANENTLY erases the files from your hard drive and finally clears that space). Consider reducing the size of your Recycle Bin - it is automatically 12% of your hard drive (you can do this from the Recycle Bin Properties window).
- Restart your computer routinely, especially after large projects, to free up un-released memory and work space on your hard drive.
- Reduce your webpage history to a week or less.
- Don't save encrypted webpages (usernames and passwords).

Do NOT...

- Do NOT delete operating system files.
- Do NOT delete program files. Rather, use the program's uninstall option to uninstall and un-register the program.

If you want your computer to run healthy, then do your best to keep it healthy!