

Does My Computer Need Regular Maintenance?

What I am about to tell you is rather controversial.

Most people will tell you that like a car, your computer also needs regular tune-ups and maintenance.

I however feel that this is not entirely accurate. This issue here is how we define the word “maintenance”. I have found that what usually passes for a tune-up (as defined by Internet searches) is not only a waste of time but potentially dangerous to your PC. Also I have found that most of the time these “tips” recommend that you install a cleaning tool or program, then some time later you find that these programs want you upgrade to the “Pro” version for a fee. Sometimes these tools act very much like viruses and make your computer run slower than before.

So basically I recommend that you follow the old saying “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it”

However there are some basic issues that everyone should be aware of

1. Have the proper protection on your computer. This includes an antivirus program, a program to detect and remove spyware.
2. Disable unnecessary startup programs. Many programs start when your computer starts and having too many can slow down your computer and cause errors. People often download and install programs and don’t look closely at the startup options.
3. Keep your major programs updated - Windows, Microsoft Office, Java, web browsers (ie: Internet Explorer or Firefox), Adobe Acrobat, and email programs. Most software has options for automatic updates, but may require you clicking on an icon or prompt to start the update.
4. Your computer should be opened up and have the dust blown out every 6 months, (more frequently if you are a smoker, or have a wood stove). Dust acts as a blanket, trapping heat, which can damage your computer and cause it to freeze up and shut down.
5. Stay away from websites that offer things that are too good to be true or have XXX content or have free downloads and games. These can infect your computer with a virus or spyware the instant you visit this site. So the best way to avoid problems is to stay away from these sites.
6. Have an external drive for instant backup. It doesn’t just have to be an external hard drive, it could also be a USB flash drive, a re-writeable DVD disc, a spare hard drive installed in your computer, or even another computer altogether. Ask yourself, what would I be missing if someone came in tomorrow and stole my computer? This may never happen, but if you’re prepared for total loss, then you have nothing to worry about.
7. Never run Registry tools. There are so many programs that claim to scan, clean, speedup, optimize your computer’s registry that it seems to be not only a good idea, but also necessary. The truth is that I’ve often been called out to repair computers after this so-called optimizing has been done. Sometimes the computer is in such bad shape that it needs to be re-formatted. There is no easy fix, or magic cure for a slow computer. Don’t be tempted by all the advertising and all the talk from so called “geeks”.

If it ain’t broke don’t fix it – and if it is, then call me!

