

Preventative Maintenance: Windows and Disk Storage Clean Up (Part 4)

by Ross Hendry

The Windows operating system has to be updated regularly as constant use of your system means that temporary files are created. These day-to-day features of Windows mean that it does need a good clean out. Although it does provide some of the tools to do this itself, Windows has one of the most popular utility programs to do this - 'CCleaner' - a free and very effective tool to maintain the Windows registry and help you keep your hard disk free of temporary files. It also includes other tools to keep your system running in tip-top condition.

CCleaner has been around since 2003 and was created by Piriform, originally called "crap" cleaner and designed to remove the rubbish from windows. It was recently voted the best free windows cleaning tool and optimizing tool. The current version is version 5 and has been updated to work well with windows 8.1, and has changed its look to the new Microsoft "metro" style to match. One of the best features are that it is safe, fast and reliable.



Piriform

The Disk Cleanup utility is the first module I run, this removes temporary files that accumulate as you browse the internet. They are created to speed up the browsing process and are seldom removed. (These are often the cause of slow internet response and need to be kept to a minimum). If you have and use more than one browser it cleans them all, well. It also removes unused files from your system and frees up valuable hard disk space including your recycle bin and many of the temporary files that are created as Windows and other programs operate.

The Registry Cleaner.

Windows has a central file/program that maintains the rules that your particular version works with. Clearly as it is updated the entries change, but sadly the Windows updates do not always work, or when an amendment is made, they do not always clean out the former entries. As Windows looks at the registry for instructions, this unnecessary data slows down the process. Ccleaner's Registry tool will check the registry for errors and other incorrect entries (called Issues) and list them. Before it fixes them it offers to back-up the registry and I strongly recommend that you do, by simply accepting the backup offered. Once the back-up is complete it will clean the registry.

Tools.

The tools section brings together many tools to maintain your system, some of which are included with Windows such as the program uninstaller. I use the "Startup" to check the programs Windows runs on its start-up. This can help when your PC seems slow to boot-up. The tool makes it easy for you to enable, disable and delete entries. I tend to disable suspect programs and restart the PC to test the system and run it for a few days, if all is OK, I go back and delete the disabled program. My recommendation is that you read and understand what the tools do before using them. You can get great advice here www.piriform.com/support/ccleaner#204043854.



If you want a copy please be sure to download it from either the Piriform website www.piriform.com or a known reputable distributor such as Cnet. Do not be tempted to get it from any old site as you may get other not-so-welcome additional programs such as viruses or other malware! You may safely download it from :-

- www.download.cnet.com/CCleaner
- www.piriform.com/ccleaner/download

I advise my customers to run Ccleaner once per month and to use the Disk Cleaner utility and Registry Cleaner Tools. If you find after a couple of months that it is not removing much from either section then reduce the run frequency to once every two months or longer. I also suggest that if your PC seems slow then it is well worth running these two options to try to improve the speed.

With the announcement of Windows 10 due in May I am currently evaluating a copy and will report on it in the June issue of 'The DSM'. I am hearing rumours that it will be offered to all users of Windows 7, 8, and 8.1 free of charge. The latest Windows updates have just updated Windows upgrade features, I guess in readiness for upgrading to Windows 10.

Ross Hendry is the proprietor of Interface Consulting and Engineering, who has over 42 years experience in Communications, Computer Technology and Direct Marketing. (See advert below).

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