

Re: Spyware/Adaware infestation

Source:

http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/microsoft.public.windowsxp.security_admin/2005-03/1987.html

From: DougM (*DougM_at_discussions.microsoft.com*)

Date: 03/25/05

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The safe-mode remark resulted from a misreading of the Help Manual...sorry. I am so frustrated that when the lights blink in the house I think that the spyware has gotten into my home's wiring. Thank you for your suggestions. I will continue to research this problem.

"Shenan Stanley" wrote:

> *DougM wrote:*

> > *A Dell computer, running XP Home, is infested with spyware to the*

> > *point that it is practically useless. Spybot and Ad-Aware will not*

> > *touch them. Webroot's SpySweeper does little good, they keep coming*

> > *back. I tried to boot the computer to Safe-Mode (F8) to run the above*

> > *and found I could not get Safe-Mode up. I finally noticed that each*

> > *time the computer started booting up the Num/Lock key on the keyboard*

> > *lit up which stops my booting to Safe-Mode. This is really scary.*

> > *Can anyone offer some suggestions on where to go from here.*

>

> *CWShredder, Bazooka Scanner, MS AntiSpyware BETA (testing, but works well),*

> *and HijackThis are a place to start.*

> *Make sure that with LavaSoft Ad-Aware, you are running SE, not 6. Also make*

> *sure you do a FULL System Scan, not smartscan.*

>

> *Otherwise you may consider backing up and redoing your system if you cannot*

> *get it clean and you have no friend (locally) who can help you out with the*

> *cleanup.*

>

> *You said you could not get into Safe Mode – why not?*

>

> *And Num-Lock – that is not really an issue. That could be a registry*

> *setting or a BIOS setting.*

>

> *Tip 10 lists AntiSpyware apps. Tip 9 lists AntiVirus. Do a full scan with*

> *some of the online antivirus softwares too. Make sure your FIREWALL is*

> *enabled during all of it and leave NO exceptions.*

>

>

> *Microsoft has these suggestions for Protecting your computer from the*

- > various "bad things" that could happen to you/it:
- >
- > *Protect your PC*
- > <http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/>
- >
- >
- > *Although those tips are fantastic, there are many things you should*
- > *know above and beyond what is there as well as other methods and*
- > *applications you can use to protect yourself. Below I have detailed*
- > *out many steps that can not only help you cleanup a problem PC but*
- > *keep it clean and secure as well as running at its top performance mark.*
- >
- > *I know this list can seem intimidating – it is quite long and a lot*
- > *to take in for a novice – but I assure you that one trip through this*
- > *list and you will understand your computer and the options available*
- > *to you for protecting your data much better and that the next time*
- > *you review these steps, the time it takes will be greatly reduced.*
- >
- > *Let's take the cleanup of your computer step-by-step. Yes, it will take*
- > *up some of your time – but consider what you use your computer*
- > *for and how much you would dislike it if all of your stuff on your*
- > *computer went away because you did not "feel like" performing some*
- > *simple maintenance tasks – think of it like changing the oil in your car,*
- > *changing the air filter on your home A/C unit, paying your bills on time,*
- > *etc.*
- >
- > *Let's go through some maintenance first that should only have to be done*
- > *once (mostly):*
- >
- > *Tip (1):*
- > *Locate all of the software (the installation media – CDs, etc) that you*
- > *have installed on your computer. Collect these CDs into a single pile*
- > *and locate the original installation media (CDs, disks) in a central and*
- > *safe place along with their CD keys and such. Make backups of these*
- > *installation media sets using your favorite copying method (CD Burner and*
- > *application, Disk copier, etc.) You'll be glad to know that if you have*
- > *a CD burner, you may be able to use a free application to make a*
- > *duplicate copy of your CDs. One such application is ISORecorder:*
- >
- > *ISORecorder home page (with general instructions on use):*
- > <http://isorecorder.alexfeinman.com/isorecorder.htm>
- >
- > *Pre-SP2 version:*
- > <http://isorecorder.alexfeinman.com/IsoRecorder/download.asp>
- >
- > *Post-SP2 beta version:*
- > <http://isorecorder.alexfeinman.com/download/ISORecorderV2B2.zip>
- >
- > *More full function applications (free) for CD/DVD burning would be:*
- >
- > *DeepBurner Free*

- > <http://www.deepburner.com/>
- >
- > CDBurnerXP Pro
- > <http://www.cdburnerxp.se/>
- >
- > Another Option would be to search the web with Pricewatch.com or
- > Dealsites.net and find deals on Nero and/or Roxio.
- >
- >
- > Tip (2):
- > Empty your Internet Explorer Temporary Internet Files and make sure the
- > maximum size for this is small enough not to cause trouble in the future.
- > Empty your Temporary Internet Files and shrink the size it stores to a
- > size between 128MB and 512MB..
- >
- > – Open ONE copy of Internet Explorer.
- > – Select TOOLS –> Internet Options.
- > – Under the General tab in the "Temporary Internet Files" section, do the
- > following:
- > – Click on "Delete Cookies" (click OK)
- > – Click on "Settings" and change the "Amount of disk space to use:" to
- > something between 128MB and 512MB. (Betting it is MUCH larger right
- > now.)
- > – Click OK.
- > – Click on "Delete Files" and select to "Delete all offline contents"
- > (the checkbox) and click OK. (If you had a LOT, this could take 2–10
- > minutes or more.)
- > – Once it is done, click OK, close Internet Explorer, re–open Internet
- > Explorer.
- >
- >
- > Tip (3):
- > If things are running a bit slow or you have an older system
- > (1.5GHz or less and 256MB RAM or less) then you may want to look into
- > tweaking the performance a bit by turning off some of the memory
- > using Windows XP "prettifications". The fastest method is:
- >
- > Control Panel --> System --> Advanced tab --> Performance section,
- > Settings button. Then choose "adjust for best performance" and you
- > now have a Windows 2000/98 look which turned off many of the annoying
- > "prettifications" in one swift action. You can play with the last
- > three checkboxes to get more of an XP look without many of the
- > other annoyances. You could also grab and install/mess with one
- > (or more) of the Microsoft Powertoy – TweakUI in particular:
- >
- > <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>
- >
- >
- > Tip (4):
- > Understanding what a good password might be is vital to your
- > personal and system security. You may not need to password your home

- > computer, as you may have it in a locked area (your home) where no
- > one else has access to it. Remember, however, that locked area is
- > unlocked when you access the Internet unless you are taking proper
- > precautions. Also, you aren't always "in that locked area" when using
- > your computer online – meaning you likely have usernames and passwords
- > associated with web sites and the likes that you would prefer other
- > people do not discover/use. This is why you should understand and
- > utilize good passwords.
- >
- > Good passwords are those that meet these general rules
- > (mileage may vary):
- >
- > Passwords should contain at least six characters, and the character
- > string should contain at least three of these four character types:
- > – uppercase letters
- > – lowercase letters
- > – numerals
- > – nonalphanumeric characters (e.g., *, %, &, !)
- >
- > Passwords should not contain your name/logon name. Passwords should
- > be unique to you and easy to remember. One method many people are
- > using today is to make up a phrase that describes a point in their
- > life and then turning that phrase into their password by using only
- > certain letters out of each word in that phrase. It's much better
- > than using your birthday month/year or your anniversary in a pure
- > sense. For example, let's say my phrase is:
- > "Moved to new home in 2004"
- > I could come up with this password from that:
- > "Mv2n3whmN04"
- >
- > The password tip is in the "one time" section, but I highly
- > recommend you periodically change your passwords. The suggested time
- > varies, but I will throw out a "once in every 3 to 6 months for
- > every account you have."
- >
- >
- > Tip (5):
- > This tip is also "questionable" in the "one time" section. However,
- > if properly setup, this one can be pretty well ignored for most people
- > after the initial "fiddle-with" time.
- >
- > Why you should use a computer firewall..
- > <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/viruses/fwbenefits.mspx>
- >
- > You should, in some way, use a firewall. Hardware (like a nice
- > Cable Modem/DSL router) or software is up to you. Many use both of
- > these. The simplest one to use is the hardware one, as most people
- > don't do anything they need to configure their NAT device for and
- > those who do certainly will not mind fiddling with the equipment to
- > make things work for them. Next in the line of "simplicity" would
- > have to be the built-in Windows Firewall of Windows XP. In SP2 it

- > *is turned on by default. It is not difficult to turn on in any*
- > *case, however:*
- >
- > *Enable/Disable the Internet Connection Firewall (Pre-SP2):*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/283673>
- >
- > *More information on the Internet Connection Firewall (Pre-SP2):*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/320855>
- >
- > *Post-SP2 Windows Firewall Information/guidance:*
- > <http://snipurl.com/atal>
- >
- > *The trouble with the Windows Firewall is that it only keeps things*
- > *out. Truthfully, for most people who maintain their system in other*
- > *ways, this is MORE than sufficient. However, you may feel otherwise.*
- > *If you want to know when one of your applications is trying to obtain*
- > *access to the outside world so you can stop it, then you will have to*
- > *install a third-party application and configure/maintain it. I have*
- > *compiled a list with links of some of the better known/free firewalls*
- > *you can choose from:*
- >
- > *ZoneAlarm (Free and up)*
- > <http://snipurl.com/6ohg>
- >
- > *Kerio Personal Firewall (KPF) (Free and up)*
- > http://www.kerio.com/kpf_download.html
- >
- > *Outpost Firewall from Agnitum (Free and up)*
- > <http://www.agnitum.com/download/>
- >
- > *Sygate Personal Firewall (Free and up)*
- > http://smb.sygate.com/buy/download_buy.htm
- >
- > *Symantec's Norton Personal Firewall (~\$25 and up)*
- > <http://www.symantec.com/sabu/nis/npf/>
- >
- > *BlackICE PC Protection (\$39.95 and up)*
- > <http://blackice.iss.net/>
- >
- > *Perhaps you can find the right firewall for your situation in that*
- > *list and set it up/configure it. Every firewall MAY require some*
- > *maintenance. Essentially checking for patches or upgrades (this*
- > *goes for hardware and software solutions) is the extent of this*
- > *maintenance – but you may also have to configure your firewall to*
- > *allow some traffic depending on your needs. Also, don't stack these*
- > *things. Running more than one firewall will not make you safer*
- > *– it would likely (in fact) negate some protection you gleamed*
- > *from one or the other firewalls you run.*
- >
- >
- >

- > Now that you have some of the more basic (one-time) things down..
- > Let's go through some of the steps you should take periodically to
- > maintain a healthy and stable windows computer. If you have not
- > done some of these things in the past, they may seem tedious at
- > first – however, they will become routine and some can even be
- > automatically scheduled.
- >
- >
- > Tip (6):
- > The system restore feature is a new one – first appearing in Windows
- > ME and then sticking around for Windows XP. It is a VERY useful
- > feature – if you keep it maintained and use it to your advantage.
- > However, remember that the system restore pretty much tells you in
- > the name what it protects – "system" files. Your documents, your
- > pictures, your stuff is NOT system files – so you should also look
- > into some backup solution.
- >
- > I'll mainly work around Windows XP, as that is what the bulk of this
- > document is about. I will, however, point out a single place for you
- > poor souls still stuck in Windows ME where you can get information on
- > maintaining your system right now:
- >
- > Windows ME Computer Health:
- > <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsME/using/computerhealth/articles/>
- >
- > Pay close attention to the sections:
- > (in order)
- > – Clean up your hard disk
- > – Check for errors by running ScanDisk
- > – Defragment your hard disk
- > – Roll back the clock with System Restore
- >
- > Now back to the point at hand – maintaining your system restore in
- > Windows XP SHOULD be automatic – but I have seen the automatic go wrong
- > too many times not to suggest the following.. Whenever you think about
- > it (after doing a once-over on your machine once a month or so would
- > be optimal) – clear out your System Restore and create a manual
- > restoration point. Why? Too many times have I seen the system restore
- > files go corrupt or get a virus in them, meaning you could not or
- > did not want to restore from them. By clearing it out periodically
- > you help prevent any corruption from happening and you make sure you
- > have at least one good "snapshot".
- > (This, of course, will erase any previous restore point you have.)
- >
- > – Turn off System Restore.
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/310405>
- > – Reboot.
- > – Turn on System Restore.
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/310405>
- > – Make a Manual Restoration Point.
- > <http://snipurl.com/68nx>

- >
- > *That covers your system files, but doesn't do anything for the files*
- > *that you are REALLY worried about – yours! For that you need to look*
- > *into backups. You can either manually copy your important files, folders,*
- > *documents, spreadsheets, emails, contacts, pictures, drawings and so on*
- > *to an external location (CD/DV – any disk of some sort, etc) or you can*
- > *use the backup tool that comes with Windows XP:*
- >
- > *How To Use Backup to Back Up Files and Folders on Your Computer*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/308422>
- >
- > *Yes – you still need some sort of external media to store the results*
- > *on, but you could schedule the backup to occur when you are not around,*
- > *then burn the resultant data onto CD or DVD or something when you are*
- > *(while you do other things!)*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (7):*
- > *You should sometimes look through the list of applications that are*
- > *installed on your computer. The list MIGHT surprise you. There are more*
- > *than likely things in there you KNOW you never use – so why have them*
- > *there? There may even be things you KNOW you did not install and*
- > *certainly do not use (maybe don't WANT to use.)*
- >
- > *This web site should help you get started at looking through this list:*
- >
- > *How to Uninstall Programs*
- > <http://snipurl.com/8v6b>
- >
- > *A word of warning – Do NOT uninstall anything you think you MIGHT need*
- > *in the future unless you have completed Tip (1) and have the installation*
- > *media and proper keys for use backed up somewhere safe!*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (8):*
- > *Patches and Updates!*
- >
- > *This one cannot be stressed enough. It is SO simple, yet so neglected*
- > *by many people. It is especially simple for the critical Windows patches!*
- > *Microsoft put in an AUTOMATED feature for you to utilize so that you do*
- > *NOT have to worry yourself about the patching of the Operating System:*
- >
- > *How to configure and use Automatic Updates in Windows XP*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/306525>
- >
- > *However, not everyone wants to be a slave to "automation", and that is*
- > *fine – as long as you are willing to do things manually. Admittedly, I*
- > *prefer this method on some of my more critical systems.*
- >
- > *Windows Update*
- > <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>

- >
- > *Go there and scan your machine for updates. Always get the critical ones*
- > *as you see them. Write down the KB##### or Q##### you see when*
- > *selecting the updates and if you have trouble over the next few days,*
- > *go into your control panel (Add/Remove Programs), match up the latest*
- > *numbers you downloaded recently (since you started noticing an issue) and*
- > *uninstall them. If there was more than one (usually is), uninstall them*
- > *one by one – with a few hours of use in between, to see if the problem*
- > *returns. Yes – the process is not perfect (updating) and can cause trouble*
- > *like I mentioned – but as you can see, the solution isn't that bad – and is*
- > *MUCH better than the alternatives.*
- >
- > *Windows is not the only product you likely have on your PC. The*
- > *manufacturers of the other products usually have updates as well. New*
- > *versions of almost everything come out all the time – some are free, some*
- > *are pay – some you can only download if you are registered – but it is best*
- > *to check. Just go to their web pages and look under their support and*
- > *download sections. For example, for Microsoft Office update, you should*
- > *visit:*
- >
- > *Microsoft Office Updates*
- > *<http://office.microsoft.com/>*
- > *(and select "downloads")*
- >
- > *You also have hardware on your machine that requires drivers to interface*
- > *with the operating system. You have a video card that allows you to see on*
- > *your screen, a sound card that allows you to hear your PC's sound output and*
- > *so on. Visit those manufacturer web sites for the latest downloadable*
- > *drivers for your hardware/operating system. Always (IMO) get the*
- > *manufacturers' hardware driver over any Microsoft offers. On the Windows*
- > *Update site I mentioned earlier, I suggest NOT getting their hardware*
- > *drivers – no matter how tempting. First – how do you know what hardware*
- > *you have in your computer? Invoice or if it is up and working now – take*
- > *inventory:*
- >
- > *Belarc Advisor*
- > *http://belarc.com/free_download.html*
- >
- > *EVEREST Home Edition*
- > *<http://www.lavalys.com/products/download.php?pid=1&lang=en>*
- >
- > *Once you know what you have, what next? Go get the latest driver for your*
- > *hardware/OS from the manufacturer's web page. For example, let's say you*
- > *have an NVidia chipset video card or ATI video card, perhaps a Creative*
- > *Labs sound card or C-Media chipset sound card...*
- >
- > *NVidia Video Card Drivers*
- > *<http://www.nvidia.com/content/drivers/drivers.asp>*
- >
- > *ATI Video Card Drivers*
- > *<http://www.atitech.com/support/driver.html>*

- >
- > *Creative Labs Sound Device*
- > <http://us.creative.com/support/downloads/>
- >
- > *C–Media Sound Device*
- > http://www.cmedia.com.tw/e_download_01.htm
- >
- > *Then install these drivers. Updated drivers are usually more stable and*
- > *may provide extra benefits/features that you really wished you had before.*
- >
- > *As for Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Windows XP, Microsoft has made this*
- > *particular patch available in a number of ways. First, there is the*
- > *Windows Update web page above. Then there is a direct download site*
- > *and finally, you can order the FREE CD from Microsoft.*
- >
- > *Direct Download of Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Windows XP*
- > <http://snipurl.com/8bqy>
- >
- > *Order the Free Windows XP SP2 CD*
- > <http://snipurl.com/8umo>
- >
- >
- >
- > *Tip (9):*
- > *What about the dreaded word in the computer world, VIRUS?*
- >
- > *Well, there are many products to choose from that will help you prevent*
- > *infections from these horrid little applications. Many are FREE to the*
- > *home user. Which one you choose is a matter of taste, really. I wouldn't*
- > *list one here I had not personally used – and they all work. Many people*
- > *have emotional attachments or performance issues with one or another*
- > *AntiVirus software. Try some out, read reviews and decide for yourself*
- > *which you like more:*
- >
- > *avast! (Free and up)*
- > <http://www.avast.com/>
- >
- > *AVG Anti–Virus System (Free and up)*
- > <http://www.grisoft.com/>
- >
- > *AntiVir (Free and up)*
- > <http://www.free-av.com/>
- >
- > *RAV AntiVirus Online Virus Scan (Free!)*
- > <http://www.ravantivirus.com/scan/>
- >
- > *Symantec (Norton) AntiVirus (~\$11 and up)*
- > http://www.symantec.com/nav/nav_9xnt/
- >
- > *Kaspersky Anti–Virus (~\$49.95 and up)*
- > <http://www.kaspersky.com/products.html>
- >

- > *Panda Antivirus Titanium (~\$39.95 and up)*
- > <http://www.pandasoftware.com/>
- > *(Free Online Scanner: <http://www.pandasoftware.com/activescan/>)*
- >
- > *McAfee VirusScan (~\$11 and up)*
- > <http://www.mcafee.com/>
- >
- > *Trend Micro (~\$49.95 and up)*
- > <http://www.trendmicro.com/en/home/us/personal.htm>
- > *(Free Online Scanner:*
- > http://housecall.trendmicro.com/housecall/start_corp.asp)
- >
- > *Untested (by me):*
- > *eTrust EZ Antivirus (\$29.95 and up)*
- > <https://www2.my-etrust.com/commerce/buy.it.cfm>
- >
- > *Most of them have automatic update capabilities. You will have to*
- > *look into the features of the one you choose. Whatever one you finally*
- > *settle with – be SURE to keep it updated (I recommend at least daily) and*
- > *perform a full scan periodically (yes, it protects you actively, but a*
- > *full scan once a month at 4AM probably won't bother you.)*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (10):*
- > *The most rampant infestation at the current time concerns SPYWARE/ADWARE.*
- > *I hate this stuff. It has no purpose. I have seen people try to justify*
- > *it over and over – it's worthless. It slows down your PC, it can send*
- > *your private information to people you'll never meet and did I mention,*
- > *it's worthless. You need to eliminate it from your machine.*
- >
- > *If you use P2P software, this COULD make that stop working. Find some*
- > *decent software to do the same thing – what you are currently using is*
- > *crap.*
- >
- > *Anyway – there is no one software that cleans and immunizes you against*
- > *everything. Antivirus software – you only needed one. Firewall, you*
- > *only needed one. AntiSpyware – you may need several. I have a list and*
- > *I recommend you use at least the first 5. I know that sounds like a lot,*
- > *and you may be saying "But you said earlier that I should clean my system,*
- > *now you are telling me to install more software – 5 pieces in fact!" Okay,*
- > *I get your point, but please consider that this stuff has prevented the*
- > *install of the latest service pack for some people, it has the potential*
- > *to slow and crater your PC, it can send your private information around*
- > *the world to people you do not know – it is all around BAD.*
- >
- > *First – make sure you have NOT installed "Rogue AntiSpyware". There are*
- > *people out there who created AntiSpyware products that actually install*
- > *spyware of their own! You need to avoid these:*
- >
- > *Rogue/Suspect Anti-Spyware Products & Web Sites*
- > http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm

- >
- > *Also, you can always visit this site..*
- > <http://mvps.org/winhelp2002/unwanted.htm>
- > *For more updated information.*
- >
- > *Then, my suggestion again is that you at least install the first five of*
- > *these: (Install, Run, Update, Scan with..)*
- >
- > *Lavasoft AdAware (Free and up)*
- > <http://www.lavasoft.de/support/download/>
- > *(How-to: <http://snipurl.com/atdn>)*
- >
- > *Spybot Search and Destroy (Free!)*
- > <http://www.safer-networking.net/en/download/index.html>
- > *(How-to: <http://snipurl.com/atdk>)*
- >
- > *Bazooka Adware and Spyware Scanner (Free!)*
- > <http://www.kephyr.com/spywarescanner/>
- > *(How-to: <http://snipurl.com/ate3>)*
- >
- > *SpywareBlaster (Free!)*
- > <http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/sbdownload.html>
- > *(How-to: <http://snipurl.com/ate6>)*
- >
- > *IE-SPYAD (Free!)*
- > <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ehowes/www/resource.htm>
- > *(How-to: <http://snipurl.com/ate7>)*
- >
- > *CWShredder (Free!)*
- > http://www.softbasket.com/download/s_8114.shtml
- >
- > *Hijack This! (Free)*
- > <http://mjc1.com/mirror/hjt/>
- > *(Tutorial: <http://hjt.wizardsofwebsites.com/>)*
- >
- > *ToolbarCop (Free!)*
- > <http://windowsxp.mvps.org/toolbarcop.htm>
- >
- > *Browser Security Tests*
- > <http://www.jasons-toolbox.com/BrowserSecurity/>
- >
- > *Popup Tester*
- > <http://www.popupstest.com/>
- >
- > *The Cleaner (49.95 and up)*
- > <http://www.moosoft.com/>
- >
- > *If used properly, you should have a malware free system now. The last*
- > *two of the first five I suggest you install are immunization applications.*
- > *None of these programs (in these editions) run in the background unless you*
- > *TELL them to. The space they take up and how easy they are to use greatly*

- > *makes up for any inconvenience you may be feeling.*
- >
- > *Unfortunately, although that will lessen your popups on the Internet/while*
- > *you are online, it won't eliminate them. I have looked at a lot of options,*
- > *seen a lot of them used in production with people who seem to attract popups*
- > *like a plague, and I only have a few other suggestions that should help.*
- > *This*
- > *one ends up serving double duty (search engine and popup stopper in one):*
- >
- > *The Google Toolbar (Free!)*
- > <http://toolbar.google.com/>
- >
- > *Yeah – it adds a bar to your Internet Explorer – but it's a useful one. You*
- > *can search from there anytime with one of the best search engines on the*
- > *planet (IMO.) And the fact it stops most popups – wow – BONUS! If you*
- > *don't like that suggestion, then I am just going to say you go to*
- > *www.google.com and search for other options.*
- >
- > *Please notice that Windows XP SP2 does help stop popups as well.*
- >
- > *Another option is to use an alternative Web browser. I suggest*
- > *"Mozilla Firefox", as it has some great features and is very easy to use:*
- >
- > *Mozilla Firefox*
- > <http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>
- >
- > *One more suggestion is to disable your Windows Messenger service. This*
- > *service is not used frequently (if at all) by the normal home user and*
- > *in cooperation with a good firewall, is generally unnecessary. Microsoft*
- > *has instructions on how to do this for Windows XP here:*
- >
- > <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/using/howto/communicate/stopspam.asp>
- >
- >
- > *So your machine is pretty clean and up to date now. If you use the sections*
- > *above as a guide, it should stay that way as well! There are still a few*
- > *more*
- > *little things you can do to keep your machine running in top shape.*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (11):*
- > *You should periodically check your hard drive(s) for errors and defragment*
- > *them. Only defragment after you have cleaned up your machine of*
- > *outside parasites and never defragment as a solution to a quirkiness in*
- > *your system. It may help speed up your system, but it should be clean*
- > *before you do this.*
- >
- > *How to use Disk Cleanup*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=310312>
- >
- > *How to scan your disks for errors*

- > <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=315265>
- >
- > *How to Defragment your hard drives*
- > <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=314848>
- >
- > *I would personally perform the above steps at least once every three months.*
- > *For most people this should be sufficient, but if the difference you notice*
- > *afterwards is greater than you think it should be, lessen the time in*
- > *between*
- > *its schedule.. If the difference you notice is negligible, you can increase*
- > *the time.*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (12):*
- > **SPAM! JUNK MAIL!**
- > *This one can get annoying, just like the rest. You get 50 emails in one*
- > *sitting and 2 of them you wanted. NICE! (Not.) What can you do? Well,*
- > *although there are services out there to help you, some email*
- > *servers/services that actually do lower your spam with features built into*
- > *their servers – I still like the methods that let you be the end–decision*
- > *maker on what is spam and what is not. I have two products to suggest to*
- > *you, look at them and see if either of them suite your needs. Again, if*
- > *they don't, Google is free and available for your perusal.*
- >
- > *SpamBayes (Free!)*
- > <http://spambayes.sourceforge.net/>
- >
- > *Spamihilator (Free!)*
- > <http://www.spamihilator.com/>
- >
- > *As I said, those are not your only options, but are reliable ones I have*
- > *seen function for hundreds+ people.*
- >
- >
- > *Tip (13):*
- > **ADVANCED TIP! Only do this once you are comfortable under the hood of your**
- > **computer!**
- >
- > *There are lots of services on your PC that are probably turned on by default*
- > *you don't use. Why have them on? Check out these web pages to see what all*
- > *of the services you might find on your computer are and set them according*
- > *to*
- > *your personal needs. Be CAREFUL what you set to manual, and take heed and*
- > *write down as you change things! Also, don't expect a large performance*
- > *increase or anything – especially on today's 2+ GHz machines, however – I*
- > *look*
- > *at each service you set to manual as one less service you have to worry*
- > *about*
- > *someone exploiting. A year ago, I would have thought the Windows Messenger*
- > *service to be pretty safe, now I recommend (with addition of a firewall)*
- > *that most home users disable it! Yeah – this is another one you have to*

- > work for, but your computer may speed up and/or be more secure because you
- > took the time. And if you document what you do as you do it, next time, it
- > goes *MUCH* faster! (or if you have to go back and re-enable things..)
- >
- > *Task List Programs*
- > http://www.answersthatwork.com/Tasklist_pages/tasklist.htm
- >
- > *Black Viper's Service List and Opinions (XP)*
- > <http://www.blackviper.com/WinXP/servicecfg.htm>
- >
- > *Processes in Windows NT/2000/XP*
- > <http://www.reger24.de/prozesse/>
- >
- > *There are also applications that AREN'T services that startup when you start*
- > *up the computer/logon. One of the better description on how to handle these*
- > *I have found here:*
- >
- > *Startups*
- > http://www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup_content.php
- >
- >
- > *If you follow the advice laid out above (and do some of your own research as*
- > *well, so you understand what you are doing) – your computer will stay fairly*
- > *stable and secure and you will have a more trouble-free system.*
- >
- > --
- > <- Shenan ->
- > --
- > *The information is provided "as is", it is suggested you research for*
- > *yourself before you take any advice – you are the one ultimately*
- > *responsible for your actions/problems/solutions. Know what you are*
- > *getting into before you jump in with both feet.*
- >
- >
- >