Symptom described by customer:

Can not open any applications.

My evaluation findings:

I could not run any \*.exe program, including my virus utilities, Msconfig, etc….

This was true in normal mode and safe mode.

I slaved the HD into a workhorse and ran antivirus and Spyware Doctor on the HD.

It found several things including:

* **automated content enhancer**
* **customized platform advancer**

These two are viruses.

Once I deleted these, I located a utility to fix the \*.exe issue. The utility I found fixes some registry entries. I thought it ran in like, 5 seconds as nothing appeared on desktop but it actually took 1 – 2 minutes.

Once it completed, the problem was repaired and I continued my virus removal.

Here is the utility: <http://windowsxp.mvps.org/exefile.htm> Although it says it is for XP, it worked on a VISTA system.