



DIRECT
LINK

June 2006

Issue 7

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The Technology Advisor

Is your Computer Running *Slow?*

Try These 5 Solutions...

One of the biggest complaints we hear from computer users is that their PC runs as slow as continental drift. If your computer is a couple of years old and you don't have the money to invest in a new one, these 5 tricks will help speed up its performance.

1. Free Up Disk Space.

If you are running Windows 98 or ME, use the "Scan Disk" utility. If you are running Windows XP, the tool is called "Disk Cleanup". These utilities find files taking up space on your hard drive that you can safely delete to free up space and improve performance.

Some of the files it will search for are:

- ◆ Temporary Internet files
- ◆ Files in the recycle bin
- ◆ Microsoft Active X controls and Java applets that were downloaded
- ◆ Windows temporary files
- ◆ Optional Windows components that you don't use
- ◆ Programs you no longer use

In most cases, temporary Internet files are the biggest disk space bandits because your browser caches (stores) each page you visit for faster access the next time you go to that site. These files are not necessary and can safely be deleted.

How to use Disk Clean Up:

- ◆ Click Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Cleanup.
- ◆ Scroll through the dialog box that pops up and select the files you want to delete or compress.
- ◆ When prompted to confirm that you want to perform those actions chose "yes".

2. Defragment your drive.

When Windows stores a document, it starts to save the document in the first area of free space on your hard drive. When it runs out of room in this initial space, it fragments the file and stores the rest of it on the next space available, and so on, until the entire document is stored. When you try to open that file again, your computer has to find all of the fragments and piece them together before it will display the document. This takes longer and results in slower performance.

The Disk Defragmenter utility consolidates fragmented files and folders on your computer's hard disk so that each file is stored on a single, adjacent space on the hard drive. This enables your system to find and access to files and folders much faster. Disk Defragmenter also consolidates your hard drive's free space making it less likely that new files will be fragmented.

How to defragment your hard drive:

- ◆ Click Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Defragmenter.

Continued on back page...

Business ...Or Pleasure ...



If you're more of a Blackberry person, the 7250 is just what you need. It has a chip in case of 911 emergencies, wireless Technology, Allows full content without the need for a corporate Server (BES), Blackberry version 4.0, and Blackberry's "push" technology enables email and corporate data to be automatically delivered to the device without user intervention.

Sprint / Verizon – Wish you could get on the Internet with your Laptop anywhere or Anytime? Then how about an Air Card. Both Sprint and Verizon are running specials on Air Card's. Connect at Broadband Speed's on your laptop without having to worrying about finding a hot spot. Direct Link is now an Authorized Sprint and Verizon Dealer. Contact us about Air Cards or any Devices and service from Verizon or Sprint. Sprint is currently offering Free Air Cards.

Verizon - Are you on the go? Do you rely on your mobile to keep you in contact with your clients? The Treo@700w has everything you need



anywhere. Windows Mobile® and Broadband Access! In addition, the Treo has Wireless Sync, built-in wireless Technology, a 1.3 megapixel camera and Windows Media Player 10

6 Signs That Your Life Is Going Too Hi-Tech

1. You have 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
2. Your daughter is selling Girl Scout Cookies on her Web site.
3. The only jokes you "hear" come by e-mail.
4. You consider 2nd day air delivery painfully slow.
5. The reason you don't keep in touch with some of your family: They don't have e-mail addresses
6. You instant message your son in his room saying dinner is ready. He replied back to ask what you're having.

Microsoft Announces End Of Support For Windows 98 and Windows Me

On June 30, 2006, Microsoft will bring a close to Extended Support for Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, and Windows Me. That means no more public or technical support, including security updates.

Microsoft will continue to host a self-service website that will provide information on troubleshooting, configuration, and other how-to content, but you are pretty much on your own.

If you are currently using any of these operating systems, we urge you to upgrade your software immediately due to the security risks that will most certainly increase following the retirement of Microsoft's support.

If you aren't certain that your current system will be able to meet the minimum requirements for an upgrade, call our office and we'll be happy to help!

This is the time to ask yourself, "Why am I Dumping Money Into my Computer Network?"

If you ask most business owners why they invest in computers and technology, they will say things like "to increase employee productivity", or "to improve customer service" or even to lower operating costs, make information more accessible, and give them a competitive advantage.

But the question is, are the computers in your office actually contributing to your productivity, or do they act as a money-sucking stumbling block to your businesses success?

In this dog-eat-dog world, you cannot afford to have anything slowing you down or interfering with your day to day operations. Especially the tools you rely on in your computer network. If you want to learn how we can help you experience fewer interruptions, problems, and downtime, AND lower the overall costs associated with your computer network, then you'll want to know about our "Network Optimization Plan".

This program was designed specifically for small business owners that do not have a full time IT staff taking care of their computer network.

For a small, fixed monthly fee, we will monitor and maintain your computer network 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to make sure all systems are running at peak performance. We'll also make sure critical network maintenance such as security and virus updates, back ups, and system optimization happens when it should to avoid bigger, more expensive problems from happening.

My Free 60 Minute "Technology Tune Up" May (Finally) Make Those Computers Pay Off

To introduce this new program to all of our clients and prospects, we are offering a free, 60-minute "Technology Tune Up" to the first 5 businesses that contact us this month.

In less than 1 hour, I can come in and examine your computer network, talk to your employees, and provide a very revealing analysis of all the under utilized or overlooked capabilities being wasted in your current computer system. We'll also look for security loop holes, check your system back ups and virus protection, and look for other hidden problems lurking in the background, waiting to turn into bigger, more expensive disasters.

After doing this analysis, I can not only advise you on how to improve the speed. Reliability, and security of your computer network, but also on ways you can improve your overall office productivity.

Normally we charge \$250 for this type of service but we are giving it away FREE as a special promotion this month to demonstrate our Network Optimization Plan. To secure your spot, simply call our offices at 800-875-5675 Ext 150 or e-mail me at info@dlhelp.com and we'll schedule a convenient time for us to come out and conduct this tune up.

No Risk, No Obligation, No Hassles

I also want to point out that you will be under zero obligations to do or buy anything if you sign up for a FREE Technology Tune Up. This is just our way of introducing our new network maintenance program to you and we certainly don't expect everyone to sign up.

So what are you waiting for? Call us right now while you're thinking about it. Remember, we are only giving away 5 Tune Ups on a first come, first serve basis so call now while there are spots left!

Important Security Alert To Anyone Using Instant Messaging

According to the Radicati Group, 85% of businesses—both large and small— are now using instant messaging (IM) as a communication tool.

Unfortunately, hackers are rapidly developing ways to use IM to spread viruses and gain access to computers and networks. Instant-messaging security vendors FaceTime Communications and IMlogic Inc. have both reported an exceptionally high spike in attacks over recent months.

IM attacks work similar to e-mail viruses; the sender tries to get the user to click on a link that takes them to a website where they'll be infected with a virus, or it tries to get the user to download a file. Many of these attacks appear to be from legitimate sources or people on a "buddy" list.

Just recently, FaceTime discovered a threat on AOL's instant messenger system. They quickly contacted AOL but tens of thousands of computers had already been infected with a peer-to-peer file sharing program called BitTorrent. Hackers then used this program to upload movies to the victim's hard drive and use their computer as a vehicle for sharing it with others.

These attacks are also getting more complex. Savvy IM users will often reply to an IM and ask their buddy if the link or file sent was safe. However, hackers have now developed an intelligent bot that will actually automatically respond to the message confirming the file or link is safe. One bot actually had 6 different responses depending on the question that was asked by the user.

Just like viruses, worms, and other security threats, businesses need to put measures in place to protect themselves from these new threats. The first step is educating your employees about these threats through your employee's acceptable user policy. However, since there is always a chance someone will click on a link or download a file, education is not enough.

If you currently use IM, we urge you to contact our office about installing the proper software and security measures to make sure you don't fall victim to these growing attacks.

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3. Clean up the spyware on your machine.

Spyware is Internet jargon for hidden programs advertisers install on your PC without your permission to "spy" on you, gather information, and report this information about you and your online activities to some outside person.

Spyware works in the background sucking up system resources and considerably slowing down your PC's performance. But that's not the worst of it. In addition to slowing down your computer, it can be responsible for delivering a boatload of spam, altering your web browser, and serving up a bounty of pop up ads. In some of the more extreme cases, spyware can also steal your identify, passwords, e-mail address book, and even use your PC for illegal activities.

There are a number of programs available to keep your computer spyware free. These include Ad-aware, (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com>), Spybot-Search & Destroy (<http://www.safer-networking.org>), Microsoft Windows Defender (<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads>), and Spy Sweeper (<http://www.webroot.com>). All but Ad-aware can be used to block further infections, and they are all free except for Spy Sweeper, which is \$30.

Services We Offer:

- Phone system consulting, design, & implementation
- Cabling Infrastructure for Phone and Data Networks
- Computer / Telephony Integration
- Voice over the Internet (VOIP) Implementation
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Solutions
- Software Analysis & Recommendations
- Telephone System Repair, Troubleshooting, & Support
- Call Center Analysis and Product Recommendations
- Accounting Solutions
- Call Detail Reporting for Tracking Usage and Billing
- Call Detail Reporting for Tracking Advertising Campaigns
- On-Site Training for Individuals and Groups
- Contract & Time and Billing Services
- Qualified, On-Site Technicians
- Remote Network Monitoring - Save Money on Service Calls
- Remote Help Desk Support
- Local, Long Distance and Data Services Recommendations - Integrated Services.

5. Add memory.

This is a relatively cheap way to speed things up. If you have 128 megabytes of memory in a Windows 98 or ME machine, you can raise that to 256 MB or even 512 MB for a real boost.

You could also upgrade the motherboard, hard drive, chip, and video card, but then you are getting into more money. If your machine is that old, you would be better off purchasing a new computer. But before you do that, try these 5 tips and see if that won't get you a little more life out of your computer.

Get a Free Dinner for Two

Thanks to loyal customers like you, Direct Link is growing faster than ever! We certainly couldn't have done it without the help of our customers referring their friends and colleagues. That's why we'd like to thank you for your referrals with a delicious dinner for two at Outback Steak House restaurant.

All you have to do is refer a business owner or IT Manager to Direct Link who is looking for any of the services we offer. As a token of our appreciation, we'll send you a gift certificate to have a great dinner for two on us. Just consider this our way of saying "Thanks!"

To send us a referral, simply call John or send him an e-mail to info@dlhelp.com. Or you can tell your friend to mention your name when they call.