The
New York Society Library
Presents:


PC Cleanup

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BACK UP YOUR COMPUTER:

A backup copy allows a certain flexibility - you can significantly change or modify files on your computer with out worrying that you will lose any information. When you back up your computer, don't worry about backing up the entire hard drive. Only back up files that you've created or have had sent to you (i.e. letters, memos, pictures, e-mail, bookmarks). The operating system (Microsoft Windows 98, etc) and installed programs (Microsoft Word, Excel, AOL) all have their own installation disks. If disaster strikes, you will need to install these programs directly from their own disks instead of from your own backup.

1. To make backups easier, store all of your original files (letters, writing, e-mail, photos, etc) in one folder on your computer. If you are on a PC, save them in the "My Documents" folder (you can rename it later). If you are on a Mac, create a folder with a unique name. This one folder can be divided into sub-folders.

2. In the old days, people used to back up on a floppy drive (1.44 MB) or Zip Drive (100/250 MB). Nowadays, it is easier to backup onto a memory key (varies in size, but usually around 128 MB), a blank CD (700 MB) if you have a CD-RW drive or blank DVD (4.7 GB), if you have a DVD-RW drive.

3. If you are on a PC, open Windows Explorer ("Start → Programs → Windows Explorer" or "Start → Programs → Accessories → Windows Explorer"). If you are on a Mac, open MacOS Finder or the folder you wish to back up.

4. If you are on a PC, click the checkmark next to "Local Disk C:" to expand the column. Find your folder (i.e. "My Documents") and click and hold the left mouse button down. Drag the entire folder onto the A: drive if you're backing up onto a floppy. Release the left mouse button. The files will start copying onto the floppy disk. If you have more files than space on the floppy, your computer will prompt you to insert another disk.

5. If you are on a Mac, click and drag your file onto the desktop floppy icon. Release the mouse button. The files will start copying automatically onto the floppy disk. If you have more files than space on the floppy, your computer will prompt you to insert another disk.
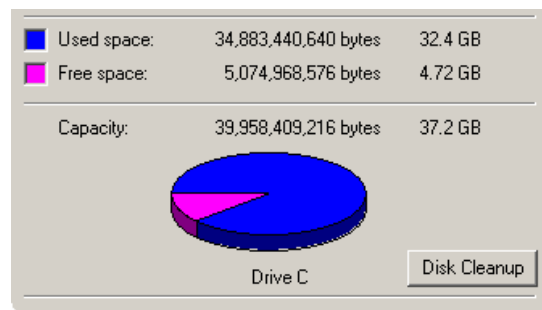
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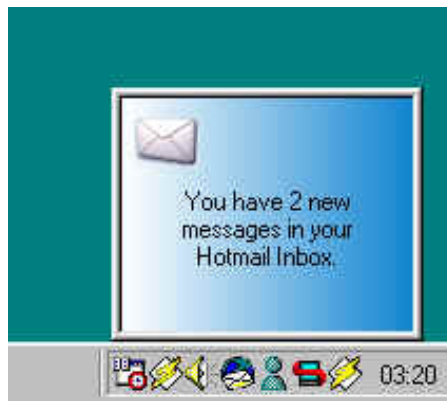
REMOVE SYSTEM TRAY PROGRAMS
Click Start → Run → msconfig

The System Tray is located in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen and includes any programs that your computer automatically runs at startup (virus scanners, sound programs, display information). None of these programs are essential for your computer to run, and many of the slow your computer down at startup.

To remove programs from the system tray, click Start→ run→ msconfig→ Startup and uncheck the appropriate box (you can always reload it later). For Windows 98 & ME, keep: LoadPowerProfile, SystemTray, ScanRegistry, PCHealth & TaskMonitor. For all computers: keep your Antivirus software & your CD-burning tools. Restart your computer.


CLEAN UP YOUR HARD DRIVE
Open My Computer → Local Disk C: → Properties→ Disk Cleanup

Keep at least 15% of your hard drive space free. Double-click on "My Computer" and right-click on the C: drive. Select "Properties" from the drop-down menu. This will tell you how much space you have left on your hard drive, as well as which unessential files to delete to free up space. Click on "Disk Cleanup". Ignore "compress old files" unless you drastically need to add more space to your hard drive. Check the other boxes and click "OK" to remove these files.

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REMOVE SPYWARE:
http://www.safer-networking.org
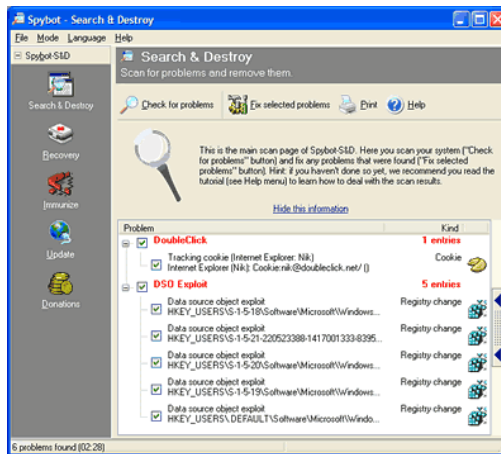
Spyware is a program installed on your computer that keeps track of your web surfing and sends the information back to the owner. It isn't illegal, but it will compromise your privacy online by sending pop-up ads geared towards you and will bog down your Internet connection by using it to send and retrieve information about you from your computer.

To remove spyware: Go to http://www.safer-networking.org and download "Spybot: Search & Destroy" (it's free; donations accepted). Install it, update it, and run it on your computer. You may have to restart your computer to completely clean it from all Spyware.



SCAN FOR VIRUSES

If your computer is running slower than usual, or if strange icons have appeared on your desktop, or if you are unable to connect to the Internet, your computer may be infected with a virus. The easiest way to check and make sure is to run a virus scan on your computer. The tools listed below are all free to download or scan online; anti-virus companies make their money off of ongoing subscriptions - not removing the viruses on your computer.

SCANNING TOOLS:
- McAfee ADVERT Stinger: http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/
- Symantec Security Check: http://www.symantec.com/cgi-bin/securitycheck.cgi

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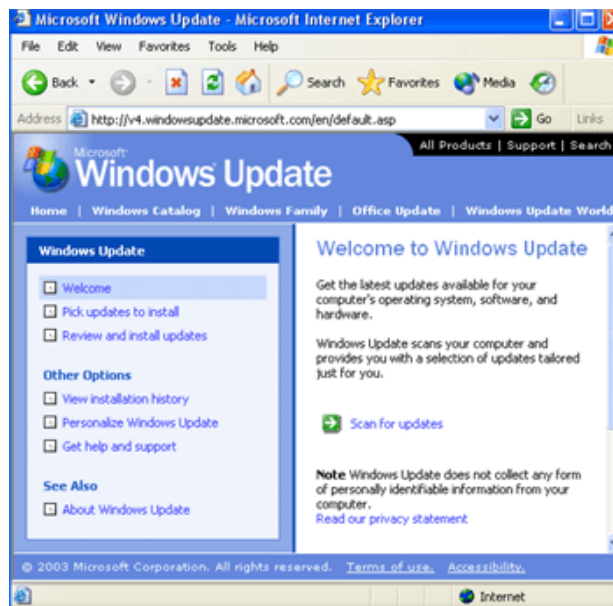
DOWNLOAD CRITICAL UPDATES
http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com

If you are using a Microsoft operating system (i.e. Windows 98/2000/ME/XP), visit: http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com and download the Critical Updates for your computer.   It's free, and it will patch up many of the security holes that the viruses exploit on your system.

DOWNLOAD MICROSOFT OFFICE UPDATES
http://office.microsoft.com
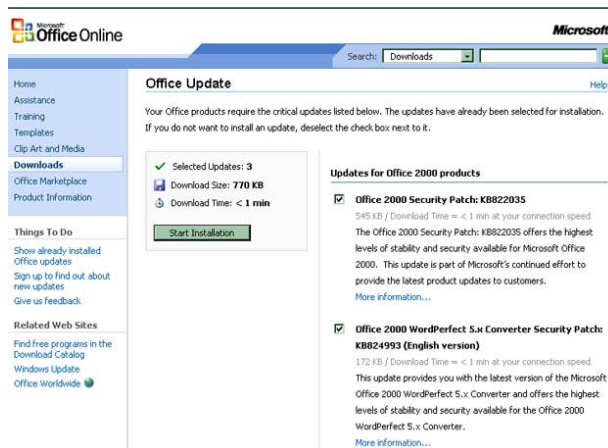
If you are using Microsoft Word and/or Excel, you may also wish to download Microsoft Office updates. These are also free and will patch problem holes with your Office products. You may need to have your installation CD-ROM available for these downloads.

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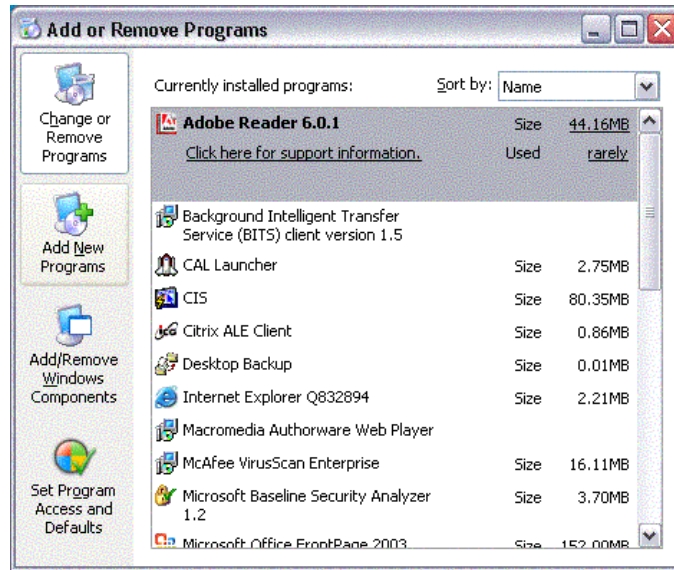
REMOVE UNUSED PROGRAMS
Click Start→ Settings→ Control Panel→ Add or Remove Programs

If you are using Microsoft XP or higher, the "Change or Remove Programs" option will give you the size of the program, the date last used and the frequency of use. Windows measures the number of times the program has been run in the past 30 days and labels it accordingly: rarely, occasionally and frequently.

Click on "REMOVE" to uninstall the program and restart your computer every time you're asked to do so. Also, as a good rule of thumb, restart your computer after uninstalling 2-3 programs, even if it doesn't ask you to restart (many of these programs lie in resident memory; restarting will clear them out).
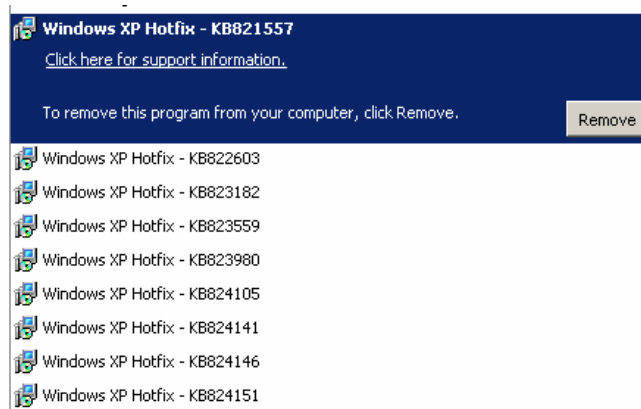
DELETE OLD SERVICE PACKS

Remember all those critical updates you did to your computer to protect it? If you're sure you want to keep the upgrade, delete old service packs (Windows XP Hotfix). This does not undo the upgrade, it just removes the option for you to uninstall it.

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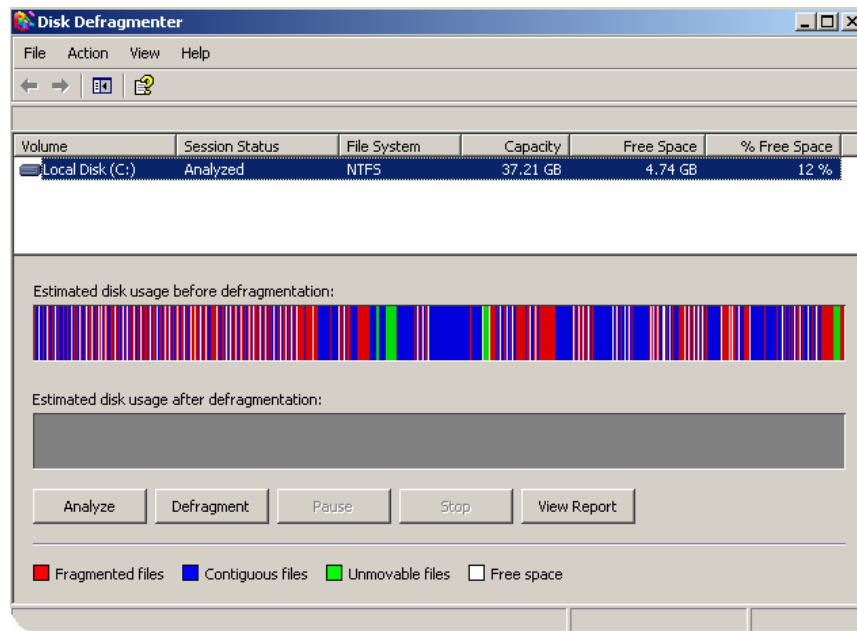
DEFRAGMENT YOUR HARD DRIVE:
Click Start→ Programs→ Accessories→ System Tools→ Disk Defragmenter

Defragmenting your hard drive takes all the programs installed on your computer and puts their data files next to each other, freeing up space and speeding up the computer (the computer spends less time looking for all sections of the program). This program is useful to do once a month or after you've installed or removed new programs on your computer.

1. Choose "Defragment now". Once you're at this box, click "Analyze" (Windows XP). In a few minutes, it'll return a message that will tell you whether or not you actually need to defragment your hard drive.

2. If you receive a message that tells you that you should defragment your disk, choose "Defragment now."

3. It's essential that you allow the defragmentation to continue without using your computer for any other function; the defragmentation will continue for several minutes or hours until it is completed.

4. Special Note: If the defragmentation takes a very long time, you may need to turn off your screensaver. Do this by going to Start→ Settings→ Control Panel→ Display and selecting (None) under "Screen Saver".

NOTES:

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