

The Five Computer Gremlins

Here it is, the most popular question asked in my shop. My computer is running much slower than it used to, what can I do to speed it up? In this situation there is not always just one answer to this question, and in fact it may even require a combination of solutions to take care of your problem. Below is a list of computer gremlins that can eat up your computer performance.

Ram. Most new computers do not come with enough ram. In fact, I can pretty well guarantee that if you have one of the so-called budget systems priced at around \$499 your system is suffering from a lack of memory. The solution is simple, add more ram. Windows XP performs well with at least 512 Megs of ram. However, extra ram in a Windows XP machine is never a waist.

MSCONFIG. I went over the use of this utility in a previous issue of the Powell Post. The general use of this utility is to turn off programs that are starting in the background. Many programs when installed on your new computer will also install a component that will run in the background. It is these components that eat up your system performance. By running MSCONFIG and turning off all unnecessary programs you can free up valuable system memory that can speed your system up.

Virus. When running the MSCONFIG utility be sure you do not uncheck any files associated with your virus protection. Virus activity can do practically anything to your computer. Your operating system may crash; your personnel data may be breached or even lost. Many times however, the reason a customer finds out that they have a virus is because their system is running very sluggish. Installing Norton Antivirus on your computer system before you are infected is the best way to protect your computer. Unfortunately, if you do not have an up-to-date version of virus software on your computer before you are infected, it will be nearly impossible for a user to remove the virus on their own.

Spyware. Possibility this year's largest computer problem. Spyware programs are automatically downloaded when you install any number of free programs. These programs can include Kazza, Precision Time, Weather Bug, or any of the Explorer add-on search bars. Once these Spyware programs are installed they will eat up your system memory and bring your system to a snail's crawl. Run Ad aware from www.lavasoftusa.com to help safely remove Spyware programs. Do not purchase Spyware removal software from a pop-up. Often times these utilities are sold by Spyware companies that will only remove their competitor's software.

Defrag. Short for Disk Defragmenter is a great little utility that can help speed up your hard disk's performance. This utility is found under the system tools folder. Computer users who install and uninstall programs on a regular basis will benefit the most from defragging their hard drive. This utility will consolidate fragmented files, which will allow your system to find them faster.

System performance is a valuable commodity. Don't let these gremlins ruin your computer experience. Stay vigilant and seek professional help when needed. Contact Thomas or Roger at Computer Depot if you have any questions or concerns; 947-0749 or e-mail at computerdepotonline@att.net.