

No-one likes housework. But it needs to be done.

Computer housework is no exception, Don't clean up in your computer and you will find that you are working slower and slower.

BACKING UP.

All people who use a computer, create things that they value and wish to keep, if the file is just sitting on your hard drive then it is NOT safe, it needs to be Backed up.

DATA BACKUP.

Data can be anything from documents and photographs to eMails and music files, system settings and other crucial files that allow you to operate your computer.

ME and XP both let you use the built in system restore that allows you to go back to a previous working state. This doesn't work if your hard drive has crashed or you have a virus or have used some human error.



WHICH FILES?

If you are using Windows 95, 98, or ME, then you should back up 'My Documents folder', All Users, Application Data, Desktop, Favourites, Local Settings and Start Menu

If you are using 2000 or XP, back up C:\Documents and Settings, and any Application Data. [This could be around 2 GB in size]

WHICH MEDIA?

There is only one choice, CD, either CD-R or CD-RW, using a CD-RW will allow you to use the same media over and over as you do incremental back ups. Always make 2 copies of your back up and keep them in separate places to guard against accidents.

HOW DO I BACKUP.

Use Windows Explorer to back up if you are coping to floppy, and a burner if copying to CD. In XP you can find Explorer by 'Right clicking' on 'Start' or you can use the Backup program in System tools.



MAKE A BOOT/START UP FLOPPY.

If using 95, 98 or ME, then select 'Start-Settings-Control Panel, double click Add/Remove and select the Start up tab and click Create Disk'.

[Use a new formatted, blank floppy disk]

If you are using XP, then insert a new blank floppy disk and open Windows Explorer or My Computer, find the 3 ½ floppy drive and 'right click' on it, and select Format from the menu. Check the box marked Create an MS-DOS start up disk, click Start and then OK after reading the warning.

RECYCLE BIN.

The reason that Microsoft called it the recycle bin and not 'Trash' or 'Garbage bin' is because the items that you place in there are not automatically deleted. Check yours, if you have never known to do this you may have 200mb or more of disk space taken up here.

EMPTY THE RECYCLE BIN.

If you 'right click' on the Recycle bin you will see a menu with an item that says 'Empty Recycle Bin', Left click this to do so.

Recycle Bir Browse With Paint Shop Pro 7 Directory List Explore Empty Recycle Bin Create Shortcut Properties

DEFRAG.

As you use your hard drive, pieces of your files are scattered [fragmented] all over the drive, this causes your drive to slow down as it looks for pieces to run together. The defrag program reassembles the pieces so that they are all near each other making the drive operate more quickly.

STARTING DEFRAG.

In 95, 98 and ME, Select Start-Programs-Accessories-System tools. Using 2000 or Xp, then open Windows Explorer by 'right clicking' on Start and 'right click' on the drive you want to defrag. Select Properties, click the Tools tab and then Defragment now. You can use the Analyse button first to determine if this needs doing, if you wish. [Do NOT USE the computer whilst using defrag]

HOW OFTEN?

If you are a power user [constantly create and delete files], then defrag about two or three times a month, otherwise each month is about right.

BEFORE DEFRAGGING.

It is preferable to fix any errors on the drive before defragging, you can do so by using Scandisk. To open Scandisk or Defrag in 95, 98 and ME go to *Start-Programs-Accessories-System tools-Scandisk*/Defrag.

For NT/2000 and XP, open Windows Explorer by 'right clicking' on Start and 'right click' on the drive you want to defrag. Select Properties, click the Tools tab and then Check now.

Close down any program that runs in the background, [you can usually find these

running in the System tray] such as your Antivirus program, Screensaver,



instant chat, calendar and automatic updates. Do remember to start them again, the easiest way to do so is to close down your computer and reboot.

NOTE

You will find that it is better to start your computer in Safe Mode when Scanning or using Defrag as this way you can be sure that nothing is running in the background that will keep resetting Scan or Defrag.

To go into Safe Mode, you can press the F5 key while Windows is booting up. Alternatively, you can press F8 to see a menu of Start up options.

I've always used the F8 key to see the menu. However, for whatever reason the reader who wrote in couldn't get the F8 key to work. So I found an alternate way to make the menu show.

- 1. Click Start | Run.
- 2. In the Run dialog box type MSCONFIG and click OK.
- 3. In Windows 98, click the Advanced button and then Enable Start up Menu. In Windows XP, click Diagnostic Start up in the General tab.
- 4. Click OK and click Yes to restart the computer.

Once you see the menu, you can select Safe Mode. After you've figured out the process, be sure to run MSCONFIG again to tell Windows to boot up normally again.