

MAINTAINING YOUR COMPUTER

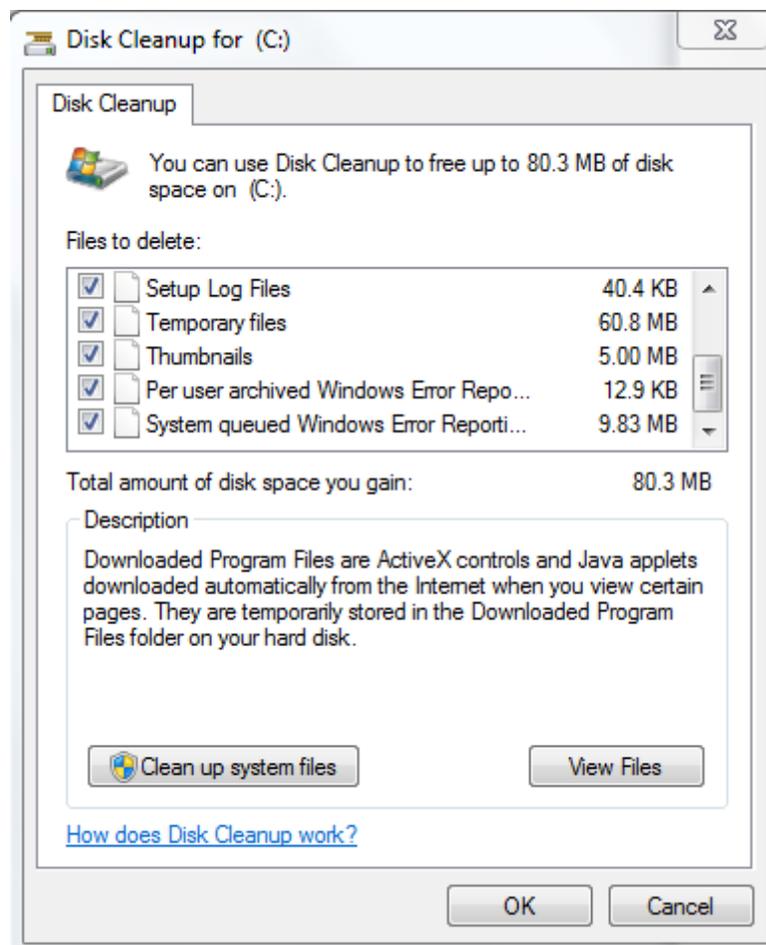
WINDOWS 7

The first (and probably the most important) thing that you need to do is install a good firewall and virus protection, keep them up-to-date and scan your computer on a regular basis. There are many good firewalls and virus protections available, some you must purchase, and others are free. The choice is yours, and this article will not attempt to advise you on which virus protection to use.

Once you have installed a good firewall and virus protection and scheduled it to run on a regular basis, there are other things to do to keep your computer running properly. They are:

DISK CLEANUP

Windows is a pack rat. Lots of things get put on your computer and do nothing other than take up hard drive space. On a regular basis (about once each week) you should clean your disk by doing the



following: Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, then find and click on "Disk Cleanup". A box will appear showing the drive to be cleaned. In all likelihood it will be the "C" drive. Click O.K. Another box will open that automatically calculates how much space you will be able to free on the hard drive. This will take a few minutes. When completed, a box will open showing a list of files that can be cleaned, and how much space you can save on the drive. Each file that has a check mark will be cleaned during the cleanup process. You can select only those files that you want to clean, or you can select them all. If you want to learn more about a

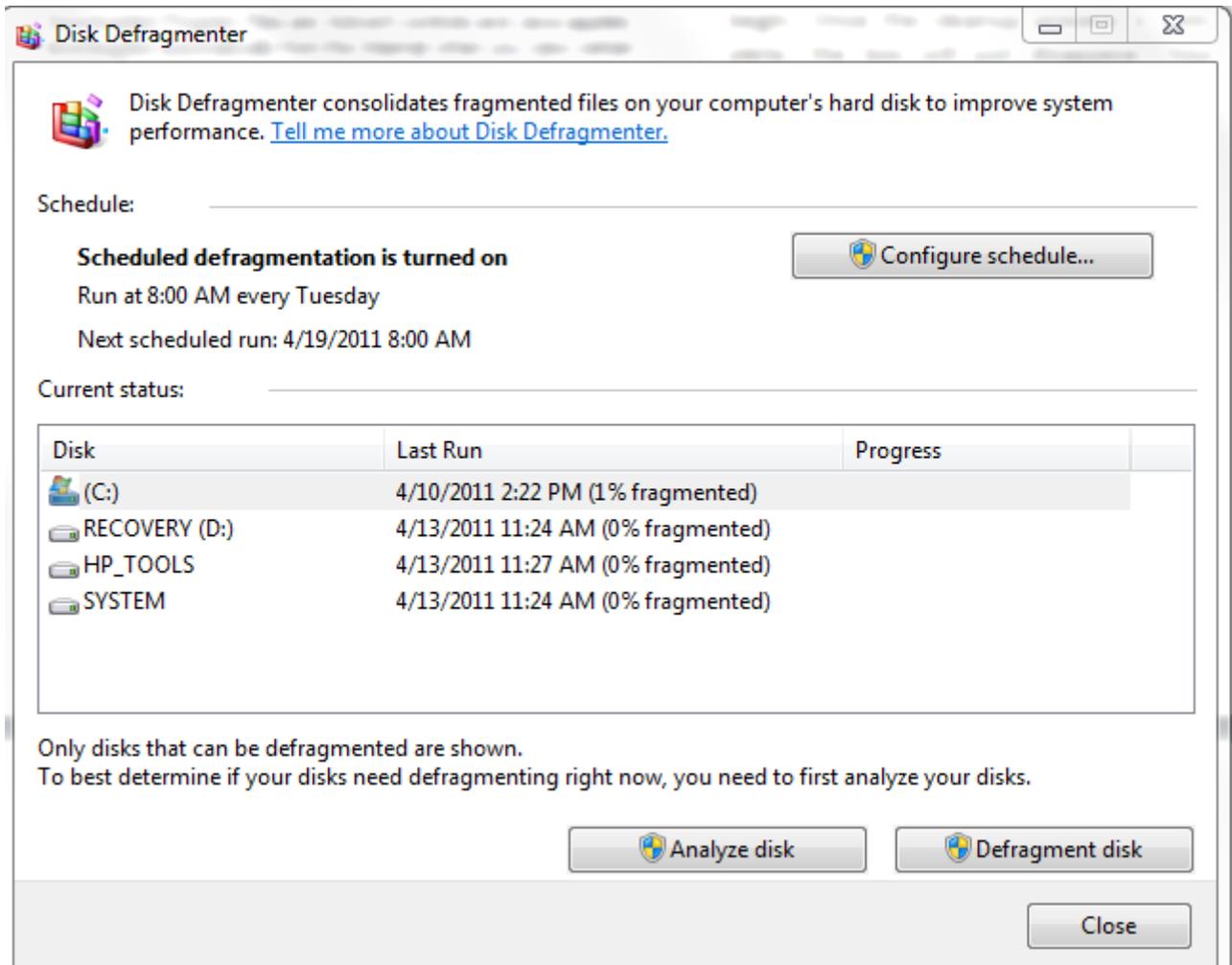
particular file, put your cursor over the file and look down at the description.

When in doubt, check all of the files and click O.K. Another box opens. It will ask you if you want to delete files. Click "Yes" and the cleanup process will begin. Once the cleanup process is complete, the box will just disappear. Your hard drive is now clean. **DEFRAGMENT THE HARD DRIVE**

After completing the disk cleanup, it is a good idea to "Defrag" your hard drive. When Windows puts a file on the drive, it looks for the first empty space on the drive and puts it there. If the space is too small it puts the remaining piece of the file in the next available space. This becomes a fragmented file. The next time that file is opened, Windows must look around for all the missing pieces. The drive needs to be defragmented.

Before we begin there are a few cautions that you must be aware of. First, always check weather conditions. If there is any possibility of a storm coming, don't defrag. The next thing to be aware of is that you should never, ever interrupt the defrag process. If you do, there is a chance that you will lose all of the data on your hard drive.

Weather O.K.? Let's start to defrag the computer. The first steps are the same as the first steps for Disk Cleanup. Go to Start, All Files, Accessories, System Tools. Click on Defragment, and this is the box you will see:



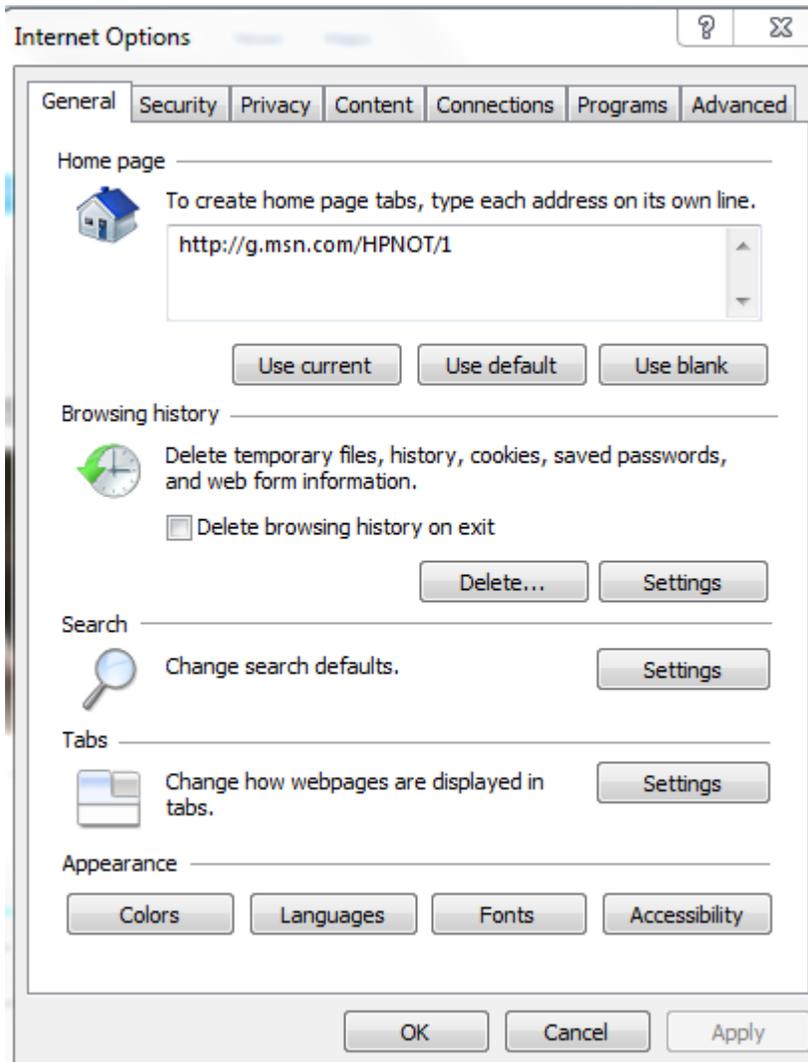
All of the drives that can be defragmented are shown. Highlight one of the drives and click on "Analyze Disk. This process will tell you what the condition of that disk is. If the percentage is low you do not need to do anything. If it is reasonably or very high, click on "Defragment Disk". Once the process begins, (and I repeat) do not stop it. Let it complete the process. This may take some time, so be patient.

As you can see at near the top of the box, you can schedule the computer to defrag automatically at a given time. This step is entirely optional.

CLEANING UP THE INTERNET

This is something you should do about once every month. At this point, it is a good idea to understand "Browsing History". Each time we type in an address on the address bar at the top of the page, Windows remembers that address. The next time you start typing in that address Windows will automatically show it so that you can

just click on it and save the typing. In fact, there is a pull down menu that you can use and just click on the address you want.



While this is a good thing, the list eventually gets too long and needs to be cleaned.

The first thing to do is to open Internet Explorer. Next, click on “Tools”. If you can’t find “Tools” just press ALT and x at the same time and “Tools” will open. Click “Internet Options” and the box to your left will appear. If you look at Browsing History, you will see a place to delete your browsing history. As you can see, there is also a place to check that will prevent your computer from creating history. That choice is yours. Now, let’s go ahead and click on Delete. Another box opens that gives you several choices of what you want to delete. Always check Temporary Internet Files and History. If you delete cookies you will lose any passwords you have instructed your

computer to save for you so that you do not have to type them in again. Cookies are tiny files that your computer uses to remember you, where you have been, what your passwords are etc. While these are very useful, some of them are used to track your activities and they are then used to let spammers know what your interests are. It is a good idea to clean your cookies from time to time, but be sure you know what your login names and passwords are as you will have to re-enter them. Once you have chosen what to delete, just hit the Delete button at the bottom and everything will be done.