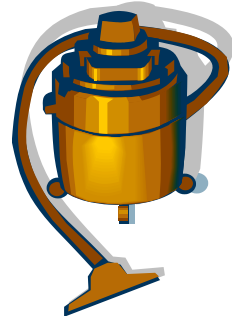


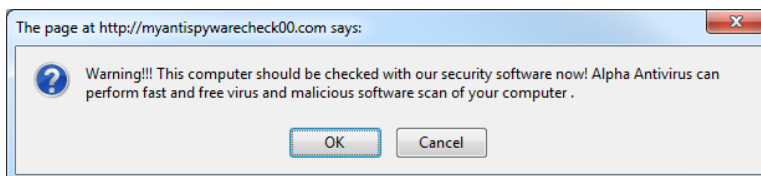


PC Housekeeping



ANTI-MALWARE PROGRAMS

- Always keep your firewall, anti-virus, and anti-spyware products up to date!
- There are many good commercial products available, such as:
 - Norton
 - McAfee
 - Kaspersky
 - Vipre
- There are several free options as well, including:
 - Zone Alarm
 - AVG
- Make sure to run a full scan of your computer on a regular basis. Automatic scans usually can be set up.
- Pick your scheduled scan time when you do not usually perform “computing-intensive” tasks.
- Set your security software to download and install updates automatically. Choose how often update checks should be made.
- Firewall software also is a good idea, especially if you use your computer on the road a lot.
- Beware of *insecurity software* – you’re browsing along, and suddenly you see something like this:



- Clicking on buttons such as *OK* or *Click here to fix the problems* may load malware onto your computer; some of this malware may force purchase of the infiltrator’s product before it can be removed.

AUTOMATIC WINDOWS UPDATES

- Set your computer to download and install Windows updates automatically.
- This will assure that you have the latest security and performance fixes as Microsoft releases them.

HARD DISK SPACE

- When your hard disk (especially the C: drive) reaches 70% - 75% full, you may see performance begin to drop.
- One answer to this problem: clear the clutter!
- Uninstall programs that you no longer use. This is done from the *control panel*.
- Burn data files (such as photo collections) to DVD, and then delete them from your hard disk. (See *Mayfield's law #1*.)
- If you are using outlook or some other non-Web email client, delete unneeded emails.
- Install a 2nd (or 3rd?) hard drive, either internal or external.

THE WINDOWS DESKTOP

- Most folks do not realize that Windows will run faster with an uncluttered desktop.
- Have you ever spent too much time looking for that shortcut or file on a crowded desktop?
- Suggestions:
 - Move documents to the *My Documents* folder or another logical location.
 - Pin frequently used apps to the *Start menu* or put them on the *taskbar*.
 - Use the *Vista* or *Win7* search box to find apps.

WEB BROWSERS

- While Internet Explorer is okay, consider test-driving other browsers:
 - Mozilla Firefox
 - Google Chrome
 - Apple Safari
 - Opera

- You may find that you can navigate better/faster using a different browser than you currently are using.
- You can have multiple browsers installed on your computer simultaneously.
- Occasionally clearing out certain data from browsers, especially Internet Explorer, may also improve browser performance.
 - In IE, select the menu item *Tools* → *Internet Options*.
 - Clear out *temporary Internet file* or cache files.
 - Clear out browsing history
 - Clear out cookies.
- Use a product such as *Delicious* (freeware) to manage your bookmarks. This product stores your book-marks on the Delicious server and permits you to access those bookmarks from any browser on any computer.

CHECK STARTUP PROGRAMS

- Sometimes when you install an app, it puts items into the *Startup* folder.
- The apps that are located in that folder are executed automatically when Windows starts.
- Check the folder from time to time to see if there are any items you can safely remove.
- When some apps are installed, they install other, “hidden” apps. These don’t appear in the *Startup* folder, but they also are run when Windows starts.
 - These apps tend to continue running once started, using up time and other resources on your computer.
 - Some of these programs are useful, but others are not, and they could even include spyware or other forms of malware.
- There is a utility named *msconfig* that can be run to look at and remove such apps. **DO NOT RUN MSCONFIG UNLESS YOU ARE SURE OF ITS USE!**

POWER ISSUES

- Always use a surge protector with your computer and related equipment.
- If you are concerned about power losses, consider purchasing an uninterruptable power supply (UPS).
 - Purchase a UPS with enough capacity to power your computer & monitor for a few minutes.
 - A UPS is not needed when using a laptop.
- Change the power options (from the *control panel*) to put the monitor, hard disk, and computer into low-power modes during extended periods of inactivity.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Don't start too many applications at the same time.
- Don't just switch your computer's power off (unless it's really frozen). Shut it down instead.
- Defragment your hard disk occasionally.
 - Be sure to back up your system before defragmenting!
 - Defragmenting an external drive takes a lot of time.
- Occasionally use a registry cleaning app.
There are both commercial and freeware versions available.
- Empty the recycle bin.
- Switch from Windows Vista to Windows 7.

SOME OF MAYFIELD'S LAWS

1. If your data is important, keep a current backup.
Corollaries:
 - a) Keep your current backup current.
 - b) If your data is really important, keep two current backups.
 - c) If you keep multiple backups, keep them in different locations.
2. It's seldom a good idea to purchase leading-edge computer technology. Going back even one generation can save big dollars. (Besides, in three to six months, the leading-edge technology for which you paid extra no longer will be leading edge.)