



Clean Up Your PC in 30 Minutes

By Christopher Hopkins, Chair, Law Practice Technology Committee

Whether you picked up a new PC during the holidays or if you question whether your current machine is bogged down, an investment of thirty minutes will fine-tune your computer. You do not need to spend money or be a computer expert (yes, even a lawyer can do it). Take advantage of a few free downloads and run several computer scans to avoid most common computer problems.

■ Know what's inside your PC:

download a small program called "Belarc Advisor" which inspects your PC and tells you, in detail, about the hardware inside your computer. Under RAM, you should have at least 2 gig for netbook/laptops and ideally 4-6 gig for desktops (or laptops running Trial Director or Powerpoint). If you do not have enough RAM, that may be the one upgrade worthy of \$50-\$100 investment. Other critical information

about the processor, size of your hard drive, and installed software is outlined in the Belarc report.

■ Uninstall What You Don't Need:

download "PC Decrapifier" and analyze your computer for marketing, demo or otherwise un-used software which you can delete. Better still, download "Revo Uninstaller" which will provide a list what software exists on your computer so that you can weed out unnecessary programs (this application also allows you to fix problems associated with old files and outdated programs).

■ Update:

allow Windows to perform a complete update to ensure you have the latest security protections (in most versions of Internet Explorer, you can find "Windows Update" under "Safety"). If you run Office or other Microsoft programs, these will also be updated.

■ Battle Viruses:

there are a number of expensive anti-virus programs which

work well however there are likewise a number of free anti-virus programs which provide the same services. Do a Google search for "Free AVG 2011" and, after installing, allow it to update its virus definitions and run a full computer scan (you do not want to have run than one anti-virus program running on the same machine). This will protect your machine – even inspect your emails –at no charge.

■ Battle Spyware:

spyware and other "malware" comes in various forms and no single free anti-spyware program will solve the problem. The solution is not spending money – just download and periodically run more than one anti-spyware program such as Spybot Search and Destroy, SuperAntiSpyware, and Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (unlike anti-virus applications, it is OK to install more than one anti-spyware scanner). Spybot is especially helpful since it will clean up your PC's registry (a haven for spyware and software glitches) as well as immunize your PC from thousands of common invaders. Run these programs every 1-3 months or as needed.

■ Run a Tight Ship:

download and install WinPatrol which will run each time you start your computer. Use WinPatrol to turn off programs which start up automatically this will hasten your startup time and likely make your PC run faster. Likewise, download and run the latest version of Ccleaner, which will rid your hard drive and system of temporary files, outdated extensions, and a host of other potential problems which develop over time and slow down your PC. Run Ccleaner every 1-3 months.

■ Undelete Files / Fix Stalled Printer:

finally, be prepared to recover accidentally deleted files and to clear your printer queue when printer problems arise. Use Google to find "Recuva64" which you can install and save for when you need to "undelete" a file. Likewise, search and download "StalledPrinterRepair" and save it until the next time your printer jams and you need to reset the printer queue.

Christopher B. Hopkins is the chair of the PBCBA Technology Committee and a shareholder at Akerman Senterfitt. Christopher.Hopkins@Akerman.com.

probate litigation

pankauski

LAW FIRM
P.L.L.C.

(561)

514 - 0906

support@pankauskilawfirm.com