



WRESTLING WITH COMPUTERS: How to Maintain Your PC so it Keeps on Keeping on.

By W. Wrestling Brewster

So you have this awesome top of the line computer. That's great. You're getting lots of work done, emailing your friends, surfing the net, and all the other reasons you bought it.

Then ... suddenly out of nowhere this piece of machinery starts slowing down. Then it starts to freeze up. Then one day it does the unthinkable – it crashes!

How did this happen? One answer could be the “junk” your computer has collected

Your computer collects junk, nasty viruses, sneaky spyware and unnecessary files. It happens every time you go out onto the Internet or work on a document. You need to make sure your computer stops doing that.

First, you need to stop a virus cold. Viruses usually infect a computer through email. You often simply click on a virus unknowingly. This unleashes the virus and can crash your computer.

You'll want to have a reliable anti-virus software program that is updated and running. When I'm on a service call, I often find computers either have no anti-virus software at all or the anti-virus software is out of date.

Anti-virus software is only as good as its last update. With over 600 new viruses every month, it is important that your protection is as current as possible.

Spyware is a different animal. The user doesn't have to do anything. When you go online, Spyware simply installs on your computer and hides in the background. Its' main purpose is to gather information on you and report back to whomever sent it.

Spyware can really slow down your computer as it is always on and running in the background. It's why you need a robust, anti-spyware software, which like antivirus software, needs to be constantly updated.

I cannot stress enough how important updates are when dealing with anti-spyware and anti-virus software.

After you install or update your anti-virus and anti-spyware software, two more computer housecleaning chores should have your computers running faster.

The first chore is to make sure that you are not running programs you do not want. Often software “piggybacks” on other programs. For example, when you install a program, other programs such as unwanted toolbars are “options” that you may not notice. These unnoticed programs install automatically with your wanted program.

To get rid of these unwanted programs that are eating up valuable space on your hard drive, simply go to the control panel and click on Add/Remove Programs. You will see all the installed programs. Click on the programs you wish to remove and click remove.

You need to be careful here. If you do not know which programs should be installed to run your computer, you should consult a computer consultant before removing anything. Removing a necessary program could instantly crash your computer.

Next you need to remove your temporary files. Every time you create a Word document, Excel spreadsheet, go to a website or download something, your computer creates a Temporary file. Over time these Temporary files accumulate and take up space on your hard drive. In some cases, this might cause your PC to become unstable.

These Temporary files exist in two places. There are Temporary files from documents you've created and Temporary internet folders.

You can get rid of both by using Disk Cleanup

1. Open My Computer
2. Right click the C drive
3. Click on Properties
4. Click on Disk Cleanup. You'll see a list of Temporary files on the computer. Delete the Temporary Internet and Temp files

These four simple steps can help maintain your computer: 1) Make sure you have an updated anti-virus software program installed on your computer. 2) Make sure you have updated anti-spyware software program installed. 3) Get rid of unwanted programs that may be running on your computer. 4) Delete your temporary files.

If you perform them properly, your computer will be humming along and safe from virus attacks. If your system continues to be unstable, there may be larger problems and a professional should be contacted.

If you have any questions or need computer help, or would like to know the anti-virus or anti-spyware software I recommend, please contact me at Brewster PC Solutions. My number is 508-746-6423, or email me at wbrewster@brewsterpcsolutions.com



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