

Here are some things to help speed up (or at least clean out) your computer. It's a good idea to do these items one or two times per month:

Click on start - click on search. Type

*.tmp

in the search box. Delete all the tmp files that are found. Some you may not be able to delete as they are in use by the system, which is normal.

Next, clean out Internet Explorer. With Internet Explorer open, click on Tools, click on Internet Options. Click on the Delete Files button. This may take a few minutes so be patient. Next, click on the settings and change the amount of disk space set aside for temporary internet files to 10 MB.

Change the space for the trash can: Right-click on the Recover Bin (or Trash Can or Recycle Bin, whatever it might be called) and choose properties. Change the amount reserved to 1 or 2% of the drive (10 - 20 megabytes).

Next defragment the drive. This will take some time so do it when you can leave the PC sit for about 30 to 60 minutes. Double-click on My Computer. Right-click on the hard drive you want to defragment, choose properties. Click on the tools tab. Click on defragment. Highlight the drive and click on Defragment now. (Note, Diskeeper Lite, the freeware included on this CD works better than the defragmenter built into Windows, especially Windows 95, 98, and ME, and NT).

By the way, what is disk fragmentation? By default, when your computer writes to the hard drive, it uses whatever space it can find. For example, if you have a 30 KB file, if there is 5 KB of free space in one area, then 15 KB free in another, and 10 in another, the file will be split into 3 parts. The effect is that when you go to read that file, it gets 'read' from 3 disk locations, slowing the process. What defragmenting your hard drive does is make all the files contiguous (all in one continuous file) speeding up this process.

Uninstalling programs: Use the Uninstaller Program that came with the program you want to remove, or use the Add/Remove Programs application found inside Control Panel.

If you are not sure about something, do some research about it first. Sometimes it's better to purchase a shareware program that will accomplish the task you want instead of trying to do it yourself.

Backup. The most likely reason you wouldn't be able to recover your data is from a hardware failure, such as a hard drive crash. Even if your operating system becomes unstable, chances are the hard drive could be placed in another system and the data copied off. You can now buy inexpensive CD Burners,

external hard drives, even USB drives that you can backup your data to. Backup what you can't recover (such as documents, program data, e-mail, etc.) and back it up as often as you feel would make it more time consuming to reenter in all the lost data, which might mean you couldn't recover if it was lost). There are also online backup alternatives available as well.