

The SAGATUG

INTERFACE

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The San Gabriel Valley Technology User's Group. The Club for TRSDOS and MS-DOS

Home Computer Maintenance 101

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Computers are at their best—and their most secure—when well-maintained. Without regular cleaning and organization, your hard drive gets cluttered with data, your file system becomes messy, and overall performance slips. Without frequent backups and weeding, your data is less secure and more difficult to restore. And, unless you occasionally update your software and renew your subscriptions, your programs will not perform optimally. Even the physical cleanliness of your hardware affects the quality of your computing experience. Monitors get smudged, dust gets into your keyboard, grime builds up under your mouse. The problem is, home computers have become so reliable and convenient, we take their efficient operation for granted. But, just like your home or your car, your computer requires attention from time to time. The following maintenance tasks, if performed on a regular basis, will keep your computer running safely and smoothly

System checkups

Your computer works harder than you think. It's constantly prioritizing tasks, storing files, executing commands, allocating memory. It's really quite amazing how efficient these machines are. Over time, however, errors occur on your hard drive, data gets disorganized, and references become obsolete. These little problems add up, and as they do, your operating system slows down, system and software crashes occur more frequently, start up and shut down operations take longer and longer. In order to get your system back into shape, and even better, to keep it from slowing down in the first place, set up a monthly maintenance schedule. Be sure to include these items in your routine.


- Scan your hard drive for errors and fix any corrupt sectors
- Defragment your hard drive
- Remove invalid Registry entries and broken shortcuts

[Norton SystemWorks™](#) has all the tools you need to schedule and complete each of these tasks. You can use Speed Disk™ and Norton Disk Doctor™ to defragment and scan your hard drives, and Norton Win Doctor™ is an excellent tool for keeping your Windows operating system in good health.

Housekeeping

To ensure an efficient and enjoyable computing

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Memory Jogger...
See you at the next SAGATUG meeting this Friday, May 9, 2003 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center, 405 S. Santa Anita Ave. (See page four for directions and more upcoming events.)

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experience, keep your computer clean and well-organized. Removing old programs and drivers frees up memory and reduces the potential for system conflicts. Deleting obsolete and temporary files opens up space for today's important work. And, the fewer unnecessary files you have on your computer, the safer you are from threats like online identity theft. Beyond digital cleanup, it's also important to give the physical parts of your computer some TLC. Left too long, dirt and grime can build up and cause damage to your hardware. So, set aside some time each month to complete the following tasks.

Remove old programs and temporary files

Delete obsolete data

Make sure private and financial data is stored securely

Clean your keyboard, mouse, monitor and computer case using manufacturer-recommended cleansers and tools

Norton SystemWorks can help with most of these housekeeping chores. It includes Norton CleanSweep™, a handy tool for scheduling and completing a wide range of clean-up tasks.

Backups and disaster preparedness

System crashes happen. So do power outages. And sometimes, no matter how careful you are, you inadvertently delete files. Back up your system regularly to make certain you never lose data. We recommend backing up at least once a month, and when you do, always make at least two copies—one for home and one for a separate location. For example, you may want to back up to two CDs and keep one disk at home and the other at work. Or, if you work at home, use an online service to store your data remotely. That way, should you experience fire, flood, or theft, your data will be safely stored on a remote server.

If you haven't already, you should also create a bootable system disk. With a system disk you can start your computer from another drive should you be unable to boot from the hard disk. If you've installed and configured Norton System-

Works, you can use the Norton SystemWorks CD as a bootable disk.

Those of you with home offices or extensive home networks may want to invest in recovery tools like [Norton Ghost™](#) or [GoBack™ 3 Deluxe](#). With Norton Ghost you can create an exact replica of your entire system, including all your data, system settings, and preferences. Should your system become corrupt, you can use your Ghost backup to easily restore the entire system, exactly as it was. Or, if you want to add a computer to your home network, you can use the Ghost image to bring the additional computer online, fully pre-configured. GoBack3 Deluxe provides a way to track and recover critical files or settings. It transparently tracks changes you make, and should data or system corruption occur, it will restore your files and settings to any given point in their history. Even if you're using these tools, don't ignore these other basic backup tasks.

- Back up data every month
- Store your backups in two separate places
- Create an emergency system disk and store it in a safe place

Staying current: updates, upgrades, and renewals

From a performance and security standpoint, keeping your software and operating system current is as important as keeping them clean. The new digital reality is an ever-evolving, ever-improving world where staying on the cutting edge is a clear advantage. To remain current, check for software updates or upgrades each time you perform system maintenance. You should also check your subscriptions and licenses to make certain they haven't expired. This is especially important for security subscriptions. Security threats are in constant flux. New viruses and methods of intrusion appear daily, and you need to keep your security tools up to date in order to stay protected. The next time you do ordinary system maintenance, add these items to your checklist.

Update your software and operating system, paying special attention to security patches

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Renew any lapsed software subscriptions services

Security maintenance

Now more than ever, you should include a thorough security check in your maintenance routine. At a minimum, your security check should include a virus detection scan and a virus definition update. You should also review your security software settings to make sure they're turned on and functioning the way you want them. Beyond these basic tasks, you may want use a tool like [Symantec™ Security Check](#) to perform a full security checkup. Symantec Security Check is a free Web-based service that's also included in products like [Norton Internet Security™](#). It identifies security gaps in your system and offers suggestions for filling those gaps.

In addition to regular security checkups, you should also review your security setup whenever you make a major change to your system. For example, if you've recently upgraded to DSL or cable Internet service, you should step back and re-evaluate your security situation. You may find you need to take some new precautions, like adding a personal firewall to your configuration. If you take the time to perform periodic security assessments, as well as the following routine tasks, your computer will remain well-protected and secure.

Run a weekly virus detection scan using a trusted virus protection program, like [Norton AntiVirus](#) by Symantec

Make sure all your security tools, including your virus definitions, are up-to-date

If you have a firewall or a comprehensive security program like Norton Internet Security, review your preferences and settings to make certain they're in line with your security situation

Run a security diagnostic tool on your system to make sure you have the kind of protection you need

Most every part of your computer requires occasional attention, from defragging the hard drive to reviewing security to cleaning the monitor and mouse. If you don't set up a regular schedule, it's likely you'll never get around to many of these

tasks. Use this article to build a comprehensive maintenance routine, and run through that routine at least once a month. The payoff will be a healthy, reliable, and safe computer.

Some Favorite Computer Tools

These tools come with permission from of Fred Langa who does the "Langa List" free informative newsletter, www.Langa.com.

1). X-FONTER 3.7.6 is an excellent means for sorting out bloated font lists. Some applications dump a load of fonts on to one's PC without even mentioning them, and it is easy to amass so many that they cause problems. X-Fonter illustrates the list and shows their file names. There is a generous-sized panel on which one can set up one's own specimen text, upper and lower case alphabets, numerals, accented letters and so on, in one's own choice of size and colour. It is thus easy to run down the names and see instantly, for example, if a Euro or other symbol [is available].

<http://users.pandora.be/eclipse/xfonter.html> or <http://www.google.com/search?q=X%2DFONTER>.

2). YANKEE CLIPPER is an incredibly useful super-clipboard which, in History mode, records every 'copy' and 'cut', and stores them even when the PC is switched off, up to a limit of 200 text items, 200 RTF, 200 URLs, and 20 bit-maps. There is also an additional Boilerplate mode which can store standard texts for pasting into documents as required. From <http://www.Yankee-Clipper.net> --- Alan Turner

5)Yahoo Popper" Our discussion of "HotMail Popper"

There is a similar program for Yahoo webmail accounts. It allows you to download your mail from Yahoo through a normal POP mail client. Downloading your mail this way is slower than from a normal popmail account, but still the advantages are obvious. When Yahoo terminated their free pop access, my account seemed rather useless. Now I use it all the time. Heck, I even sent you this message through Yahoo, using my ISP's smtp server <http://sourceforge.net/projects/yahoopops/> Kind regards, Roelof Stevens, The Netherlands

THE GOOGLE COOKIE : AGENT OF EVIL!

When you visit Google, a “cookie” is stored on your hard disk. Contrary to what you may have heard, there is nothing intrinsically evil about cookies. A cookie is just a string of text stored in a file on your computer. It’s not software — so it can’t snoop around in your files or send salacious photos of Nina Tottenberg to everyone in your address book.

Cookies are most often used to make your web surfing more personal and convenient by remembering your preferences from one visit to the next. This can enable a website to serve up customized content based on your preferences, keep track of items in a shopping cart, or remember a login and password. Cookies can only be read back later by the site that created them, so you needn’t worry about Website “B” peeking at the cookie that Website “A” created. The Google cookie remembers your Google preferences, and contains an identifier that is unique to your computer. Daniel Brandt, founder of a group called Public Information Research thinks this is a Really Bad Thing. Brandt claims that the unique ID in the Google cookie, alongwith a user’s IP address, could personally associate a specific individual with a stored list of Google searches. Why would Google want to do such a thing? According to Brandt: Matt Cutts, a key Google engineer, used to work for the National Security Agency. Google wants to hire more people with security clearances, so that they can peddle their corporate assets to the spooks in Washington.

So the mere fact that Google hired a former government employee makes them guilty of planning to sell their database of who-searches-for-what to “Washington spooks”? Sorry, but I fail to see the logic there. Never mind that Google doesn’t know your name or email address. And never mind that there is nothing personally identifying in an IP address. It’s just a number your Internet Service Provider (ISP) assigns to your computer when you go online, so other computers on the Internet can communicate with yours. In most cases, the IP address is different each time you connect. Some service providers assign a static (non-changing) IP address to customers, but even so, only the ISP knows the identity of the user with that ad-

d r e s s .
S N E A K A N D P E E K

So how will Google connect anonymous lists of “Some user with this IP address searched for X, Y and Z” with actual names of the searchers? Okay, they can’t. But Mr. Brandt sees another way for Spooks Incorporated to get the lowdown on you. Authorities can do a “sneak and peek” search of a Google user’s hard drive when he isn’t home, retrieve a Google cookie ID, and then get a keyword search history from you for this ID. Yup, they just break into your house, grab your cookies, and make a quick phone call to the friendly folks at Google... CIA GUY: “Hi, this is Schmulder. How’s the wife & kids? Hey, I’m inside this guy’s house in Duluth. We think maybe he’s up to something.” GOOGLE : “Hey, we’re here to help. Just gimme the ID from his cookie and we’ll see if he’s naughty or nice.”

CIA GUY: “Alrighty, let’s see... (tappity tappity click tap) here it is. 3-FOX-952-CHARLIE-7301-BAKER-49”

GOOGLE : Just a minute, here we go. Looks like he’s been searching for a Chicken Lorraine recipe. Might have bought tickets to see Springsteen. Not much else here, sorry. ” Sound likely to you? I’m not saying the things that trouble Mr. Brandt’s sleep are impossible. But they do seem rather improbable. There is one comment on his website that DOES trouble me, though. Brandt says: Google is so important to the web these days, that it probably ought to be a public utility. So putting Google under the control of the government will HELP to keep the spooks away from your search history??? Hmmmm. If you’d like to read more from Daniel Brandt and his concerns about Google, check out his Google Watch website: <http://www.google-watch.org> By Patrick Rankin and Douglas Crispin, From the Internet Tour Bus Subscribe, Signoff, Archives, Free Stuff and More at the Tourbus Website <http://www.TOURBUS.com>

**Next SAGATUG Meeting
Time and Place:**

7 to 10 p.m., Friday, May 9, 2003

**Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center, 405 South
Santa Anita Avenue, Arcadia.**

(In the park just south of Huntington Drive)

Meetings are on the second Friday of every month

Club Officers and Board Members:

President	John Calhoun, john@sagatug.org
Vice President	Royal Brown
Treasurer	Art Heywood, heywoodm@worldnet.att.net
INTERFACE Editor	Bob Allen, boballen99@earthlink.net
Past President	Art Molz, art1sam@juno.com
Members at Large	Roy T. Beck, roytbeck@ix.netcom.com
Webmaster, SAGATUG.org	John Calhoun, john@sagatug.org

Upcoming Events:

Manhattan Beach, last Saturday, monthly, TRW
Swap Meet, Admission Free.

Santa Ana, last Sunday of each odd month, ACP,
1310 E. Edinger, Admission Free.

Pomona Swap Meet 3rd Saturday, monthly, at Cal
Poly Pomona, 3801 W. Temple Ave., Admission Free

Pomona Fairplex, May 17 & 18 in bldgs. 6 & 7 at LA
Fair grounds, Gate 14, Admission \$7, plus parking.

Burbank, June 21 & 22, 2003(Sat. & Sun.), Hilton
Burbank Airport & Convention Center, 2500
Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA 91505. 10 a.m. to 5
p.m. \$5 admission

Costa Mesa, May 10 & 11, bldg. 12, 2002, Orange
County Fair and Exposition Center, 88 Fair Drive,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., \$5
admission

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Deadline for the Newsletter

The deadline for the INTERFACE is the last
Saturday of the month.

Republication:

Articles may be republished if credit is given to
the author and the San Gabriel Valley
Technology User's Group.

**Please visit the new SAGATUG website
at www.sagatug.org There you will find
photos of the meeting site, maps to the
meeting, articles from other sources and
an archive of the *SAGATUG Interface*.**

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