Category: Computer Hardware

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Skills required: Anyone can do it!

What: **Improve Computer Performance - Defrag Disk Drive**

Why: As you add and delete files and programs, you leave thousands of little empty spaces all over your hard drive. When you add a new program or document to your computer, the computer uses these vacate spaces to store the new information. However, the empty space it starts with may not be big enough to store the entire file so it store the remainder in other vacate spaces. It is similar to you putting each piece of a group of fabric intended for a single project into any available space you can find. When you finally get ready to start your project you waste precious time going to all the different places to re-gather the fabric group.

With a fragmented drive, the computer does the same thing – waste time going to all the different places to find all the pieces necessary to run a program. Defragging the drive is the same as taking all your fabric out off you storage shelves and then putting the pieces back on the shelf in a meaning order so that when you get ready to start a project you only go to one place to find all the needed fabric.

To help keep my computer running smoothly, I defrag my disk once a month, even if the defragging program says I don't need to. Why wait until I am in the middle of a project and discover that the disk is a wreck? I am a huge believer in preventative maintenance because I don't handle surprises well!

How: Windows XP Computers -

It is best to close all programs and run Disk Cleanup, but it is not mandatory. Next, beginning with the Start icon in the lower left corner of your computer screen, click the links in this order:

Start
All Programs
Accessories
System Tools
Disk Defragmenter
Defragment

Sit back and watch. It is kind of fun to watch the "Red" bands disappear or if you have other things to do, just let it run. It takes awhile and if you disk is really fragmented it can take as long as a couple of hours. Red bands represent fragmented files. When the program finishes, 90% of what you see should be blues and greens. This is good!

Windows Vista Computers -

The procedure is about the same.

Start
Programs
Accessories
System Tools
Disk Defragmenter
Defragment Now

The main difference is that you don't have anything to watch. Vista runs the defrag program in the background (out of sight). With Vista you can continue to use your computer because your use has priority over the defrag program.

One thing you can do with Vista that you cannot easily do with XP, is schedule automatic defragging. Look just about the Defragment Now button and you will see a checkbox labeled "Run on a schedule" and a button labeled "Modify Schedule". It is easy to use. Just follow the prompts.

I hope this information has made your day a little better. Drop us a line at support@NancyPrince.com with suggestions on things you would like to learn more about.

To your success,

Techie Tom