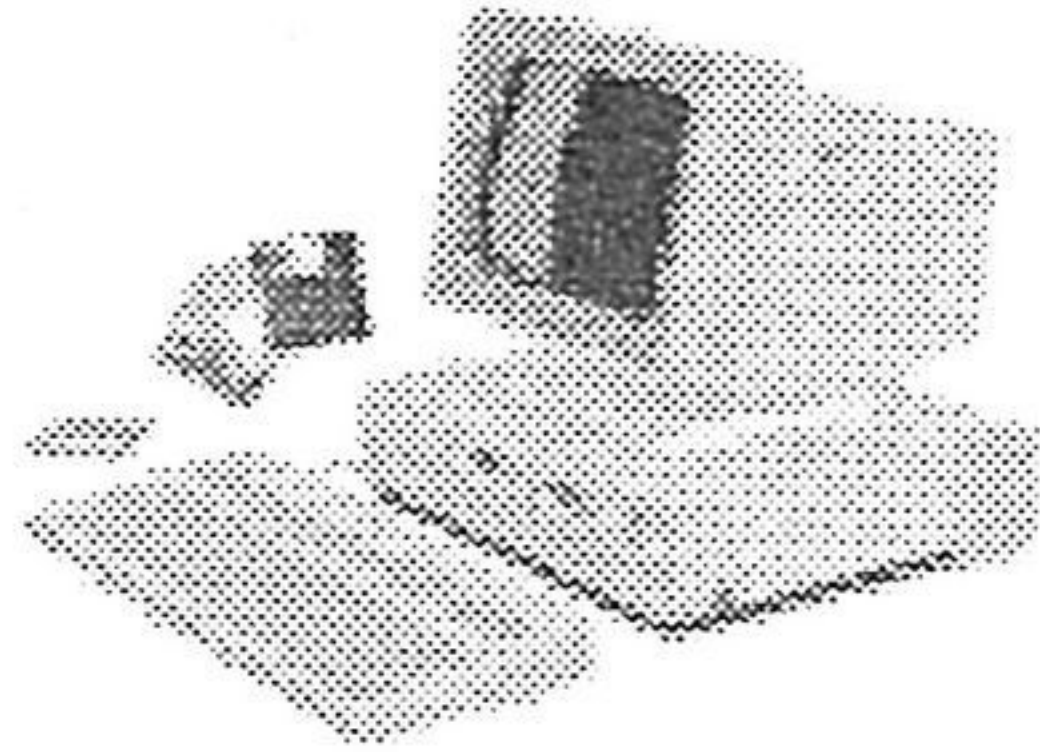


Computer Tips



In the spring it is always great to think of spring cleaning. It is the same in the world of computers. Here are some tips to clean up your machine and keep it running at optimum speed.

Don't you just hate it when you've installed a program that insists on starting itself when you boot the computer? You know the drill. You install something and it places an icon in your system tray. Now, all those little icons you see in your system tray represent programs that are RUNNING. If a bunch of stuff loads when you start your computer, you may be maxing out your system before you launch your first regular program. So, if you find your computer getting progressively slower as you add more software, it could be that these system tray icons are, at least partially, at fault. In addition, program running in your system tray can cause any (or all) of the following problems:

- Sluggish system speed
- Frequent lockups / illegal operations
- Software install problems
- Difficulty in running some programs

The more of these programs you have running, the more likely it is that you're going to see one or more of the problems mentioned above. Granted, System Tray programs are not the only cause for the conditions mentioned above, but they are the first place to look.

So, how do you keep all these unwanted programs at bay?

1. Click the **Start button** and select **Run...**
2. Next, type in:
msconfig
Then hit **OK**.
3. The System Configuration Utility should run (please note that not all computers have it installed -see note below).
4. Click the **Startup tab**.
5. You'll see a listing of all the stuff that starts itself when your computer does. Just uncheck the programs you don't

want to load and leave the rest alone. Note - If you don't have msconfig on your system (win 95 / 2000 doesn't) then check out Startup Control Panel at:

<http://www.mlin.net/StartupCPL.shtml>

It does basically the same thing.

Once you get msconfig or the program above running, you'll probably see more stuff than you bargained for. I would advise exercising caution while unchecking, especially if you're not sure about what program(s) you're suppressing. Stuff like "Scan Registry" and "System tray" are probably best left alone. If you see stuff that you recognize as being non-essential software, than uncheck it. This is one of those do at your own risk things - for sure. If you're not sure which program is being referred to, look at the path. Sometimes the folder just before the ".exe" file can give you a clue as to what program you're dealing with.

For example, if I see something like:

"C:\program files\real\realplayer.exe"

I can guess the program in question is the ever annoying Real Player.

In general, don't disable lines that starts like this:

"C:\Windows\"

Or lines like this:

SysTray.exe

These are more likely to be important system files and programs. You may find that your computer won't run without them and you'll have to go into Safe mode to get things working again.

Finally, note that unchecking this stuff doesn't remove it. The idea behind having these programs start when the computer does is to give you fast, easy access to them. However, having too many of these programs running at the same time can hit you hard in the system resources de-

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