

Reasons Why Your Computer Runs Slow

There are motives for your reduced speed and any one of them could result in a crash and an up close and personal viewing of the BSOD, (Blue Screen of Death). A slowdown occurs over a period of time. Essentially, if you are on dial-up that is slow to begin with and if you have less than 512MB of RAM, that too can be a major cause. Here are 10 others:

1. **Start up overload.** As you add additional programs, they claim start-up status quickly and quietly. The more programs you have that are loading at start-up, the slower the start-up. Go to start, all programs, scroll to Startup and see how many programs are lurking there. The decision is yours. Remove the programs you do not want, or are not necessary, to be starting at boot-up. Back up, or set a system restore point before you begin - don't forget, "I told you so!" No need to panic! Just follow along! Click Start, move to All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and click System Restore, set your criteria. Next click on: Start, Run, type "msconfig" no quotes, OK this window. At the top of the page, click on Startup. Don't be surprised at what you see if you have never been here before. Use your logical reasoning to select those that you do not need at start-up. Uncheck to disable them. This will not remove this program from your machine; it will just stop it from starting at boot-up. This can take some time, especially if you are not sure of what you do, or do not, need. **DO NOT REMOVE:** The Firewall, Anti-virus or anti-spyware programs. Remember, if you do make a mistake, you have your backup or restore available. Be safe, remove them one at a time; you can always put it back. OK the window, and restart the computer for the changes to take effect.

2. **Spyware:** Malicious programs that stealthily embed themselves into your software. They are installed in your software, without your knowledge, in many ways. Through e-mail especially, the ones that are multi-forwarded. You know who sent it to you, but what about all of those other names? Who are they? Through free scans or free downloads. Through Web sites that you visit that specialize in this practice, and music downloads.

These must be removed from your computer before they cause damage to your operating system and applications and bring your system to a halt. Using your browser, go to www.freeware.com. There you will find many anti-spyware programs. Ad-Aware SE, Spybot Search and Destroy, and Spyware Terminator are three good ones.

Run them frequently and keep them updated.

3. **The Registry.** If your registry is corrupted or bloated, there could be a BSOD in your future. The Windows registry is the master control center for your operating system and the applications it runs. Corruption or overload can cause: performance problems, including applications at start-up, slow windows start-up, extremely slow shut-downs and a general disruption of system processing. Unless you are absolutely sure of what you are doing, **DON'T** manually attempt any changes to the registry. I go there frequently but not without first backing up and/or setting a restore point. Once again, www.freeware.com. No quotes can lead you to several good registry cleaners and optimizers. I have a couple of "freebies," but in this case, I recommend Registry Mechanic and use it after each session. One of the free ones is Ccleaner. It is safe since it has a back-up feature as does Eusing Registry Cleaner.

4. **Badly Fragmented Hard Drive.** Over time, your computer's files can be scattered over your hard drive; this is called fragmentation and a cause for file searches to be slower than usual. Use the built-in tool of Windows to solve this condition and be patient as it runs. Single click "My Computer," right click "C" drive, click properties, click tools. Highlight your system drive,(usually C) then click defragment. While you are there, on the General tab, you have the option to Clean the Hard Drive. Click disk cleanup select all the items in the window. Follow the instructions and OK your way out. This, along with the defrag, will put your hard drive back in proper working order. While you are there, uncheck the box for "indexing the files" this is another source of slow-up.

5. **Poor Security Software.** A large number of security programs, and suites, are bloated with software and demand a great deal of system resource and memory. The constant surveillance of your system for malicious ITD's can cause your system to get sluggish. Yes, system security is essential, but some of the programs have gone overboard with coding and, some of the lesser known, can be a source of system infestation. These programs we have previously recommended do not fit in this category. Sunbelt-Software's CounterSpy has been my favorite standby. It is not free, but it is user-favorable with an easily understood interface and more features than others I have tested.

6. **Remnants of Uninstalled Programs.** There is a program that I recommend, and use, for complete un-installation: Innovative Uninstaller Pro. The writer of this

software is consumer-oriented and offers a free test period. In checking in the registry, I have found it does remove the coding and software of an uninstalled program you merely drop the icon of the one you want uninstalled on the uninstaller icon. Cool what? A good start on your way to a clean-up is through RegCure that cleans up previously left behind debris.

7. The Page File. The Windows Page File is a temporary source of memory used by the system in processing functions. It is actually a buffer that is used for "wiggling room." If your page file is too small, your operating system will not have enough room to move and the result will be poor performance and error messages.

If this is your experience, you can increase the size of the page file. Right click on My Computer and go to "Properties," click "Advanced Tab," click "Settings" in the "Performance" section, click the "Advanced" button, click "Change" under "Virtual Memory" Microsoft recommends that the paging file be 1 ½ times greater than the amount of installed RAM. However, Windows can automatically adjust this for you. Select "System Managed Size" then click the Set button. OK your way out.

8. Too Many Windows and Temporary Files. Your hard drive could be crammed with many useless files left over from re-installs, and just general use. To clear these up, you can first refer back to item #4 and clean your hard drive or click on "Start" then "Run" then enter "cleanmgr.exe" without quotes. Select the "C" drive and click ok. The hard drive clean utility will pop-up and do its thing.

9. Viruses or any ITD. Is this the "tail-wagging-the-dog?" Could be! But by this time, you should be fully protected with a bi-directional Firewall, (the Windows Firewall is only One Way), a good reliable and up-to-date anti-virus program. Because no individual spyware program can get all of the ITD's, two is better, three recommended. AVG is a dependable anti-virus with a free capability, but then, go to www.download.com with no quotes, and do a little shopping.

10 Hardware Problems. There are assortments of things that can happen to your hardware: wear and tear, over heating and dust. If you do not know how to clean the inside of your machine, put "Dust Removal" in the subject line of your e-mail to me. If you do experience a failure, crash or a shut down it can be traced to a hardware problem.



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