

KEEPING COMPUTERS RUNNING SMOOTHLY

The last 5 or so years have seen a lot of improvements in computers but raw operating speed has not significantly improved during that time. 5 Years ago the fastest processor was about 3 gigahertz and that is pretty much the upper limit of processing speed for a processor today as well. Intel and AMD were able to get around this limitation by producing multi-core processors. In effect, if a computer task could be split into two smaller jobs then the separate cores could perform the tasks simultaneously. Similarly, Windows 7 was designed to more effectively use the multiple cores to do its job as well. Even though Windows 7 is more complicated and can do more than Windows XP, it is reasonably quick.

Still, there are many tasks that really aren't all that much faster on a new computer when compared to a 5 year old one. The good news here is that computers do not need to be upgraded nearly as often as most people think unless you are using very highly complex programs like Computer Aided Design.

Computers that have been in service for a number of years do tend to slow down somewhat for a number of reasons. The first reason is that Windows itself has grown in size and complexity. Windows XP came out in 2001 and at that time it was quite fast running on a Pentium IV computer with 128-256mb of Memory. Those computers often ran with a fairly small and efficient Anti-Virus if they had one at all. As Windows and Anti-Virus programs got bigger and more complex the older computers often struggled to keep up.

While some slow down was to be expected, it was often substantial due the relatively low memory available on the older computers. For this reason the best investment to keep them running efficiently is to upgrade the available memory to at least 1gb and if possible to 2gb for the maximum boost in performance.

REGULAR COMPUTER MAINTENANCE

While a lack of memory is the primary reason many older computers slow down there are several other reasons that computer fail to perform up to their full capacity. These can include excessive software installation such as toolbars and instant messengers. It can even include programs that were installed and subsequently uninstalled as some programs have a tendency to leave bits and pieces behind even after they have been removed.

When you add to this an accumulation of temporary files, old web pages and assorted other internet files, computers can fill up with many megabytes, even gigabytes of junk files over time. Assorted malware and viruses can add to the problems and unwanted MS-Office and Internet Browsing Add-Ons can literally cripple certain of your computer's abilities.

We recommend the following regimen to speed up your older computers:

- 1) Upgrade your memory to 2gb if possible
- 2) Go thru the Control Panel and uninstall any older unnecessary programs
- 3) Run Virus and Malware Scans at least once a month to clean out any bugs
- 4) Run a C: Drive Temporary File Clean Up and Defragmentation once a month as well to tidy up and organize your files
- 5) Run a Registry Cleanup utility to fully remove old program references
- 6) Review start-up programs to see if there is anything you can regularly do without

Advanced System Care can take care of steps 4 thru 6 and is an excellent weekly and monthly tune-up program that we recommend to do routine maintenance to your computer.