

## How To Spring Clean Your PC

Are you having trouble seeing through the smudges and smears on your computer monitor? Do your keys stick because of the crumbs from months of eat-at-your-desk lunches? Then it's time to clean your computer!

### MOTHER'S DAY TRIVIA

#### DID YOU KNOW...

Julia Ward Howe wrote the Battle Hymn of the Republic and was a staunch fighter for women's rights. She staged an unusual protest for peace in Boston, by celebrating a special day for mothers. Julia wanted to call attention to the need for peace by pointing out mothers who were left alone in the world without their sons and husbands after the bloody Franco-Prussian War.

Did you know your computer keyboard has more germs on it than the average toilet seat? Pretty gross. But aside from the health hazards of a dirty workstation, all that dust and dirt can actually make your PC overheat and inhibit proper performance. Since spring is in the air, there's no time like the present to rescue your desktop from all that grunge.

For this project, regular old Windex and Mr. Clean are taboo. Make sure you have the right tools before you get started. We recommend:

- A can of compressed air
- Antibacterial wipes
- A cleaner designed specifically for computer monitor screens
- A soft, lint-free cloth
- A small vacuum

First, turn your computer off. I recommend starting with your keyboard because that is the easiest to clean. Hold your keyboard vertically over a trashcan while you use the can of compressed air to blow out the dust and crumbs trapped down in between the keys. Then use an antibacterial wipe to clean the tops of the keys only. Make sure you don't drip the liquid down into the keyboard, and never spray it with any type of cleaner. While you're at it, give your mouse a good cleaning too.

For those who are germ phobic, you can purchase keyboard and mouse sets that have an antimicrobial coating to inhibit organic growth. This may be a good idea for public PCs or those that are shared by multiple users.

Next, clean your monitor screen. Before you clean your monitor, turn it off; it will be easier to see fingerprints and smudges.

NEVER spray Windex or a regular household cleaner directly onto your monitor. The liquid could seep down through the edges of the monitor and cause irreversible damage. Instead, use computer cleaning wipes that can be purchased at any computer or electronics store. If you don't have these wipes available, you can use a diluted 50-50 mixture of water and isopropyl alcohol. Spray a little bit of this mixture onto a soft, lint-free cloth and wipe the screen carefully. Again, make sure the cloth is slightly damp and not wet or the water can enter the monitor and damage the circuitry.

Now for the really dirty part: your computer's fan. This is the most serious dirt-related threat to your PC. Dust constantly gets sucked inside the case while your computer is running and, over time, it will cling to and clog your power-supply and cooling fans, causing them to slow down or fail completely. If and when the fan stops working, your PC will overheat and cause component failure and ultimately, data loss. *(continued on page 4)*

## BACKUP ALERT TO ALL IPOD USERS...



If you've been an iTunes and iPod customer for any length of time, you'll quickly rack up the number of songs, videos, and audio books in your library. And in no time flat, you can end up spending a small fortune.

But be warned! Most iTunes customers don't realize that Apple will NOT allow you to re-download the music you've paid for, even if you lose every file because your computer dies, gets fried, infected, or destroyed.

If you don't want to risk losing the purchases you've made, then make sure you back them up. Here's how:

First make sure you have some blank CDs or DVDs ready to go, then do the following:

From the iTunes File menu, choose Backup to Disc. A dialog box will open up giving you an option to do one of the following:

- Back up entire iTunes library and play lists (to backup everything)
- Back up only iTunes Store purchases (to backup only your purchases)

If you have previously backed up your library, and only want to backup the changes, check only back up items added or changed since last backup.

Click "Back Up" and wait for the CD drawer to open. Add a disc each time iTunes asks for one. If your library won't fit on a single disc, iTunes will ask one at a time for as many discs as needed and write your library to them.

Make sure you store your backups in an off-site location. If your office catches on fire, gets burglarized, or destroyed by a flood, faulty sprinkler system, or violent storm, they'll go down with your PC.

**TIP: Make Sure you store your backup CDs in an off-site location or fireproof safe.**

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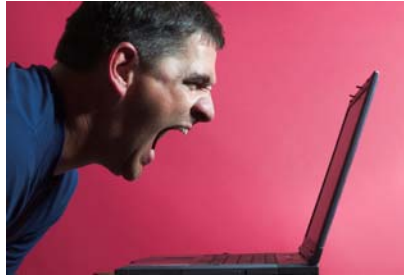
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### I'd Love To Hear From YOU!

Is there an article you would like to comment on? Is there a topic you want me to research? Have a funny story or a resource you want to share with the other subscribers? Send it to me! We are always looking for new and useful content to add to Technology Advisor.

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## HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO PUT UP WITH THAT SLOW COMPUTER THAT IS ALWAYS CRASHING ACTING CRAZY, AND GIVING YOU PROBLEMS?



Tiny, consistent computer problems are usually a warning sign of a much deeper problem. That's why we insist that all of our clients enroll in our SmallBusinessIT services. Viruses, hackers, spyware, hardware failures, and software corruption are a constant threat to your network and the precious data it holds. Ignore basic maintenance and your system will frequently crash, run slow, and put you at risk of losing data and expensive downtime.

### Why should you care about this?

Because there are a number of ways hackers and viruses can access your network—undetected—to embezzle your private information, steal your identity, and use your network as a conduit for spreading spam, viruses, and even illegal software. Tape backups have a failure rate of 100% - that means all tape drives will fail at some point without warning. You don't want to find out that your backup was not working the day after your hard drive was erased. Hardware failure and software "glitches" can corrupt your data making it useless. When this happens, you can end up spending thousands of dollars in emergency recovery services. Plus, all the tiny technical problems can end up pulling you away from your work for hours.

To make sure these disasters don't happen, there are over (21) system checks that should be done on a regular basis to secure your network and keep it up and running. Since most business owners don't

have the time or expertise to perform this regular maintenance, we offer SmallBusinessIT to constantly monitor and maintain your computer network. Not only will your network be more secure, but we'll save you the time and aggravation of dealing with computer problems.

To find out how our SmallBusinessIT Service can help your company, call us at 603-879-9022 or send an e-mail to Chris at ward@sciinc.com. The first 9 people who call this month will receive a FREE Problem Prevention Network Audit (\$495 Value)!

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### The Lighter Side:

Two government economists were returning home from a field meeting. As with all government travelers, they were assigned the cheapest seats on the plane, and were occupying the center seat on opposite sides of the aisle. They continued their discussion of the knotty problem that had been the subject of their meeting through takeoff and meal service until finally one of the passengers in an aisle seat offered to trade places so they could talk and he could sleep.

After switching seats, one economist remarked to the other, "Well, that's the first time an economic discussion ever kept anyone awake!"

I think of the man who was honored as "Businessperson of the Year." At the presentation dinner, a newspaper reporter asked him, "To what do you owe your great success and prosperity?"

"Five things contributed to my success," said the man. "First, I always treated people fairly. Second, I always offered a fair price. Third, I was always honest. Fourth, I was always generous to my employees. And fifth, my Aunt Edna died a few years back and left me two and a half million dollars."

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Once again, grab your can of compressed air. Remove the case lid and you'll see the various fans and incredible dust bunnies clinging to them. Using short, powerful bursts, blow the dust through the internal slits so it exits to the outside of the case. Make sure to spray the compressed air in short bursts, keeping the can upright and the tube at least a couple of inches from the hardware. You may want to use the vacuum to suck up the dust you blow out onto the carpet, **BUT BE CAREFUL!** Vacuums create static electricity, which is deadly to sensitive electronic components. Don't stick your vacuum hose inside your PC to clean up the dust or you'll risk damaging the sensitive electronic components.

You can buy battery-powered vacuums made specifically for electronics, but for the price, compressed air will work just as well. Just make sure you power down your computer and unplug it before you start cleaning it.

After you are done, check all the cables and plugs inside your PC to make sure you didn't knock anything loose during cleaning and turn it back on.

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