

One for the newsletter

By Tom Burke

Now that your computer is getting older does it seem to take longer and longer to boot. Well, this isn't your imagination. If you actually could compare the amount of time it took to boot your PC when it was new compared to the amount of time it takes to boot now, you would see that there really is an increase in the boot time. As time goes by and you add additional software and devices, these additional items add their own commands to the start-up so they are constantly running in the background. The result is an increase in boot time for each item that finds its way into the start-up sequence and slower performance because of the resources being used by items running in the background that are not needed until you actually run their associated program. Many of these items do not need to be loaded when the PC boots. If they are not loaded when you want to run the associated application, that application will load all the required software when you actually run the application.

To improve your PC's performance, get rid of the clutter. First, uninstall any programs that you do not use. Don't just delete it; you want to remove it by running the Windows "Add or Remove Programs" (located in the Control Panel), find the obsolete program in the list, highlight it and click on remove. While you have the "Add or Remove" list in front of you, take a moment to check for all other applications installed on your PC that you are no longer using and remove them. Occasionally you may not see the application you are looking for in the list, in that case check if there is an Uninstall program in the folder where the targeted application resides and run that removal program.

It is also a good idea to check a brand new system for "trialware". Trialware is sample application software that is usually installed on most new Brand Name PCs. Most of these trial programs are a "crippled" version of the full application. They are limited either by not having full functionality or by having a counter/timer embedded that force the application to shut down after a certain period of time or a specific number of uses. After that, you must pay for it if you want to use it. Remember, if it loads, it is using memory. So, if you aren't using it, lose it.

The bottom line is this. Most programs set themselves up to load "something" from the application each time you turn your system on. This is fine if it is something that you always use, such as your anti-virus. Just be aware that applications that you don't use or only use occasionally are loaded if they are in the start-up sequence and if it is installed on your PC, it is probably in the start-up sequence.

Ridding yourself of these unused programs will usually give your PC more memory to access for other uses. Shedding the "extra pounds" will also decrease the time your PC needs to boot. There are other things that can be done to help boost your PC's performance, such as:

- Cleaning your registry (back-up the registry first and then be careful with this because a mistake can disable your PC). There are plenty of utilities available for "cleaning" your registry but they all should be used with care. AND BACK-IT-UP FIRST!
- Edit your "MS-Config" to stop certain files from automatically loading without uninstalling the actual application. You can check each item on the list to see if it is needed, not needed, up to the user, or should be removed by going to <http://www.sysinfo.org/startuplist.php>

Doing some simple maintenance as outlined should restore some of the lost performance to your PC.