

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 article deals with the following question: Why do computers come with so many extra/useless programs? And how do I get rid of them?

These are rather important questions and something I deal with when I setup new computers for clients. All of these extra/useless programs have been recently called Crapware. Crapware has been defined as software you don't want on your computer. Now everyone has their own opinion on what is or isn't crapware, and I consult with my clients on this during the setup on a computer. Companies are trying to fight each other for every inch of your screen real-estate, monetize every search and every click, and capture every glance you make which turns your computer in to a messy battleground. Most of this crapware can be removed by uninstalling it, but some cannot. I have found the following two programs to be good tools for removing crapware: Autoruns and CCleaner.

Autoruns is a program like msconfig that shows you what processes/programs are going to run when the computer boots up. While it is like msconfig the information it gives you is more detailed and helps you determine what needs to run at boot up and what doesn't. I also use this program when trying to remove spyware, malware, and adware from infected computers.

CCleaner is a utility that helps you remove unused files from the computer. This allows the computer to run faster and it frees up disk space.

While both of these programs can help you get rid of crapware, you should still use them with caution. You should backup the registry and set a restore point before using them as you do have the possibility of causing the computer to not be bootable.

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.