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Utilities of Operating System

A utility software is one which provides certain tasks that help in proper maintenance of the computer. The job of utility programs is to keep the computer system running smoothly. Nowadays many utility softwares are part of the operating system itself. Even if there is no utility software on your computer, the computer works but with the right kind of utility software loaded, the computer becomes more reliable and even its processing speed increases. Some of the commonly use utility softwares are antivirus, Disk defragmenter, backup, compression etc.

Antivirus

An antivirus is utility software which detects and removes computer viruses. If the software is not able to remove the virus, it is neutralized. The antivirus keeps a watch on the functioning of the computer system. If a virus is found it may alert the user, flag the infected program or kill the virus. Some of the common types of viruses are:

- **Boot Sector Virus:** A boot sector virus displaces the boot record and copies itself to the boot sector i.e. where the program to boot the machine is stored. So first the virus is loaded on to the main memory and then the operating system. Whenever a new disk is inserted the virus copies itself to the new disk. The antivirus overwrites the correct boot record on the infected boot sector and also cleans the bad sectors.
- **File Virus:** A file virus generally attacks executable files. They can attach to various locations of the original file, replace code, fill in open spaces in the code, or create companion files to work with an executable file. Most of the file viruses are memory resident and wait in the memory until the user runs another program. While another program is running, the virus replicates.
- Macro Virus: This virus infects an important file called normal.dot of MS Word. As soon as the
 application is opened the virus gets activated. It damages the formatting of documents and even may
 not allow editing or saving of documents.
- Trojan Horse: It is a code generally hidden in games or spreadsheets. Since they are hidden, the
 program seems to function as the user wants but actually it is destroying the program. A Trojan horse
 does not require a host program to embed itself. It is a complete program. Its main objective is to cause
 harm to the data. They can create bad sectors on the disk, destroy file allocation tables and cause the
 system to hang.













Worm: Worm is a program capable of replicating itself on a computer network. A worm also does not require a host as it is a self contained program. They generally travel from one computer to another across communication links on a network. They generally disrupt routine services.

Disk Defragmenter

The memory is used in small chunks randomly. Sometimes when a memory chunk of appropriate size is not available, the operating system breaks or fragments the files resulting in slower access to files. A disk defragmenter scans the hard disk for fragmented files and brings all the fragments together.

Backup Utility

This utility is used to create the copy of the complete or partial data stored in a disk or CD on any other disk. In case the hard disk crashes or some other system failure occurs, the files can be restored using backup software.

Compression Utility

This utility is used to compress large files. Compression is useful because it helps reduce resources usage and the file transmission on the network becomes easier.

Disk Cleaner

This utility scans for file that have not been accessed/used since long. Such files might be occupying huge amount of memory space. In that case the Disk Cleaner utility prompts the user to delete such files so as to create more space on the disk. If the files are important, the user might take a backup before deleting them.

File Management Tools

This utility helps the user in storing, indexing, searching and sorting files and folders on the system. The most commonly used tool is the Windows Explorer and Google Desktop.

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