

## WINDOWS PC MAINTENANCE & TROUBLESHOOTING F.A.Q.

*Answers to Frequently Asked Questions from Library Staff*

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Backups   Check Disk   Defrag   The Desktop   Firefox   Safe Mode   Scheduling Maintenance Tasks   Spyware   Uninstalling   Updates   Viruses  
Wallpaper   Screensavers   Icons

**Handout Online at: <http://www.nmrls.org/ce/PCFAQ.htm>**

**Find websites, examples, downloads here: <http://delicious.com/bibliotechy/maintenance>**

### 4 QUICK TIPS

**1)** Simple tip for all computer users when you encounter a problem!  
**RE-BOOT!**

**2)** Easy tip to find menus and customize  
**RIGHT-CLICK on your Mouse**

**3)** **Go to Windows Security Center in the Control Panel.**  
*(Click on Start, click on Control Panel)*  
**Turn on Windows Updates!**  
**Turn on Windows Firewall!**  
**Turn on Windows Defender Anti-Spyware!**  
**Keep your Anti-Virus software up to date!**

**4) BACKUP! BACKUP! BACKUP!**

### **WHAT BROWSER TO USE**

*I have always used Explorer, but I see a lot of people here use Firefox. How are they different?*

- you can customize Firefox to suit your needs and aesthetic sensibility
- lots of great free add-ons from weather to colors to fonts to RSS feeds
- it works on Windows, Mac, Linux (*Internet Explorer is for Windows only*)

*Is Firefox better?*

... it depends ...

- it's free, you can install and use both *Firefox* and *Internet Explorer*
- it works on Windows and Mac
- you can customize Firefox to suit your needs and aesthetic sensibility

*How would I download Firefox, if I decide to use it?*

<http://www.mozilla.com/>

## UPDATES

*Some software updates require you to accept the terms--how do you know when they are legitimate and not a virus and if it is okay to click on them?*

- **First**, do you have Microsoft Windows **automatic updates** turned on!? **Turn it on!!!**
- When this happens are you using a Browser (*Internet Explore or Firefox*)? If yes, it may be a pop-up add and can be ignored, close it. Even if it is real, your program or Windows will remind you again and again to install this update.
- Is the software or upgrade or up-date is coming from one of these guys?
  - Microsoft Windows / Microsoft Office *or* Apple (iTunes) *or* Norton Anti-Virus *or* Firefox *or* Adobe (Reader or PhotoShop) or any other brand of software on your computer, then click YES and go on with our life!
- You have no choice if you want legitimate software installed. The terms are called a EULA (*End-User License Agreement*), if you say no you don't get the software ...

## VIRUS MESSAGES

*I have gotten pop-up messages while using the computer that say that the computer may be infected with a virus. Then the message instructs me to follow certain instructions to remove the virus. These messages look like they come from Windows/ or Microsoft.*

*How do I know if they are for real?*

- **First** know your anti-virus (A-V) program! This is the only program on your computer that will give you a virus warning. What brand is it? Symantec, Norton, MacAfee, AVG?
- When this happens are you using a Browser (Internet Explore or Firefox)? If yes, it may be a pop-up add and can be ignored, close it. Even if it is real, your anti-virus program will remind you again and again!
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*What should I do if I get a message that says my computer has a virus?*

- Follow the instructions that your anti-virus gives you. Usually an A-V program will quarantine a suspected file and ask you whether to delete it ... the answer is YES! Usually an A-V program finds a virus in an email attachment, again it will be quarantined and it will ask you to delete ... the answer is still YES!
- An A-V program is always running in the background looking for suspicious files and activities. You should also schedule a daily scan of your system.

*Are there any cheap or free Anti-Virus programs?*

- YES!
  - AVG Free: <http://free.avg.com/>
  - Avira AntiVir: <http://www.free-av.com/> (see *Consumer Reports*, p.33, Sept. 2008)

## SPYWARE

*What is spyware?*

Spyware is software installed on your computer without your knowledge. It can be a threat to your privacy, to your passwords and to any financial, medical or personal data you may have on your computer. It may just be tracking what websites you visit and for how long, or it may be recording your keystrokes to crack your passwords or credit card number. A lot of it is poorly written and, privacy concerns aside, it gunks up your computer, makes it run slow, takes up space on your hard disk(s) and may make your computer more venerable to viruses. It really serves no good purpose ... do I need to go on? Of note, spyware and viruses are not so much a problem with owners of Apple computers.

## SPYWARE

*Do I need it?*

- No you do **NOT** need spy-ware ... **You need ANTI-SPYWARE!!!**
- The simplest and easiest thing for Windows users is to install **Windows Defender**. This is Microsoft's **FREE** anti-spy program for both Windows XP and Vista. On Vista it is preinstalled, no need to download. On Windows XP you may need to download it.
- Find it here: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/>
  - Defender will scan your system as it installs and will then constantly run in the background protecting you. And it even automatically run a daily scan (which you can re-schedule in the Tools menu). If it misses a scan it will catch up, but may ask you to run a scan "right now!" If Defender finds spyware, follow the on-screen

Another well-respected and **FREE** Anti-Spyware program is **Spybot**.

- Spybot can run alongside Defender and may find programs that Defender does not.
- But, Spybot is a little more complicated to set up and can slow down a PC when it is running a scan.
- Find it here: <http://www.safer-networking.org/>

*Is it already on my computer?*

- Maybe ... download and install one of the programs above!

*Do I have to do something or does it run automatically?*

- On Windows Vista computers **Microsoft Defender** is preinstalled, no need to download.
- On Windows XP you may need to download it, see above.
- On Macs ... not a worry so far ...

## Personalizing the Desktop & Start menu

*How do I change the background of my desktop? How would I change the color scheme?*

### Windows XP

1. *Right-click* with mouse anywhere your desktop that is not an open window
2. Choose **Properties**
3. Choose **Desktop** tab
4. *Scroll* through pictures under Background: *Click* on your choice
5. *Click* on **Apply** button

### Windows Vista

Step-by-step changing background:

<http://www.winvistatips.com/change-background-image-a127675.php>

*How do you add or delete programs from the Start Menu?*

- Quick answer : **Right-click**, choose **remove** from this list
- Setting this from the start: *Right-click* on **Start** button, choose **Properties**, choose **Customize**, **Number of Programs on Start menu**

*How do I reset the date and time?*

- Double-click on time in lower right corner and re-set it. Be sure to set proper Time Zone too!

## Screensavers

*What about screensavers? Why do I need one?*

- Yes, probably ... In theory they prevent an image from being permanently burned in to a screen. Many new flat-panel LCD monitors run screen savers or go to sleep automatically to prevent this.

*How do I select a screensaver that I like?*

- It's reflects your taste and sensibility ...

### Windows XP

1. *Right-click* with mouse anywhere your desktop that is not an open window
  2. Choose **Properties**
  3. Choose **Screen Saver** tab
  4. *Click* on Screen Saver **drop-box** and *Click* on your choice
  5. *Click* on **Settings** button to customize
  6. *Click* on **Apply** button
- A good choice for **Public PCs** is **3D Text**. You can type in an upcoming program, reminder to log-out, etc. **A cheap and easy marketing tool!**

### Windows Vista

Step-by-step changing background & screen savers:

<http://www.winvistatips.com/change-background-image-a127675.php>

*How do I set the number of minutes I want the screen to be idle before the screensaver activates?*

- Whatever time-period is most convenient for you, but **less than an hour**.

## Organizing Desktop Icons & Shortcuts

*How do I create a shortcut?*

1. *Right-click* on anything (a file, a folder, a program) and choose **create shortcut** from menu
2. Move the short-cut file to **Desktop** or a folder where it is convenient for you

*Arranging Icons*

1. *Right-click* with **mouse** anywhere your desktop that is not an open window
2. Choose **Arrange Icons By ...** you have many choices!
3. **TIP: Choose Align to Grid**

*How do I Clean up Desktop shortcuts*

- If you want to get rid of a shortcut either **drag to Recycle Bin** or *right-click* and choose **Delete**

### Automated "cleanup" of un-used icons on Windows XP

1. *Right-click* with mouse anywhere your desktop that is not an open window
2. Choose **Properties**
3. Choose **Desktop** tab
4. *Click* on **Customize Desktop**
5. Check **Run Desktop Cleanup ...**
6. *Click* on **Apply** button

*Is deleting the shortcut the same thing as deleting the program?*

- **NO!** The shortcut is just that, a shortcut to get to the program. or file. or folder you want to get to.

## DEFRAG?

*What is this?*

- A Microsoft Windows program (both XP & Vista) that pulls fragments of files saved on your hard drive together. This makes the speed of retrieving files quicker and easier. The process may also discover problems with a hard drive and give you ample warning that your drive is about to crash and die ...
- *Wikipedia article:* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disk\\_Defragmenter\\_\(Windows\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disk_Defragmenter_(Windows))

*Am I supposed to be doing this?*

- **YES!**

*If yes, how?*

### Windows XP

1. *Double-click* **My Computer** on the desktop.
2. *Right-click* the disk you want to defragment (usually the C:\ drive), and then *click* **Properties**.
3. On the **Tools** tab, *click* **Defragment Now**.
4. *Click* **Defragment** button.

### Windows Vista

For a nice step-by-step goto Windows Vista Tips:

<http://www.winvistatips.com/disk-defragmenter-a96.php>

*And how often?*

- **Monthly** will be fine.
- Be aware it will take a long time if you have never run it before ...

*Are there other clean up processes that I should be running regularly?*

- **Yes Check Disk!** Also known as **CHKDSK**. Check Disk checks to make sure your hard drive is organized efficiently as well as checking for bad sections of your hard drive and telling Windows not to put stuff there.

*How do I know what they are?*

- You asked me!
- The two **most important** things are **Defrag** and **Chkdsk**.
- Use Windows help menu and Microsoft will spell this all out too, but not as succinctly.
  1. *Click* on **Start**
  2. *Choose* **Help and Support**
  3. *Choose* **Performance and Maintenance**

## Check Disk / CHKDSK

*Running CHKDSK on the fly!*

### Windows XP

1. *Double-click My Computer* on the Desktop, then *right-click* you want to check (usually the C:\ drive).
2. *Choose "Properties"*.
3. *Click the "Tools" tab* at the top of the Properties window.
4. In the "**Error-checking**" section, *click* the button "**Check now**".
5. The option "**Automatically fix file system errors**" should be chosen for routine checks.
6. *Click Start*.
  - If serious disk problems are suspected, the option "Scan and attempt recovery of bad sectors" should also be checked. However, this may involve a period of many hours.

### Windows Vista

For a nice step-by-step goto *Windows Vista Tips*:

<http://www.winvistatips.com/vista-chkdsk-a126028.php>

*How do I make my computer do this automatically!?*

- Use the **Windows Task Scheduler!**

To open Scheduled Tasks in Windows XP:

- **Option 1 via Start menu**
  1. *click Start*
  2. *click All Programs*
  3. *point to Accessories*
  4. *point to System Tools*
  5. *click Scheduled Tasks*
- **Option 2 using Windows Help menu.**
  1. *Click on Start*
  2. *Choose Help and Support*
  3. *Choose Performance and Maintenance*
  4. *Click on Scheduling tasks*
  5. *Click on Schedule a new task*

## Scheduling Tasks (CHKDSK / DEFRAG)

How do I schedule a CHKDSK and DEFRAG task to repeat weekly and monthly?

1. Double-click **Add Scheduled Task** to start the Scheduled Task Wizard, then click **Next** in the first box.
2. The next box displays a list of programs that are installed on your computer, **but not DEFRAG or CHKDSK!**
3. To *find* **DEFRAG** and **CHKDSK** *click* **Browse**, *double-click* the **Windows folder**
4. *Scroll* through folders until you find **system32** folder
5. *Double-click* **system32** folder.
6. *Scroll* through files and find **chkdsk.exe**, *click* on **chkdsk.exe** (you will need to repeat these steps for **defrag.exe** too!)
7. *Click* on **Open** button
8. Type a name for the task where file name is highlighted in blue (ex. *Weekly Check Disk*), and then choose one of the following options:
  - *Weekly* for **Chkdsk**
  - *Monthly* for **Defrag**
9. *Click* **Next**, specify the information about the day and time to run the task, and then *click* **Next**. (*Lunch time or anytime when a slower computer won't bother you as much*).
10. Type the **user name** and **password** of an Administrator (*which is You! on your home computer / on work computer you may need your IT staff to set this up*). By default, the wizard selects the name of the user who is currently logged on.
11. *Click* **Next**, and then *click* **Finish** after you verify the choices that you have made.

**IMPORTANT** - You may get a black window with text popping up when **CHKDSK** and **DEFRAG** want to run. Do not be alarmed, it is saying that they can not run right now, but **would you like them to run next time your computer starts?** The answer is **YES!** Type a “Y” in that black window and go on with life satisfied your computer is properly maintained!

## Windows performance

What is Safe Mode?

- A way for Windows to start if there is something wrong with Windows, a program or installed hardware, the possibilities are endless ... unfortunately

What should I do if my computer automatically starts up in Safe Mode?

- It depends ...
- Try to re-start by *choosing* **shut down** at the **start** menu
- Did you just install some new software or a new hardware (a mouse or keyboard)?
- **Uninstall** it in **Safe** mode and **re-boot** (re-start by choosing shut down at the start menu)
- If these options don't work it might be time to call Dell or the Geek Squad or take it to a local repair shop ...

## Windows performance

*What causes Windows to freeze?*

- Lots of things ... but, it's not you, it's the PC!
- Windows and the software you are using encounter a problem
- Windows and the hardware you are using encounter a problem
- You got a virus
- You got spyware
- Your computer is old

*What should I do when Windows freezes?*

- **Re-boot!**
  - To reboot from the keyboard hold down *all three* of these *keys*: **CRTL-ALT-DELETE**
  - If Ctrl-Alt-Del does not work, **hold down the power button** for at least 10 seconds to force the PC to shut off. Count to 10, turn it back on.

*What if Windows seems OK, but a particular program is freezing?*

- See if there are any **updates** for the program
  - In that program, *Click* on the **Help** menu then click on updates
    - *OR* - **Google** search the *name of the program* and the word “**updates**”
- **Final Option:** *Un-install* the program and forget it ever happened ...

## UNINSTALLING PROGRAMS

*When I open my email the Yahoo! Messenger and/or AIM program pops up, how do I stop that!?*

- **Uninstall it!**

*How do I uninstall a program?*

If program comes with it's own uninstall program use that.

1. Go to **Start \All Programs\[name of program]** folder
2. *Click* on icon/shortcut for **uninstall [name of program]**
3. **Re-boot**, even if it doesn't ask to re-boot (just to be sure it's cleared out)

If the program does not have an uninstall icon/shortcut, then:

1. Goto **Start \Control Panel \Add or Remove Programs**
2. *Choose* the program to remove from listing
3. *Click* on **Remove** button
4. **Re-boot**, even if it doesn't ask to re-boot (just to be sure it's cleared out)

## BACKING UP

*Should I back up often?*

- **YES!!!!**
- At the library your cataloging and circulation data is backed up by NOBLE. But local spreadsheets or Word documents may not be ...
- At home you should be backing up all your documents including your digital photographs and videos, as well as any legally downloaded music or movies. If your hard drive crashes you will lose all those pictures and have to re-buy all that music!

*O.K. How? And is there a way where it will run automatically? And maybe for free too?*

- Yes and it depends ...

### EASY - External Hard Drive – \$\$\$

- Another very useful and even easier option is to **buy an external backup hard drive** (\$75-\$125). This drive will include very user friendly software which will also backup your “My Documents” files and folders automatically and on a portable hard drive separate from your computer.
- Buy a hard drive that is at least 100GB (gigabytes), that will give you plenty of room for backups.
- Brands: *Seagate, Maxtor, Western Digital*
- Stores: *Best Buy, Circuit City, Staples*

### HARDER - Microsoft Backup – FREE!

- If you have two or more separate hard drives on your computer or if your computer is part of a network linked to file server, use **Microsoft Backup**. It is available for both XP and Vista.
- In **Windows XP**, find it in **Start \All Programs \Accessories \System Tools \Backup**
- In **Vista** find it in **Start \All Programs \Accessories \System Tools \Backup Status ...**
- Use the **Backup Wizard** to set up a backup of “**My Documents and Settings**.”