

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month's question is: "Besides the security applications that should be installed on computers, are there any other utilities that need to be installed?"

There are a few good utilities that should be considered for all computers. First of all, you should know that proper computer maintenance is still a manual process. A very important maintenance process is defragging the computer's hard drive(s). This is even more important with Windows XP and the large hard drives that are available today. It is an important process for computers that are used for engineering or CAD/CAM applications as these tend to generate many files, some temporarily, which will slow down computer performance as they are spread across the hard drive. There are two ways to go here for a disk defragmenter. One is to use a standalone application such as Diskeeper. The other way is to use a defragmenter that is part of a utility suite such as Norton's SystemWorks. Both of these applications are very good. Norton's SystemWorks adds some other utilities that help keep a computer healthy. SystemWorks includes Norton Anti-Virus, Checkit Diagnostics, and System Optimizer.

Other things to consider are to keep your Internet Temporary files at a minimum and scanning your hard drive for temporary files that can be deleted. Some of these temporary files are installation folders and files that are left on the hard drive after an application has been installed. Some of these are also temporary files that applications create when you launch them that they don't delete when you close the application. Windows XP have a System Tool called Disk Cleanup that can be used to clean up some of this but a number of these files need to be deleted manually. Doing these hard drive cleanups is a service that a good computer specialist, like myself, can provide.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.