

# COMPUTER GURU

By Don Benjamin

## How to “Clean” Your PC

Does your computer seem slow these days? Perhaps you’ve been told it’s because: 1. Your Downloads folder has too many files; 2. The Windows Registry needs optimizing; or 3. Computers get slower as they age. Maybe you’ve seen ads on TV or the web for software such as CCleaner, CleanMyPC, or PC Tune-up that will “Make your PC run like new again.”

But none of these “problems” will cause your computer to run slower, and cleaning programs aren’t necessary. In fact, they could mess up your PC by tinkering with system files (especially the Windows Registry) that can’t be easily fixed.

If your computer is more than, say, five years old, it may seem slower because: 1. Its internal processor can’t handle the demands of new software or the increasingly complex web pages

with embedded graphics; 2. Your internet speed isn’t up to the task of downloading more on-line content; or 3. Your newer mobile devices (smart phones or tablets) are much faster, making your PC seem slow by comparison. In other words, your computer is as fast as it’s always been, you’re just requiring it to do more.

Of course, malware can slow down any computer regardless of age, but there are programs (not PC “cleaners”) to fix that.

That doesn’t mean you don’t need to tidy up your PC now and then to get rid of unneeded files that accumulate on your hard drive, if only to give you peace of mind. But the software you need to do this is already part of Windows or MacOS. It’s easy to run and keeps you from messing up your computer.

Here’s what you can do to keep your computer running smoothly:



Windows	Mac	Notes
Weekly		
Restart your <b>computer</b>		Allows the operating system to remove its temporary files.
Check <b>Anti-virus</b> program	(Optional for Mac computers)	Make sure it’s running and up to date.
Scan for <b>malware</b>		Perform scan (if not automatic).
Monthly		
Run <b>Disk Cleanup</b>	Run <b>Storage Manager</b>	Lets you review and remove old files and other temporary files created by your browser, et al.
Clean out <b>Downloads</b> Folder		Not a good place to keep files. Either move them into documents folders or photos or delete.
Review <b>Programs and Features</b> list	Review <b>Applications</b>	Check for software you didn’t intentionally install.
Empty <b>Recycle Bin</b>	Empty <b>Trash</b>	Obvious (I delete anything more than 30 days old).

**Remember: Neither Microsoft nor Apple will call to you claiming your computer has a problem. Do not allow any “tech support” to “fix” your computer remotely!**

Drop by the PSRC Tech Lab if you need help. Our assistants are available Tuesdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m., and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to noon.