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Next Meeting

Wednesday 7th December 2011
7 PM

Followed by an exchange of
information about Computers

PIZZA NIGHT!!!!

Subscriptions now due

Newstream Articles

Deadline : 10 Days before Meeting

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Tutor Coordinator: *E Horder*
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Newsletter Editor: *Iris Meek*
VICTOR Coord.: *Rob Tierney*
Publicity: *I Meek*
Committee: *Marie Cleaver,
Janet Headlam, Heather Loffel,
Kay Dawson, Pauline Hardy,
Irmgard Rosenfeldt and Sandra
Viney.*

OPEN NEWSLETTER – NOV – Dec 2011

Coordinators Corner

Hello everyone and Seasons Greetings to everyone.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all students, tutors new and seasoned veterans and committee members for making this year possible, and successful.

Housekeeping duties its that time of the year again, subscriptions are due from the 1st December \$15.00 single and \$20.00 per couple.

Monday 5th December bookings for the Christmas lunch close O.P.E.N finishes up for 2011 on Friday the 16th December we will be having a end of year break up party from 1pm-3pm we would love to see as many of you that are able to come, I know it's a busy time of the year, if you can bring a plate with food to share would be appreciated.

Monday 19th December the Christmas lunch will be again at the Sunnyhills club at Ravenswood at 12pm you must have booked to be able to come. A reminder the cost is \$23.00

We will be holding summer school again this year from Monday 9th January till Friday 20th January no classes on Wednesday during January. We will be open on January 26th.

Regular class schedule resumes from Monday 23rd January. Our annual general meeting will be on Wednesday 1st February at 1pm. I would really encourage people to consider being part of the committee it is your club and your input is needed to keep us going. Beginner's classes resume on Monday 6th February.

Finally I would like to thank Dennis and those who have helped with maintaining our computers and equipment this year.

If I have missed anyone thank you

So ,on that note I will sign off for 2011 and wish you all a merry and safe Christmas and prosperous 2012.

Rob

OPEN Committee 2011

Chairperson	June Hazzlewood
Co-ordinator	Rob Tierney
Vice Chairperson	Rob Tierney
Minute Secretary	Eleanor Horder
O Learn Coordinator	E Horder
Tutor Coordinator	E Horder
Membership Coord.	Karia Wicks
Newsletter Editor	Iris Meek
VICTOR Coord.	Rob Tierney
Publicity	I Meek
Committee:	Marie Cleaver, Janet Headlam, Heather Loffel, Kay Dawson, Pauline Hardy, Irmgard Rosenfeldt and Sandra Viney.

Please consider taking a role on the committee.

FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE

The last session for 2011 will be held Wednesday morning December 7. Judy and Co show you how you can access and research your ancestry.

Classes will resume January 25.
Please note: classes will return to Normal time slots next year.

BASIC GRAPHICS

This popular class resumes in the new year. Please register on the sheets to take part.

The last class for this year is Nov 30 10am.
Classes resume Feb 8 2012 10 am

NOTE from luncheon the first day of the Conference.

Seniors were critical of the media for accentuating the fact that an elderly male driver had accidentally driven onto the northern railway line and caused serious train delays.

The same week a 17 year old male had crashed his car in the suburbs, killing himself and all four passengers.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – NOV-DEC 2011

It was indeed an eye opener to attend this years ASCCA Conference in Sydney.

The new venue had a few things going for it, however concurrent sessions proved the antagonist.

Originally people were given a choice of who they wished to hear and issued with coupons. Just prior to lunch we were told this would not work and to tear them up and go into one of the three sections curtained off for presenters.

After the second lot of diners returned one room was overcrowded and two under attended, so we were forced to go to another presentation or talk to the people showing their products in the hall.

Students who do not like extended holidays may take advantage of the Summer Roster which Rob has outlined for you.

Nan was quite put out by this situation which was controlled by hotel management dividers.

The person most people wanted to hear was Deeps deSilva from Microsoft speaking on XP and the move to Windows 7, tips and benefits.

There was also a bit of a rush to sessions 2, 3 and 4 which all provided interesting topics.

Tips and Tricks with Word 2010 Graphics was a clever presentation by Graham Clark of Computer Pals Manly. He performed some excellent "morphs" such as someone else's photo onto a different card or item.



TUTORS MEETING

Thanks to Bruce Dineen for offering to do a Q and A at the last Tutors Meeting.

Owing to his ill health this had to be postponed, so hopefully we will be able to call on him at the next Tutors Meeting in 2012.

We wish you a speedy recovery Bruce.

The requested Maintenance and email Filtering class held November 30 will be repeated Wednesday morning February 15 10am –noon.

ASCCA COMPETITIONS

Several entries were received from OPEN members for various sections of the competitions this year.

They were not judged by ASCCA staff, but by neutral observers & readers.

According to the judges, presentations were extremely professional Most of the winning entries came from clubs around Sydney with one Melbourne Club in the mix. Some clubs concentrated on making WEB pages and were overjoyed with their success.

OPEN Session Times
At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton
Standard Sessions \$5.00

Monday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	Beginners & PC Support
Tuesday	10 am –12	P C Support & Beginners + Mac
	1 pm – 3 pm	As above
	7 pm—9 pm	PC Support (Night Class)
Wednesday	10 am—noon	Special sessions or Meetings
	1.pm—3 pm	As for mornings (see rosters)
Thursday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	General & Beginners
Friday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm—3 pm	Beginners

OPEN NEWSLETTER – Nov –dec 2011 to 2012

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS
Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

Date	Time	Topic	Details
Nov 30	10 am –noon	Basic Graphics	Judy, Sandra and Laraine Tutors
	1 pm—3 pm	Computer	maintenance & email filtering
Dec 7	10 am—12	Family History online	Judy, Laraine, Sandra,
	1 pm—	OPEN MEETING	Finalise arrangements for AGM
Dec 14	10 am—12	Graphics	Judy, Sandra & Laraine tutors.
	1:00—3 pm	Level 2-3 Graphics	Judy, Eleanor, Laraine & Sandra
Jan 25	10 –12/1-3pm	Family History all day	Judy, Sandra, Laraine
Feb 1	10am –noon	Creating Posters	Using Print Artist
	1 pm	OPEN AGM	Election of Office bearers for 2012
Feb 8	10 am-noon	Basic Graphics	Start new sessions with Judy & others
	1 pm—3 pm	Family History online	Judy, Laraine and Sandra tutors.
Feb 15	10am—noon	Computer	Maintenance & email filtering
	1 pm—3 pm	Level 2-3 Graphics	Start new sessions for 2012

OPEN NEWSLETTER – Nov–Dec 2011

Senior Moments

At June Hazelwood's request I attended an interesting presentation on how to manage your medications by a COTA speaker.

Being an OP, trying to locate the lecture hall at the new Riverside Precinct proved puzzling and frustrating. After searching for some time, the said June came looking for us and led the way in.

Maureen Rudge was very enlightening, highlighting many of the dangers facing older persons e.g. taking both medications after a doctors has prescribed something different and not taking medication correctly or forgetting to take them at the correct time. I plead guilty to the latter.

Choice Computer, YOURLifeChoices and The Senior were amongst the sponsors for this years Conference. Kaye Fallick, publisher of YOURLifeChoices presented the Creative Writing awards.

Choice Computer reviewed the latest laptop computers, chose their top webcams and put out the ISP survey results.

They have also recently reviewed the new Google social networking site. All users need is a Gmail address. Following an extended trial, the privacy features appear to to be safer than those on Facebook.

It is a free program to those with a Gmail account. Key features include Circles, (for friends), Sparks (for sharing), Hangouts (for videoconferencing) Huddle (to make communications easier) and Mobile (for uploading photos from mobiles to albums).

LEVEL 2 & 3 GRAPHICS

With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8

2012 classes begin F ebruary 22
1 pm–3 pm

PC Support Classes Will resume Tuesday evening January 31 between 7 pm and 9 pm.

Julie, Barry, Laraine and helpers
For students unable to attend
during the daylight hours

VICTOR TELEPHONE NUMBER
Help for members
0408 174235

LCG MEETING
WEDNESDAY DEC 7 at 7pm
Followed by Workshop with Ivan & pizza
supper

PSP X1

Advanced Graphics using PSP X1
Follows on from the basic and level 2 and
3 classes.
Classes begin February 22

MAC USERS

Mac Tutors

Reinhard, Ivan and Maurice

Help Mac students

Each Tuesday

Graphics Workshops
Are held the first Wednesday in
each
Month from March
March 2012

TAKING CARE WITH PRINTERS

I'll be the first person to admit that keeping up with the number of printers available at OPEN can be a real battle. When you are ready to print a document you might see as many as 8-10 printers listed in the Print dialog box.

In the words of Corporal Jones of "Dad's Army" fame DON'T PANIC - most members' needs will be served by using the Toshiba 450 (affectionately known as Goliath) for non-colour printing, or the Canon IP4850 for colour printing such as photographs, greeting cards, signs and labels.

The Toshiba is connected to the network via an Ethernet (blue) cable so it is not dependent on any particular computer being turned on, other than the one you happen to be using.

However the Canon IP4850 is connected to the network via a USB cable that is attached to OPEN1—so OPEN1 needs to be turned on for members to be able to print documents on Canon.

While it is not a hard-and-fast rule it is more cost-effective (and usually much faster) to print non-colour documents on the Toshiba, so we'd prefer that your use of the Canon is restricted to print-outs that really need to be in colour.

'Pretend Printers' Apart from the various physical printers that are available on the OPEN network you may also see 'virtual' devices such as the Microsoft Image Writer, the XPS Image Writer or Send to One Note listed in the Print dialog box.

Select one of these and you could be forgiven for thinking that you'd accidentally clicked the Save or Save As option. That's because these 'printers' create a print-file rather than a print-out. In practical terms few people would ever use these virtual printers.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – Nov–Dec 2011

TAKING CARE WITH PRINTERS

Guest Computers It seems that increasing numbers of members are purchasing laptop computers and using them to do their studies at OPEN.

Whether your laptop joins the OPEN network via a blue Ethernet cable or via a wireless connection you may be able to access one of the printers in order to get a hard-copy of a document during class hours.

This is a more technical procedure than plugging in a USB printer at home but once the software is installed you can use club printers while at the club and then switch back to your own printer at home.

Printer Trouble Shooting

One of the problems that accompanied our Toshiba 450 (Goliath) were paper-jams caused by printer paper picking up moisture when left in the paper tray over weekends. To prevent this occurring it is now standard practice for the paper to be stored in a container on Friday afternoons and then to be replaced in the printer on Monday mornings. Although this may not directly affect most members it is something to keep in mind if any of our regular tutors are absent at those critical times.

When replacing or replenishing the paper in any of the printers care should be taken to make sure that it is ONLY PAPER that finds its way into the printer.

Recently there was an instance when the Canon IP4850 printer began having paper jams and it was

found that a small bag of silica gel had slipped into the rear tray, preventing the paper from feeding through properly. Our 'best guess' is that this moisture-preventing object was accidentally picked up out of the paper box when the printer was refilled.
Dennis Murray

VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

The club telephone is available

during class hours.

63434928

10am –3 pm

Apple iPads

ASCCA trainer Teresa Wilson calls this a remarkable piece of technology.

Approximately 25 million have been sold since its release in 2010.

Her interest in computers began in the 80's when she became a volunteer with the COTA Computing Club at the Crows Nest Centre and began teaching computing. She helps students explore the features of the iPad.

TALKING TECH: INSTALL WINDOWS 7 WITHOUT A DVD DRIVE

So you've decided it's finally time to take the plunge and install Windows 7 on one of those computers you have lying around, but there's a small problem: some of the compact designs don't have built-in DVD drives. Or maybe you have one but it doesn't work; an optical drive can be one of the most fragile parts of a portable computer and they seem to often go bad long while the rest of the system is still working fine. Of course, you could always buy a portable DVD drive that plugs in via USB, but why spend the money if you don't have to? Even without an optical drive, you still have several options for installing Windows 7.

If you [buy Windows 7 from the Microsoft Store](#), you can download it either as a set of compressed files or as an ISO file. If you download the ISO, instead of burning it to a DVD, you can copy it onto a USB stick and install Windows 7 from that. Almost all modern computers today have USB ports. You can make the USB stick bootable, so that you can install Windows 7 onto a computer that doesn't have an operating system installed. Here's the procedure:

After you download the ISO, you'll need to copy it onto your USB drive. You need a minimum of 4 GB of free space on the drive. Also note that the USB drive needs to be completely blank; even if there's plenty of extra space, you can't use a drive that has existing files. If you're upgrading from XP, first make sure you have the [Microsoft .NET Framework 2.0](#) or above installed. You also need to install the [Microsoft Image Mastering API v2 for XP](#).

To copy the ISO to your USB drive and make it bootable, you need the [Windows 7 USB/DVD Download Tool, which you can run from the Microsoft website](#). First make sure you're logged on as an administrator and that you already have the Windows 7 ISO downloaded to your hard drive. When you click the link and are prompted to save or run the file, select Run. In the dialog boxes, enter the location where you want to install the Download Tool.

Open the Download Tool from the Start menu (All Programs) and double click it to run it. In the field that says Source File, enter the name and path for the Windows 7 ISO file that you downloaded (or click Browse to find it). In the next dialog box, select USB Device. Insert your USB drive into a USB port. Select your USB device in the dropdown list, then click Begin copying. Once the ISO has been copied to your USB drive, when you're ready to install Windows 7 just open Windows Explorer and navigate to the root of the USB drive. Double click Setup.exe and there you go!

If you want to use the USB drive to install Windows 7 on a computer that doesn't have an operating system installed, you may need to go into your computer's BIOS/Setup utility and change the settings to boot from USB. Then you can just insert the USB drive and start the computer with it in, and the Windows 7 Setup program will start running. You can keep the USB drive as a backup copy of the software in case you ever need to reinstall Windows 7. Remember that you can only use the USB drive to install Windows 7 on one computer per the license agreement.

Another option for installing Windows 7 without a DVD drive is to do an over-the-network installation using the PXE boot capabilities of modern computers. In that case, you would download the compressed files (instead of the ISO) on a computer that's connected, via your local area network, to the computer on which you want to install Windows. Set up the folder as a network share. Then you can download a program called TFTPboot. You'll [find instructions for using TFTPboot](#) in this article.

XP TIP OF THE WEEK: RECOVERING FROM A CRASH

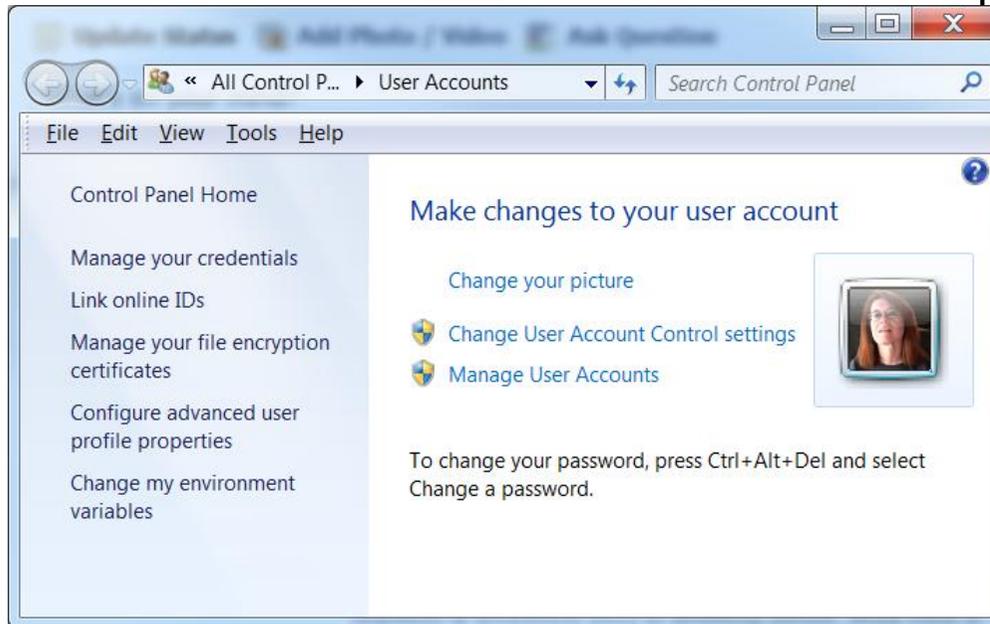
What do you do if Windows XP crashes? Well, you have several options:

1. Restart the computer (if it's hung up, use the power switch or reset button) and XP will display the Recovery menu. Here you have the option to start XP in Safe Mode, where you can start/stop services, change settings or uninstall the program or driver that caused the problem. Select Safe Mode with Networking if you'll need to access files on the network to fix the problem.
2. Another option in the Recovery menu is Last Known Good Configuration. If you've installed a driver that caused the crash and you haven't successfully booted into Windows since, this option will take you back to the most recent settings with which you did successfully boot into Windows.
3. If you've made changes to the video settings that caused your computer to crash or not be able to boot into Windows, try selecting Enable VGA Mode in the Recovery menu. This is handy if you inadvertently set it to a resolution that's not supported.
4. If you can boot into Windows after the crash but it's not working properly, you can use System Restore to return to an earlier configuration when things were working. You'll find it in All Programs | Accessories | System Tools.

If you aren't able to boot even into Safe Mode, and you have your Windows XP installation CD, you can use it to run the Recovery Console. Run Windows Setup and press R at the Welcome to Setup screen. With the Recovery Console, you can replace or rename folders and files, turn services off and on, enable or disable devices, repair the boot menu or master boot record and more. [KB article 314058 describes how to use the Recovery Console](#).

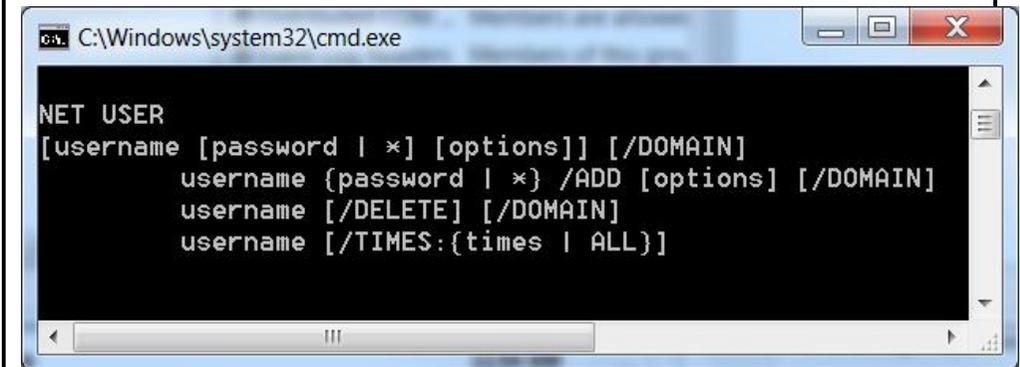
WINDOWS 7 TIP OF THE WEEK: HOW TO MANAGE USER ACCOUNTS

You probably know that you can manage user accounts via the User Accounts applet in Control Panel, which gives you the simple interface shown below.

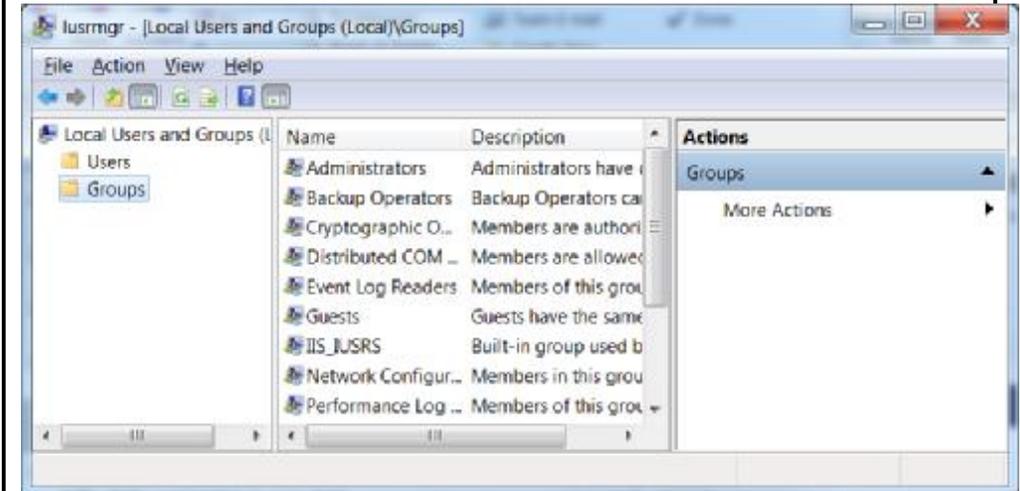


But did you know there are several other tools in Windows 7 for managing user accounts? Note that if your computer is a domain member, the Manage User Accounts link will open the Advanced User Accounts tool, which lets you do additional things such as changing the user names on accounts and configuring automatic logon. If your computer isn't a domain member, you can still open this interface by typing netplwiz at the command prompt.

If you're into command line tools, you can use the Net User command to create and modify user accounts. [KB article 251394 describes the syntax for the Net User tool.](#)



And finally, if you're running the Professional, Enterprise or Ultimate edition, you can open a Microsoft Management Console (MMC) and use the Local Users and Groups snap-in, which provides more account management features than the Control Panel applet. You open this by typing lusrmgr.msc in the Start menu Search box.



TOP STORY

What you should know about Windows' Event Viewer

By Woody Leonhard



Most of the Windows utilities we talk about in the Windows Secrets Newsletter help you work faster or better or smarter, but Windows Event Viewer doesn't fall into that category.

A powerful diagnostic tool, Event Viewer is now being used by online support scammers who make big bucks preying on peoples' fears.

As I explained in my Feb. 3 [Top Story](#), scammers are cold-calling people in North America, Europe, Australia, and other locations who claim to be Windows support technicians — in some cases, gaining access to users' PCs and personal information.

The con I discussed back in February described how a caller, possibly from India, contacted a Windows Secrets reader in the U.S. and claimed to be working on behalf of Microsoft support. My reader had posted a support question on what he thought was a Microsoft site. It was a very good con: the scammer knew the reader's name, phone number, and the fact that he was having a problem with Windows XP. He cleverly convinced the reader to **open Event Viewer** and look at all the red and yellow flags indicating a malware attack. The con almost worked.

Of course, any phone call to a household in North America stands a good chance of striking pay dirt when the topic is some sort of Windows problem. Call ten people in your town at random, and say you're calling on behalf of Microsoft (and sound like you know what you're talking about), and I bet at least one or two of your neighbors will take you up on the offer. In my neck of the woods, it would probably be closer to nine out of ten.

In the case of my nearly duped reader, the scammer first tried to get money for the support, claiming the Windows warranty had **expired**. The reader was **almost** convinced to give the con artist direct access to the reader's home computer via Windows Remote Access. Fortunately, the intended victim smelled something

fishy and cut off the conversation. But how many other people that day got snookered by that same wily scammer?

It could be many. Lately, I've received a rash of messages from people who have been approached in similar ways. There's even a [post](#) about it on the Windows Secrets Lounge. So be aware of this malicious con. To help you understand how it works, I'll dissect this specific scare technique — used to make you believe you need their help. It all hinges on Windows' Event Viewer, which I talked about briefly in my March 4 [Top Story](#) on the Windows Reliability Monitor.

Here's the rest of the story.

What the Event Viewer does — and how to use it

Windows has had Event Viewer for almost a decade. Most Windows users don't know about it, and far fewer still know how to use it. Microsoft states that its utility "maintains logs about program, security, and system events on your computer. You can use Event Viewer to view and manage the event logs, gather information about hardware and software problems, and monitor Windows security events." In other words, it gives you a detailed window into what your system has been doing.

Windows has not just one event log file, but many; there are administrative, operational, analytic/debugging, and application logs. The logs are simple text files, written in XML format.

Every program that starts on your PC posts a notification in an event log, and every well-behaved program also posts a notification when it stops. Every system access, security change, operating-system twitch, hardware failure, driver hiccup, and more ends up in an event log. The Event Viewer scans those logs, aggregates them, and puts a pretty interface on an otherwise voluminous — and often deathly dull — set of machine-generated data.

In theory, event logs track **significant** events on your PC. (See Microsoft's Help & How-to [page](#), "What information appears in event logs [Event Viewer]?" for more info on what's in the logs.) But in practice, what's **significant** is a bit squishy — it will be different for a programmer, a repair tech, or just a regular Windows user. What's vital and self-evident to a programmer, for example, might be useless gibberish to a user.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Still, when a PC's condition takes a downturn, the Event Viewer can give PC users some insights into the source of problems. If you've never used it, I suggest taking a few minutes and checking it out. Note: You'll need to run Event Viewer with an administrator password or account.

The Event Viewer built into Windows Vista and Win7 runs rings around XP's version (shown in Figure 1). For Vista and Win7, Microsoft not only built a better interface but made it easier to ignore unimportant events, program more meaningful event notifications, and find what you're looking for.



Figure 1. Windows XP's Event Viewer is a very straightforward text-viewing application that looks into XP's log files.

To start the Event Viewer in Windows XP, click Start, Control Panel, **Performance and Maintenance**, and Administrative Tools. Then double-click **Computer Management**.

In Vista, click Start, Control Panel, **System and Maintenance**, and Administrative Tools. Next, double-click **Event Viewer**.

In Win7, it's Start, Control Panel, **System and Security**, and Administrative Tools. Double-click Event Viewer. (Or just click Start, type **event** into the **Search programs and files** box and press Enter.)

In Windows Vista and Windows 7, chances are good that the events you want to look at are in the Administrative Events folder. Double-click it; you'll see the most important system-wide events listed to the right, as in Figure 2.

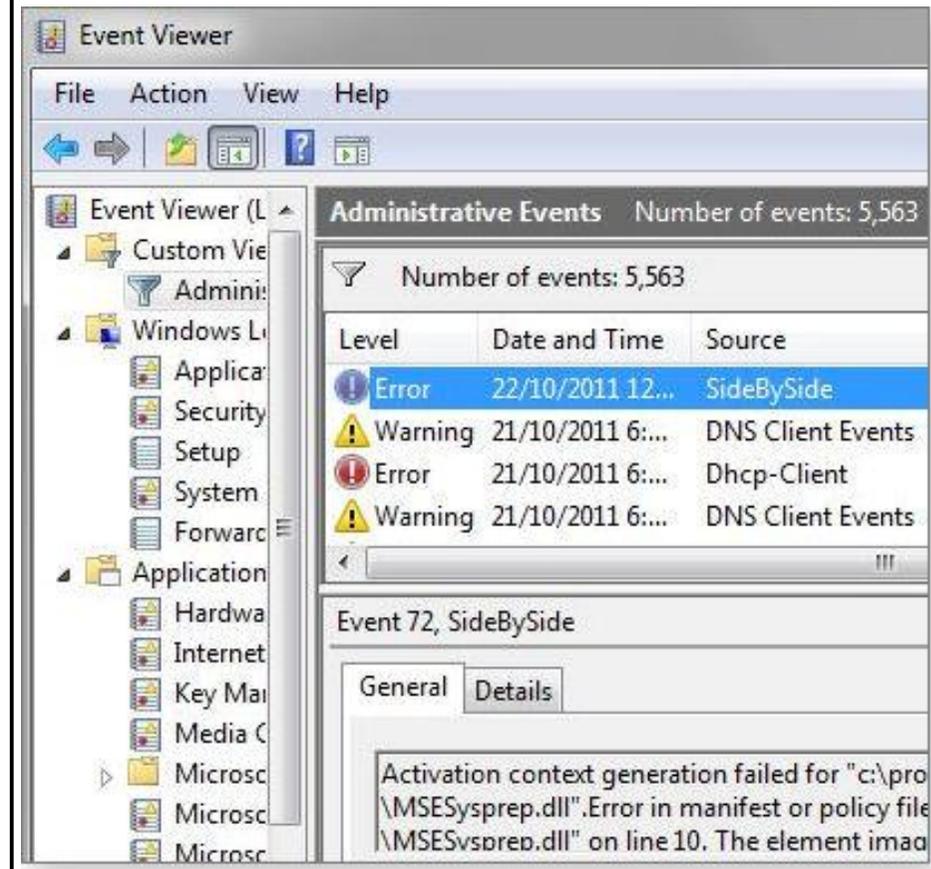


Figure 2. Windows Vista and Win7 put the most important events into the Administrative Events folder.

Note that even the best-kept system (well, my production system anyway) boasts hundreds, if not thousands, of lines of scary-looking error messages. That's normal.

(Continued on page 12)

Event-worthy — and not-worthy — warnings

Before you get hot and bothered about the thousands of **errors** on your PC, look closely at the date-and-time field. The bulk of them probably date back to when you first installed the PC. Chances are good you'll see a handful more for every day the PC has been on — most of these are just repeats of the same error or warning. Generally, they have little or no effect on the way you use Windows; you may safely yawn and say, "Who cares?"

For example, looking through my most recent event log, I see a bunch of errors generated by the Microsoft Security Essentials program **MSESysprep.dll**. The warning

"The element imaging appears as a child of element urn:schemas-microsoft-com:asm.v1^assembly which is not supported by this version of Windows"

sounds ominous, doesn't it? But if you look up the error message, you'll find this sage advice from Microsoft MVP Stephen Boots on a Microsoft Answers [page](#): "The Event Viewer is a great tool to troubleshoot issues. If you are not experiencing an issue, take Jeff's advice ... he's from Microsoft." Jeff's advice? Ignore it.

That's exactly my advice. If you aren't experiencing problems, don't sweat what's in the Event Viewer. And even if you're experiencing problems, the Event Viewer might not be able to help you.

In some cases, Event Viewer can help you by pinpointing problems or explaining odd behavior that would be very hard to isolate otherwise. For example, TechRepublic's Greg Shultz [blogged](#) about using Event Viewer to diagnose slow boot times on a Win7 PC — and to find a failing hard drive. Sure, there are a dozen ways to monitor hard drives, but you might not immediately associate slow boots with a bad drive. The Event Viewer provided the needed view of the boot sequence's inner workings.

On Windows SevenForums, Brink [explains](#) how to find the results of a Windows **CHKDSK** run inside the event logs. That information could be handy if you can't run that important diagnostic command manually.

Event Viewer can also help you nail down network access problems; the Windows programs that control network communication spill a large number of details into the event logs. Unfortunately, translating the logs into English can be a daunting

task. But at least you might be able to tell where the problem occurs — even if the logs don't give you a clue as to how to solve the problem.

What to do if you're getting scammed

At this point, it should be obvious that your event history is a virtual cesspool of information. And that you're being taken for a ride if you get an unexpected support call — especially if you're asked for payment or access to your PC.

Yes, under certain circumstances, Event Viewer can give you worthwhile information. But for most Windows users, most of the time, it's a scary place that can obfuscate issues and intimidate you. It's especially of little value if you aren't conversant with terms such as DHCP or DNS or Kerberos — just to mention a few of the Windows processes that recently showed up in my event logs.

If you figure you've been scammed, or you know someone who fell for the Events Viewer shtick, you should first make sure that your machine isn't infested. Letting someone else run their software on your machine is a sure road to disaster. Put your PC through as thorough a scan as you can muster, using at the very least Microsoft Security Essentials ([info page](#)) and Malwarebytes ([site](#)).

If you let someone onto your machine, you also have to assume they've made off with some of your files — many of the scammers are smart enough to pull data right out from under your nose.

If you suspect data theft, start with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft [site](#). There you'll find important information about how to recover from — or at least cope with — the loss.

Also keep in mind that if your data was taken by someone outside your home country, your chances for restitution are zero.

Pat yourself on the back if you kept the bad guys out of your PC. But if you handed over some money, head directly to your credit card company's fraud reporting unit. Insist that you get your money back; and even if you don't, at least you'll be adding your voice to the worldwide call for regulation against these Event Viewer scams.

Most successful scams are exceptionally clever at separating a mark from his (or

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

her) money. Those who get conned are often too embarrassed to report it — or they're never sure that they were actually swindled.

Bottom line: If somebody calls you, convinces you to open up your Event Viewer, and requests money, it's a con. And if you've been taken, fight back — for everybody's sake.

FIVE RULES TO REMEMBER IN LIFE:

1. Money cannot buy happiness but it's more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes than on a bicycle.
2. Forgive your enemy but remember the bastard's name.
3. Help someone when they are in trouble and they will remember you when they're in trouble again.
4. Many people are alive only because it's illegal to shoot them.
5. Alcohol does not solve any problems, but then again, neither does milk.

XP TIP OF THE WEEK: HOW TO DISPLAY THE DATE ON THE TASKBAR

Recently, an XP user who has been using Windows 7 at work asked me how he can display the date, along with the time, on his XP taskbar - as he sees on the Windows 7 machine. It's actually very simple:

1. Right click the Taskbar.
2. Select **Unlock**.
3. Position the pointer at the top until the double arrow appears and "grab" the edge of the taskbar.
4. Pull it up to make it double height. Now the date will automatically display under the time.

RELOCK THE TASKBAR (IF DESIRED).

1 WINDOWS 7 TIP OF THE WEEK: ADJUST SOUND VOLUME FOR PROGRAMS

2 Did you know you can set the volume for individual applications in Windows 7 (and Vista)? Here's how:

1. Right click the volume icon in the Notification area (system tray).
2. Click **Volume Mixer**.
3. Under **Applications**, adjust the volume for the application(s) you want.

The volume can be equal to or lower than the volume set for the Speakers. You can also set Windows 7 to automatically reduce the volume of other sounds when you make phone calls on your computer:

1. Right click the volume icon in the Notification area.
2. Click **Playback Devices**.
3. Click the **Communications** tab.
4. Select whether you want to mute all other sounds or reduce their volume by 50% or 80%.

Click **OK**.

Putting Registry-/system-cleanup apps to the test

By Fred Langa



The most contentious software category has to be PC-system/Registry cleaners. Some users find them invaluable; other users consider them worse than useless.

A series of controlled experiments puts these apps to the test — and turns up some surprises.

Many Windows programs are still sloppy about their uninstall process, leaving behind digital debris. In older versions of Windows, this situation was a known cause of trouble.

Leftover, "orphaned" files waste space on your hard drive and create extra work for Windows when it performs indexing, searching, defragging, backups, or other file-related operations.

Leftover Registry entries similarly inflate the Registry — to no useful purpose. Erroneous Registry entries can create system instabilities and crashes, and a bloated Registry might needlessly slow down system startup and shutdown.

Registry- and system-cleaning software is designed to correct these problems by finding and removing orphaned files, useless Registry entries, and other junk. The end result is supposed to be a leaner, cleaner, more stable system.

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest that cleanup software can do what it claims. But most of this information derives from older versions of Windows, which were notorious for **not** cleaning up after and policing third-party software.

Windows 7, on the other hand, has more self-protective features than any previous version of Windows. So, are Registry- and system-cleaning tools still worthwhile in a Windows 7 world? I decided to find out.

Designing the tests and the baseline system

First, let me be perfectly clear about this report: my tests were **not** designed to find the **best** Registry cleaner — or even a comparative analysis of one cleanup tool

versus another.

My sole point was to see whether the general principles of system and Registry cleaning deliver quantifiable, measurable improvements to Windows 7. Do specialized cleanup tools really let you remove more junk than Windows 7's own built-in tools? Do system and Registry cleanups provide any real-life, practical benefits, such as faster boot times?

To find out, I started with a known-good, plain-vanilla, up-to-date, fully normal Windows 7 setup in an Oracle VirtualBox ([site](#)) PC. (See Figure 1.) VirtualBox systems can be cloned easily, which meant I'd be able to use exactly the same system as a starting point for different cleaning tests.

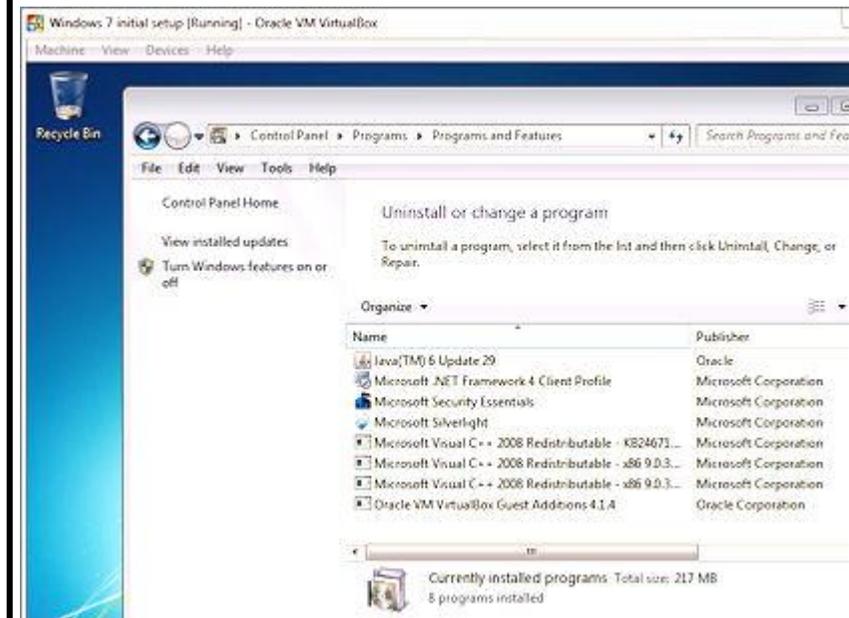


Figure 1.
The test system was a plain-vanilla,

minimalist Windows 7 VirtualBox setup with very little extra software installed, as shown.

Because this system was to be the starting point for all that followed, I

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documented several key variables.

First, I timed how long the unmodified system took to boot. I used a stopwatch to measure the time from the moment I switched on the system to the initial appearance of the Windows sign-on password dialog box. I then paused the stopwatch and entered my password. On hitting Enter, I restarted the stopwatch and continued timing to the point of **full boot**; — when the full, normal Windows desktop appeared and the system was stable and ready for use.

I also timed how long the system took to turn off — from the moment I clicked **Shut down** on a stable, idle system to **all lights out**.

I ran the tests several times in succession, with a full power-off shutdown in between, and then I averaged the results to help smooth out any human timing errors or other random variables.

These initial timing numbers would let me see whether my cleaning experiments would have any effect on startup and shutdown.

I measured the size of the test system's Registry by exporting its full contents (via Windows' Registry editor, **Regedit**) to a text file and noting the size of the file. I also used Windows Explorer to record the aggregate size of all the files on the hard drive.

These Registry-size and file-size numbers would let me see the effects, if any, of various cleanup techniques and tools, regardless of what the tools themselves might report. (Many cleanup tools tend to overstate their own effectiveness.)

Looking for trouble: adding 20 popular downloads

With the baseline measurements established, my next step was to create a system with lots of orphaned files. That meant installing and uninstalling applications that might leave digital detritus. To choose software commonly used by real-world users, I consulted CNET's [list](#) of the "20 most popular Windows downloads."

I installed all 20 apps on the test system as inexperienced Windows users might over time — layering on the software without regard to consequence and accepting all default settings, including the offers of extra toolbars, download managers, and so on.

As you'd expect, the system ended up a mess. (See Figure 2.) After loading the programs, Windows was much less responsive; several subsystems (Internet and sound, for example) stopped working entirely.



Figure 2.

Installing 20 popular apps brought Windows to its knees.

I measured the boot/shut-down times and file sizes on the bloated system. Incredibly, the time for a full boot went from under a minute (39 seconds) on the **clean** system to almost **10.5 minutes** (629 seconds) for the bloated configuration. The Registry ballooned 170 percent — from 99MB to 169MB. Table 1 shows the results.

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	TIME (seconds)			SIZE	
	To initial sign-on prompt	To full, stable desktop	To shutdown from idle	Registry (MB)	All files (GB)
Baseline Win7	32	39	11	99	12.2
Bloated setup	61	629	113	169	15.4

Table 1: Adding 20 popular downloads to the test system created a bloated setup whose full boot time went from 39 to 629 seconds — over 10 minutes!

Removing the bloat: Uninstalling the 20 apps

As planned, the test system was now desperately in need of cleanup.

The first step to clean any bloated system is to simply uninstall unneeded software. I uninstalled each of the 20 programs in the normal way — using the control panel's **Uninstall a program** applet. This removed much of the bloat — as it should — and also resolved whatever conflicts had caused the sound and networking failures.

My next round of timing and size measurements showed that, as happens all too often in the Windows world, uninstalling programs left behind various files and Registry settings — it did not fully restore the test system to its initial condition.

Table 2 shows the results. After standard uninstallation of the popular software, the test system did not regain all its initial startup and shutdown speed. Also, 1.4GB of orphaned files and 6MB of Registry entries were left behind.

	TIME (seconds)			SIZE	
	To initial sign-on prompt	To full, stable desktop	To shutdown from idle	Registry (MB)	All files (GB)
Baseline Win7	32	39	11	99	12.2
Bloated setup	61	629	113	169	15.4
After standard uninstall	37	83	16	105	13.6

Table 2: After I uninstalled the sample apps, the test system still contained leftover files and suffered from reduced performance.

I was now ready to see what the cleanup tools could do.

Windows Disk Cleanup versus third-party cleaners

I had planned to run three different cleaning tests (I'll explain them in a moment), so I cloned three, identical copies of my test system. These cloned systems would give each of my clean-up tests precisely the same starting point.

On the first cloned setup, I downloaded and ran the standard edition of Piriform's free **CCleaner** ([site](#)), an immensely popular and easy-to-use system- and Registry-cleaning tool. (See Figure 3.)

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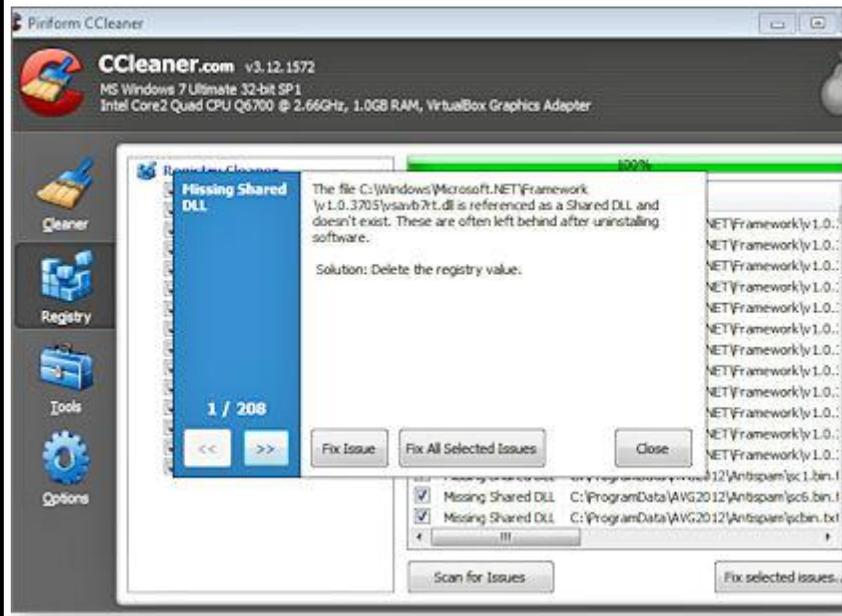


Figure 3.

Piriform's CCleaner is designed for quick, easy, and routine removal of junk files and useless or broken Registry entries.

I chose CCleaner because I'd recommended it many times in the past and wanted to see whether my recommendations still held. CCleaner also represents a class of tools primarily intended for frequent, routine cleanups rather than a deep, targeted spelunking of the system's internals.

I ran CCleaner's file and Registry cleanup routines in their default settings, letting the software decide what to clean on the test system. I then rebooted the system and made new timing and file-size measurements. I'll discuss the results in a moment.

On the second cloned setup, I downloaded and ran Macecraft's **juv16 PowerTools 2011** ([site](#); free, fully functional trial for 50 days, \$30 thereafter). This software represents a heavier-duty class of tools that can do routine cleaning but also offers much more power and configurability for expert users.

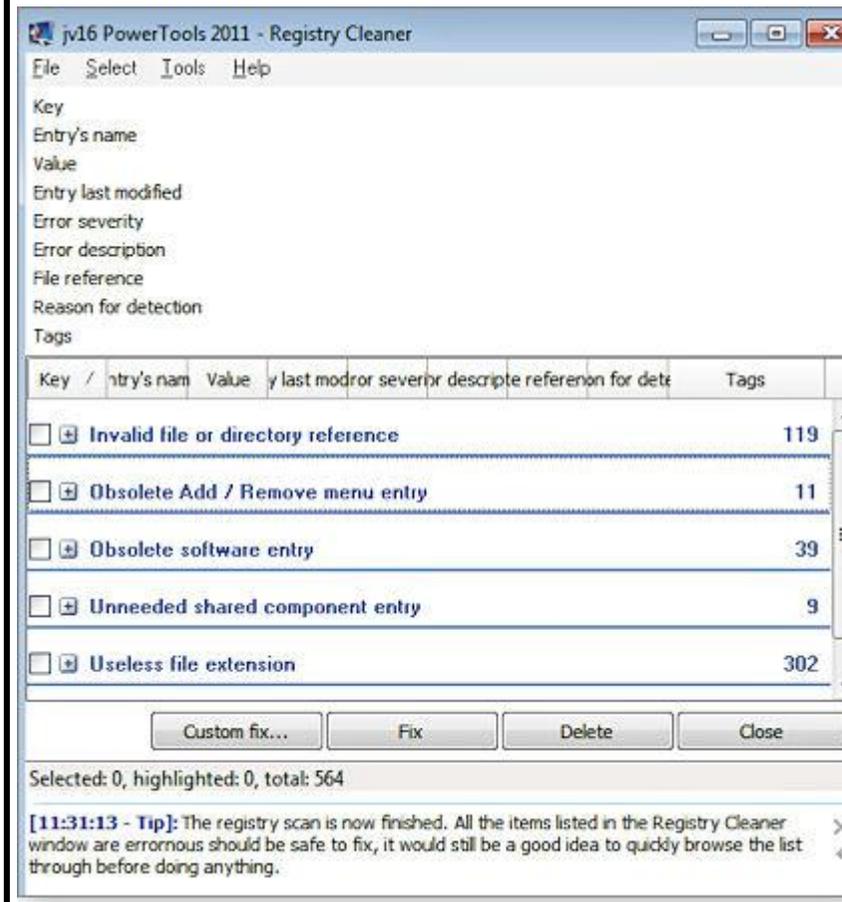


Figure 4.

Macecraft's **juv16 PowerTools 2011** includes features and functions aimed at advanced users.

Using jv16 PowerTools' default settings, I ran its **Registry Cleaner**, **Registry Compactor** (a type of tool unavailable in CCleaner), and **File Cleaner**. I then rebooted the system and recorded times and file size.

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On the third, identical clone setup, I used Windows' built-in Disk Cleanup app, a system-cleanup tool that's been included in every version of Windows from Win98 onward. (You can enter **cleanmgr** into the **Search programs and files** box to access the tool in its most basic configuration.) Win7's Disk Cleanup is actually surprisingly powerful and complete; it's one of those unheralded tools that have been quietly improved with each iteration of Windows.

I've always found Disk Cleanup to be safe and reliable, but Microsoft — in an abundance of caution, perhaps — has always made Disk Cleanup's most potent cleaning functions a little hard to get at. In fact, to use the tool to its best effect, you have to enter **cleanmgr** in a Command Prompt window or from a command line, and that's what I did. When run that way, Win7's Disk Cleanup is actually surprisingly powerful and complete; it's one of those unheralded tools that have been quietly improved with each iteration of Windows.

Disk Cleanup's basic commands haven't changed in almost a decade, and long-time readers may recall the April 4, 2002, [article](#), "Sageset unlocks CleanMgr's power." The how-to instructions in that story still work perfectly in Windows 7.

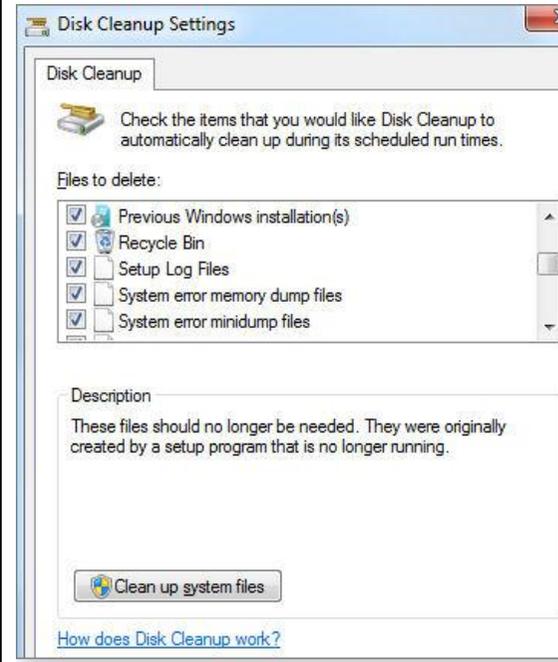


Figure 5. Windows 7's built-in *Disk Cleanup* can delete about 20 different kinds of junk files.

I ran **cleanmgr** exactly as described in that article. When it was done, I rebooted the system and again noted the startup and shutdown times, the Registry size, and the overall disk space used — just as I'd done with CCleaner and jv16 PowerTools.

Table 3 shows the results of these tests.

	TIME (seconds)			SIZE	
	To initial sign-on prompt	To full, stable desktop	To shutdown from idle	Registry (MB)	All files (GB)
Baseline Win7	32	39	11	99	12.2
Bloated setup	61	629	113	169	15.4
After standard uninstall	37	83	16	105	13.6
After uninstall + Ccleaner	32	41	11	105	12.9
After uninstall + jv16 Power Tools 2011	30	37	9	104	13.3
After uninstall + Cleanmgr	33	42	11	105	13.3

Table 3: All three tested cleanup methods reduced bloat and helped improve system performance.

These results make it clear that Windows 7 can indeed benefit from use of cleanup tools!

Bottom-line conclusions and caveats

The primary takeaway from these tests is that use of any cleanup tool — even the free, built-in **cleanmgr** — can help fight bloat and improve your system performance over what you get if you simply uninstall an application.

Although I was surprised that no tool removed all the junk files and leftover Registry entries, they all — even the lowly **cleanmgr**, if launched from a command line with all its cleanup options enabled — reduced the startup and shutdown times to those of my original, clean system.

The thousand-dollar penalty for reusing passwords

By Woody Leonhard



You can find no end of advice on creating strong passwords, using clever tricks, stats, mnemonics, and such.

But all too frequently we (and I include myself in this rebuke) tend to reuse little passwords at what we think are inconsequential sites. It's a big mistake — here's why.

This story is true. As the admonition goes: only the names have been changed to protect the innocent.

I live in a small town a couple of hours away from a big city we'll call Metropolis. There are several daily newspapers in Metropolis, and one of the largest (let's call it the Daily Planet) boasts a very nice website. The people who create and maintain the Daily Planet site are excellent designers and programmers — but they aren't security experts.

One of Metropolis's citizens is a regular guy named, oh, Joe. He's pretty good with computers, and he knows enough to use strong passwords on bank and stock-market sites.

But Joe just got hacked — and bilked in a most unexpected way.

Using simple passwords for unimportant sites

The Daily Planet's website, like most big newspaper sites, lets its readers set up accounts for a variety of services. For example, subscribers can receive e-mail notifications about important breaking-news stories. They also need an account to comment on editorials and to submit photos for the newspaper's photo-judging contest. About 25,000 people have accounts.

Years ago, Joe signed up for a Daily Planet account, using **JoeKewl** as his user name and **JoeSumthinErAnother@yahoo.com** for his e-mail address. And because the Daily Planet site should not have posed any real security issues — no sensitive personal information was at stake — he used an easy-to-remember

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password he frequently employed for such occasions: **12345678**.

At some point, Joe's Daily Planet account fell into disuse; he rarely thought about it. Meanwhile, the Daily Planet's website admins were focused on online publishing, applying their energy on search-engine optimization and site layout with a bit of SQL Server and PHP on the side. They knew about security but weren't terribly worried about hackers. Their thinking was: Who in their right mind would want to steal sign-in data for people commenting on news stories?

A new black-hatter beats a site's security

But there was a *who* — a self-styled password cracker residing in a completely different country. Someone driven to show his hacking moxie by cracking a Web server. He acquired a free version of Havij ([more info](#)), a SQL Injection hacking tool with a "user-friendly GUI and automated settings and detections, to make it easy to use for everyone, even amateur users," according to the IT Security Research & Penetration Testing Team's Havij 1.15 user manual. He watched the YouTube video and went through the Havij tutorial — and soon knew how to run a SQL injection attack.

The cracker didn't really care what website he cracked; he was simply looking for a site with simple sign-up routines. Eventually, he discovered that the Daily Planet's website fit the bill nicely. Within a couple of hours, the cracker had figured out how to access the Daily Planet's reader database. He was able to crack only one of the four SQL tables at the site, but that netted him 5,200 user records. He got really lucky because (and this is key — no pun intended) the Daily Planet's site stored user data in the clear — none of it was encrypted.

Then the cracker decided he was hot stuff and wanted to tell the world. So he posted 200 of the stolen records on a public website, claiming he'd post more if enough people subscribed to his Twitter feed. To publicize his accomplishment, he convinced one well-known underground tweeter to send out details about where to find the stolen data.

Using a password once too often spells 'break-in'

This is where I came in. All of this happened in a town not far from where I live. But I caught wind of it only when I checked an underground tweeter account I monitor. By then, the cracker had posted 3,400 user names and more than 300

people had viewed the list.

And Joe's name was at the top of the list.

One of these 300 visitors soon signed onto a local financial site, using Joe's stolen e-mail address and password. (I won't mention the site by name, but it's an institution in Metropolis.) The password didn't work, so the bad guy clicked the **Forgotten Password** link. As expected, the financial institution's automatic password-recovery routine offered to e-mail a new password to Joe's Yahoo account.

Next, the bad guy signed onto Yahoo Mail using Joe's e-mail address and entered the password (12345678) he'd stolen from the Daily Planet password list — and sure enough, he got into Joe's Yahoo account. From there, just a couple of clicks gave the bad guy full access to Joe's online financial account.

There are countless other ways Joe could've been compromised, but Joe made the bad guy's job much easier by using the same password for both the Daily Planet and the Yahoo Mail accounts. Joe will most likely get his money back — eventually. But he could have avoided a lot of hassle by simply using a unique, throwaway password for the Daily Planet.

Of course, Joe isn't the only one at fault. The admins at the Daily Planet should know enough to encrypt their stored user data. They also should've plugged up their SQL interface. But that doesn't let Joe off the hook.

If you're still not using a password storage/retrieval tool such as LastPass or AI RoboForm (discussed in a June 3, 2010, Best Software [column](#)), it's time to get with the program. Don't blame a poor memory for recycling old passwords; learn to use one of those tools. The money you save will most likely be your own.