

Xmetalfanx Computer Optimization Guide – rev 1.4

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Opening

Are you experiencing a computer that is not as responsive/"speedy" as it once was? We all experience that and this guide should help you do routine maintenance to make your computer run as optimally as possible.

Computers need time and care to operate properly, and some users tend to forget that. Not all of these have to be done, by all users. Just do the ones you are comfortable (*and if it's a family/work computer, ... one's you have PERMISSION to do*).

Some people go on their computer only a few times a week and they never really install anything, so some of the more "in depth" tasks .. are really not needed at all. In fact in that case other than a simple temp file cleaning from time to time, most of these steps may not be needed.

If you do not want to perform these tweaks, and/or optimizations, no problem. I hope to clear up any questions with what these suggestions are doing to your computer; though, if you are unsure, I encourage you to do your own research before you do anything I suggest or is suggested on any website.

If you are not comfortable (even after reading up on a subject) performing, DO NOT DO IT. I know "we all have to start somewhere" and despite some people over the years poking fun of me, "Screwing things up from time to time" is how I learned a lot that I know... in fact .. most that I know, I have studied on my own, and in some cases, by figuring out "what not to do" by screwing things up.

My Goals with these guides

I have a lot of different guide on my site and for some users it may be confusing to go all over the site for computer optimization tips in various areas. My hope is to summaries all of this information in one easy to read and understand guide that people may look over at their convenience.

I am not claiming any one task I list here is a "FIX ALL" to optimize your PC (Though I will list programs which can perform a number of tasks that I list, to make it easier for newer users)

Metaphor for optimizing

The example I use is Coupons ... Like coupons, maybe each task (each individual coupon) can do a little-fix here (or a little bit of money saved here") ... a medium-optimization there ... and together they all add up to a "happier computer"

Bottom line: I just want to help people .. .THAT Is my only goal .. I do not recommend a program for any other reason that it has helped me, or has helped a few people I know who used the same programs. I have no investment in recommending a certain program or site, other than I happen to really like it. I will try to give as many options for a type of program as possible, though I am sure there may be good options out there, that I have not found yet.

My assumptions about virus or malware infections

I am ASSUMING you have run an Anti-virus scan and Malware scan as a SUDDEN slowdown, *may* indicate an infection of some kind.

NOTE: Simply because you experience a computer that is not “as fast as it once was”, does NOT mean it 100% is infected....

- I WANT TO BE CLEAR ON THAT. I have seen people go “OH YOUR COMPUTER IS 100% INFECTED”, trying to ... (I will be honest, I do not know the reason) ... “Scare people” or try to trick people into buying a certain software. If the software is good, a company shouldn't have to resort to tricking users into buying it.

You should periodically run a Malware and Virus scan from time to time to make sure your system is infection free, anyway.

Optimization Sites (many advertised on TV)

These are those “as seen on TV” sites that I personally hate.

There are legit sites for this sort of thing (I haven't been there in years, however, “[PCPitStop](#)” comes to mind as a legit option)

- **The problem I have with these sites**
 1. The fact they they “find errors” (that are not errors, but simple “Most Recent Used Files” (aka MRU) in various programs ...
 2. Then flag this as a “PRIVACY INTRUJECTION” or something like that ... “Critical System Error” ... you get the idea
 3. “IF YOU WANT TO REMOVE/FIX THESE ERRORS, BUY OUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE”



THAT IS JUST WRONG, if you ask me. That is preying on people who just don't know any better, not having experience on computers before.

A Few things to remember

- Backup on a regular basis,
- *[up to a point (there are tasks like “flashing your BIOS chip” that can really damage your computer, if done incorrectly)]* **Do not be afraid to “mess around”** (key: remember point one ... “if you do not want to lose it, back it up”
- Not all Defragmenters, “Registry Cleaners”, ..etc are created equal. Some are better than others and some can EVEN damage your computer by removing “too much”, trying to get you to buy a program. This is shady practice ... faking a problem, and then trying to use that fake issue to get you to use your hard-earned money on a product.
 - NOTE: I AM NOT SAYING, all paid-for products are not any good.. I really want to say that.

(TODO's for Future releases:)

Explain WHY EACH STEP can help you optimize your computer

Add link and complete description on newer System Suite I found useful “Wise Care 360”

Step 1 : Check/Remove Un-needed Startup Items

** These are items that are always starting up at Windows boot-up, and while this is where you can spot suspicious entries (malware/viruses) I am not claiming the bulk of what you may see here are "bad".*

Unchecking these entries WILL NOT remove them from your system, but rather

1. Use **MSConfig** from the run box of the start menu and look at the start-up tab for anything that is un-needed at the time Windows boots up. Un-checking an item DOES NOT remove that item from your system..

2. How to do this:

- Go to the start menu and click the "Icon/Orb" and then go to "Run"
- Once that appears type in **MSConfig** and go to the Startup tab on the window that appears

3. Other Options (for programs to monitor/edit start-up items)

- Both of these programs are FREE



- **Win Patrol** (<http://www.winpatrol.com/>)
 - Scans AND Monitors Start-up items (AMONG other things)
 - Alerts you to changes made, and asks your permission on what you want to do



- **Autoruns from SysInternals** (<http://www.sysinternals.com/>)
 - Not for new users,
 - Power users who have never heard of this before can get a lot of use out of it.
 - DOESN'T monitor; however, it DOES allow you to get to any start-up item you can think of which is more than almost all other "start-up managing" programs out there

- **What to keep?**

- [OPTIONAL] A overall start-up monitoring program like **WinPatrol** (Freeware) [THIS CAN REALLY HELP DISABLING ITEMS LISTED FURTHER DOWN THE PAGE,]
- Firewalls
 - These keep your computer safe from hackers and other nuisance
- [OPTIONAL] Firewall "accent" programs
 - "Peerblock IP Blocker " , for instance.
- Anti-viruses
- Anything specifically related to drivers (although not "always" needed). I for instance leave ATITray Icon on, although i probably "COULD" remove it.
 - SOMETIMES such drivers being disabled here (say Lexmark from my experience) will not let

the device (say my Printer/Scanner Combo) function until I re-enabled this and then reboot

- [OPTIONAL] Spyware scanner's real time scanners
- **What to remove**
 - This just means **it's not starting when Windows starts**
 - This does not prevent the program from working when you click the icon on the desktop or start menu
 - Internet Messengers
 - (*Yahoo Messenger, Pidgin, MSN Messenger, ...etc*)
 - Anything that you may want to run from time to time but do not always have to have running,...
 - ESPECIALLY every-time you startup the computer ... uncheck/disable/...etc
 - As a side-note to the last point ... basically any type of program not listed above in the "what to keep" sections.... can *probably* be removed ...
 - Always research things before you just start removing entries)...

Step 2 - Run a Temporary/"Junk" File Cleaner

These will clear out internet browser temp files, regular temp files (say from a program installation), Browser Cookies, and more. A large number of temp files may not slow down certain systems (especially with larger and larger hard drives), though it is a good idea to clean them out every so often.

Some free options are



- **CCleaner** (<http://www.ccleaner.com/>)
 - One of the best and most well known programs for temp file/folder cleaning
 - Cleans cookies and many MRU list from various programs (See CCEnhancer below for details on this)
 - CCleaner, also has the options to remove custom (*which ones you select*) restore points (I have seen family member's computers with 25+ restore points, dating back to 3 or more weeks prior to the current date).. ... If you ask me, this is COMPLETELY un-needed to have this many of them.
 - While I am not for "removing all restore points" if you are going to want them (you CAN remove Restore Points entirely, if you so choice)



- **CCEnhancer** (http://majorgeeks.com/CCEnhancer_d6547.html)
 - This little app is for CCleaner and adding many more programs to it's "Database" ... It doesn't remove anything (CCleaner) unless you TELL IT to. ... you run this from time to time updating like a malware or antivirus scanner



- **Bleachbit** (<http://bleachbit.sourceforge.net/>)
 - There there are many good choices, if there is one I would pick other than "CCleaner", Bleachbit is the program I would choice
 - This is for Windows or Linux (that I know of... possibly more operating systems)
- **Cleanup**
 - Mainly for Internet Explorer users and the one I used before finding CCleaner ... I still like this one
 - *Some options in the System Suites located later in this guide are good choices too*

Step 3 - Defragment

Defragment the drive to prevent the hard drive from having to go to many different parts of the hard drive to open/save/manipulate files.

Two good choices (both 100% free)



- **Auslogics's Disc Defragmenter** (<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag>)



- **Defraggler** (<http://www.piriform.com/defraggler>)
 - From the makers of CCleaner

Step 4- Run an overall system optimization utility

(*** This could be step one, really***)

These run a series of common maintenance tasks that will help your computer perform to the best of its ability

- There are many “scam” sites or sites that find the problems, then tell you the only way to fix them is to buy their product. I will just list two options below; though, I have used both and neither are “intrusive” ... granted that if you do not know what you’re doing, they may seem confusing, though take your time and just read the manuals and you will be fine.
- Both of these make backups of any and all changes they make, so it is easy to restore a change back to your system’s original settings.



1. **JV16 Power Tools** (<http://www.macecraft.com/jv16-powertools-2014/>)

- The full version is not free, but a very good program,
- There IS A LITE version you can try that is free (<http://www.macecraft.com/powertools-lite-2013/>)
- I have used for YEARS



2. **Glary Utilities** (<http://www.glarysoft.com/>) (FREE)

- Some of the tasks this program can perform, are: Invalid Shortcut Fixer/Remover, Temp File Remover (scans whole HDD), Trace remover, Registry Cleaner, Start-up Manager, and most useful a new user (if you ask me) a 1-Click Maintenance feature that performs selected tasks automatically for the user.
- I WOULD SUGGEST using the free program first and seeing if that may suite your needs, before you pay for the pro version, that may have a few added



3. **Wise Care 360** (<http://www.wisecleaner.com/wisecare365.html>) (FREE)

- Some of the tasks this program can perform, are: Invalid Shortcut Fixer/Remover, Temp File Remover (scans whole HDD), Trace remover, Registry Cleaner, Start-up Manager, and most useful a new user (if you ask me) a 1-Click Maintenance feature that performs selected tasks automatically for the user.
- (Yes this is very similar to Glary Utilities, though I really do like both of them)

Other Mentions



- **Auslogics Boot Speed (SHAREWARE)**
 - This is one I have just tried and many of the “These items are effecting your computer's speed” type programs are offered in separate downloads by Auslogic's. ... Registry Cleaner, the defragmenter, are just two examples of this
 - Why pay for Boot Speed then?
 - It has many different freewares all on one location
 - This is not a problem for me, since I have no issue with downloading separate programs, that does the same thing, while being free, though some people rather pay for all of these tools “being on one location” and judging how much good Auslogic software has done for me, I wouldn't be against recommending people purchase Boot Speed
 - This does have a few addition tools and “suggestions” for say “disabling certain services”, and suggestions on daily maintenance for your computer

Section 2 - Advanced Information

** The "items here" are in no particular order as in you do not have to do them the "order" I list them overal*

Item 1 - Get a Hold on Restore Points

Along with the number of run-away system log entries, I have noticed on a few machines, restore points that are no longer needed. I say this for restore points for even more then a week prior (though if you only use your computer once a week, that comment should be adjusted)

- ***Here is a simple way to clean out some un-need entries.***



- Method 1 – [CCleaner](#)

- Open CCleaner and go to the "Tools" Panel (look on the left, under "Cleaner" and "Registry")
- from here Click "Restore points", On the Left portion of the screen
- From here what and how many you remove is up to you.
 - After I clear them out I have noticed a difference of 15 GB (yes Gigabytes) after clearing just some of the older entries out.
 - REMEMBER ... RESULTS MAY VERY ... there may only be one entry in the list
 - ALSO, I am sure, CCleaner does NOT TOUCH the most recent restore point, even if you want Ccleaner to remove it

Method 2 – Use [Restore Point Creator](#)

- Mirror 1 - http://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/restore_point_creator.html
- Mirror 2 - <http://www.softpedia.com/get/System/Back-Up-and-Recovery/Restore-Point-Creator.shtml>

Item 2: Registry Cleaners - ...

- These programs I don't just recommend any of them ... There are plenty of even free RC's that remove needed entries and although I know how to recover from a PC that will not boot due to this, not everyone does.



- **JV16 Power Tools**

- (<http://www.macecraft.com>)
- Without going into a complete description of everything this shareware can do, JV16 is one of the registry cleaners, that I have used for over 9 years now. Its not free, but I recommend this program 100%. Has helped me remove entries of pesky programs that have issues with the uninstallers



- **Reg Seeker**

- (<http://www.hoverdesk.net/freeware.htm>)
- Nice program to hunt for leftover entries and decent registry cleaner that has never removed "too much" on any of my computers.



- **Aulogic Registry Cleaner**

- (<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/registry-cleaner/>)
- has a very good free registry cleaner that (like any of Aulogic's other software) has never caused a problem on any of my systems

- **CCleaner -**

- (<http://www.ccleaner.com/>)
- Decent but "basic" registry cleaner... nothing comprehensive about it.

Item 3 - Registry Defrag

- As with all of the tasks in my guides, I am assuming this is your own computer or you at least have permission to perform these tasks.. If you do not have permission, then I can not be held responsible for what happens
- This is something that you really do not have to do often; though, if your computer is running sluggish, and its been a LONG time since you formatted or reinstalled a new version of Windows, you may want to give this a try.
- **Of all the 'optimizations', that I list in this guide, this is the one I would run the LEAST (if at all). This is not a "Must do" task, though for those that are willing to give it a try, ... Here it is:**
- These are just a few, I have found there may be other good freeware "Registry Defrag" programs out there. I have not run any "benchmarks" to compare prior mentioned "registry Defrag programs" (as in compared to each other). They are all good choices and you really cant go wrong with any of them.
- *I mean for you to run one of them and NOT one "reg defrag" one after the other, after the other.... I am sure there will be 100% NO HARM done, though there is just no need to do that.*
- **Program Recommendations:**



- **Glary Utilities's Reg Defrag** (<http://www.glarysoft.com/>) (FREE)
 - This is a good one ... nothing complicated about it ... I have just run this on both of my laptops
 - XP Sp3 – Removed/Defragged 7MB of the Registry ; Win 7 64bit – Removed/Defragged 14 MB of the Registry
- **Quicksys RegDefrag** (<http://www.regdefrag.com>)
 - Like Aulogic's (below) I have never had trouble with this (32 or 64bit operating systems) on any computer I have ever ran it on



- **Auslogics Reg Defrag** (<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/registry-defrag/>)
 - AGAIN, I **have** run into issues with "[JV16](#)" Registry "compactor"/Defrag ; although all of the programs (all freewares too) that I have tried from Aulogic seem to work great.
 - JV16 Power Tools is one of my favorite programs of all time and I have to say, the "Registry Compactor" component I had issues with (Windows 7 64bit wouldn't boot up normally) on my Windows 7 laptop, though Reg Compactor was perfectly fine on my 32bit Windows XP Machine
 - OTHER THAN THAT, EVERYTHING ELSE IN JV16 Power Tools is great and I have used it for years, and recommend it to every "power user"
 - I did not notice any "GREAT IMPROVEMENT" in Windows 7, after using this program, but it did remove (so it said) 1.2MB from my registry.
 - No Comment on Vista, but I have run this on XP 32bit and it was fine and Windows 7 64bit and it was a-ok as well

Item 4 - Event Log Related

- Set Event Log Size (ONE TIME task)

Adjusting so that logs "do not get out of control".

I added this since I have seen "out of control" logs on family member's computers with logs over 3 months, taking up over 100MB ..

This is not so much to clear out space (*though it ... does clear out space*), but rather gets rid of the log, recording and keeping, tons of un-needed entries.

1. **Right click the log you want to work with and select "properties" (I would recommend doing this for "Applications", "Security", and "System" Log**
2. **Lower the "Maximum log size" ... about 20,000KB is equal to 20 MB (or whatever you choose)**
 - You may want to reduce that number to a lower number of your choice... the system log will still function, it just will not keep as many entries, as long, AND take up less room on your computer.



[Event Log Explorer](#) is not a needed program, though it makes managing and looking through your Log files *much easier on Windows XP. YOU CAN install it on Windows 7, though the "default log viewer" in Vista (and above) has improved.

At the time I am revising this guide (May 17, 2012) I just installed the new version of Event Log Explorer and am looking for new settings and improvements. Still worth a try (if you ask me) even if you like the default event log viewer.

Saving/Clearing Log in Vista/ 7

1. Go to Start and in the "search box' right above the start menu, start typing in "eve .." and eventual "Event Viewer" comes up
2. Here you see three columns ... right click the left most panel where it says "*Windows logs*"
3. STEP 1: [Optional] Saving Application, Security, and/or System Log
 - Right Click the log you want to work on's icon in left-most panel and select "Save All Events as" and then select location you want to save the log file as
4. STEP 2: Clear Applications, Security, and/or System log
 - Select The log file you want to work with, in the left panel and right click "Clear Log" ... it will give you 3 options "Save and Clear" (you can skip saving if you did step 1, above), "Clear" and "Cancel"
 - Here you would select Clear or Saving and Clear

Closing

My Website:

For more tips, programs suggestions, and security information, please visit my sites at <http://xmetalfanx.awardspace.us> or <http://xmetalfanx.x10.mx/> .. When I have fully uploaded my files, both sites will be exactly the same (think of them as mirrors). I have had bad luck with web-hosts, and did not originally intended to “have a mirror setup” for my site, though once the idea came to me, it seems to make sense.

When fully uploaded, both sites will be considered my “homepage” and I do not have any preference as one host as a “homepage” and the other as a “Mirror of my homepage”.

Different web-hosts I have had in the past, have canceled service without notifying me and when signing up for another host, I have had to wait, so my site was offline (off the internet) for in some cases a week or more at a time. I figure even if one of these hosts, stop service, then I still have the other host to refer people to.

This guide was typed in:



- **Libre Office**..(Free Office Client for a variety of Operating Systems)
 - (<http://www.libreoffice.org/>)

Thanks

I want to give thanks to sites, programmers, and friends, along with people I never met, but give great advice .. I know I may forget some (there are so many I want to thank, but hopefully I will include everyone I want



- **Ghacks.net** – News, “new” (to me) programs, tech advice and news
 - Of course I mean the contributors to Ghack, not just the webmasters themselves
- Programmers and developers (along with all beta testers, ...etc) of the mentioned programs...
 - I am constantly updating this “Guide”, so I am not sure if listing all programs here would really be “smart” though if you see your program listed, I thank you for making a great product