

Computer Tips article

“Computer Maintenance”

In last month's article I didn't introduce myself, and I perhaps should have as some people weren't certain who I am. My name is David Gill, I Co-Own the PC Knights Computer service and sales store, in the eastlawn plaza in Midland Michigan. I have been working in the IT field for the last five years doing everything from charity work to being a Systems Administrator. I have a degree in Computer Systems and Technology, and multiple computer related certifications. I've always wanted to write computer reference documentation that actual people can read. If you don't like these articles let me know how to improve them.

My business partner is Brenda Lamb, she edits these articles for me. She has been a database administrator for the last 15 years, and has her degree in Computer Science. She has always wanted to be a business owner and is now living that dream.

Christmas is over and perhaps you have a new computer. How do you keep it from breaking before 2009? This article will help you keep that computer running. When you are done reading you will know about some great tools to maintain your computer and why you should use them.

This article doesn't tell you how to run the tools but, on our website we have detailed step by step tutorials for all of

these applications. Just go to www.yourpcnights.com and click “Computer Tips”.

The first tool that we are going to mention is called Disk Cleanup. This is a tool to remove files on your computer that you do not use. There are several reasons to remove temporary files. The main reasons are that Viruses often store information in your temporary files, and corporations can use them to track what you do online.

The next tool is Disk Defragmenter. When your computer saves information for you; like pictures, or e-mails, it saves the information as a file. When one file on your computer gets split and saved in two locations, this is known as fragmenting a file. All “Disk Defragmenter” does is look for files on your computer that have been split up and saved in multiple locations. It then takes those files and puts it in one location.

How does this speed your computer up? When you want to open a picture of your family or friends your computer has to get that picture file from only one location rather than having to go to multiple locations to open that one picture file.

Now that we have talked about these two tools, one important thing to mention is the order in which to use them. Always make certain to run “Disk Cleanup” First, then “Disk Defragmenter”.

Why do it in the order? When you run “Disk Cleanup” it removes many small files. If you then want to save a larger file, like a picture to your computer, that large picture will get split up to fit in the places where those smaller files use to be before you ran Disk Cleanup. Now your computer will have to go to multiple locations to open that picture.

These are two of the most important tools that are included with Windows, there are a few tools that should be mentioned that aren't included with Windows. Tools to prevent and remove viruses and spyware.

There are a many advertisements telling the consumer their product removes spyware or viruses, all while never mentioning the difference between the two. Before you spend money on a product I want you to know the difference. A virus is an application that is typically written by an individual or group of people. A viruses purpose is usually to break a person's computer or to steal data on the computer. Spyware on the other hand is written by companies. They write spyware to track what you do on the Internet so they can make pop-ups that are tailored to you.

Both Viruses and spyware can make a computer come to a screeching halt. Not to mention that some Viruses can steel your personal information. Apparently some companies think we want their product so bad that we want them to break our computer to advertise it to us.

The two I recommend above anything else are Norton AntiVirus and SpySweeper. Norton prevents and removes Viruses and some spyware while SpySweeper removes and protects against spyware. Both of these products you have to pay for.

Three years ago I would not have recommended Norton, but their newer products have been working great without slowing down your computer. Norton has to other products to remove viruses and protect your computer, Norton Internet security and 360. Both applications work great, but the reason why I don't recommend them is because they can create confusing pop-ups when you are online.

If you're in a pinch or just don't want to pay for an Anti-Virus product I recommend Spy-Bot to block and remove spyware and Clamwin as an AntiVirus. If you decide to use Spy-Bot make certain it is Spy-Bot. There is a pay for program called SpyWare-Bot.

Not many people have heard of Clamwin, and there are very important reasons why I am recommending it. It is truly free, they won't see your contact information or send you monthly e-mails asking you to signup and payup! Even businesses can use this program. It is an extremely easy application to use. Two clicks and you have scanned your entire computer. If, like me, you never run scans it has scheduled scans that it does once weekly. Most importantly it does not slow down your computer, like some antivirus programs.

There are a few downsides to this program. Many antivirus programs offer real-time protection and Clamwin's protection is limited. Also, since it isn't a paid for program it doesn't catch many of the new viruses until they have been on the internet for a few days. Lastly it takes a long time for the scanning engine to work, so it is a good idea to let it run overnight or schedule it to run at night.

In closing I just want to let everyone know that no anti-virus, anti-spyware, or maintenance program is full proof. So please do not expect these to fix all issues that have come up with your computer.

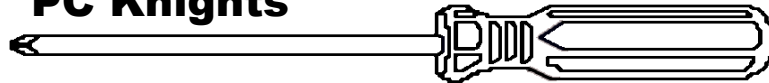
If you have any questions feel free to stop by our store or call us. We are location in the Eastlawn Plaza by Hamilton Pastries, and our phone number is 989-607-9391. Ask about our anti-virus software, anti-spyware software, PC Tune Ups,

Computer Recycling, and our up and coming free computer classes.

David Gill

PC Knights

"We will rescue your computer"



Next Month's article:

“Open Source Software”