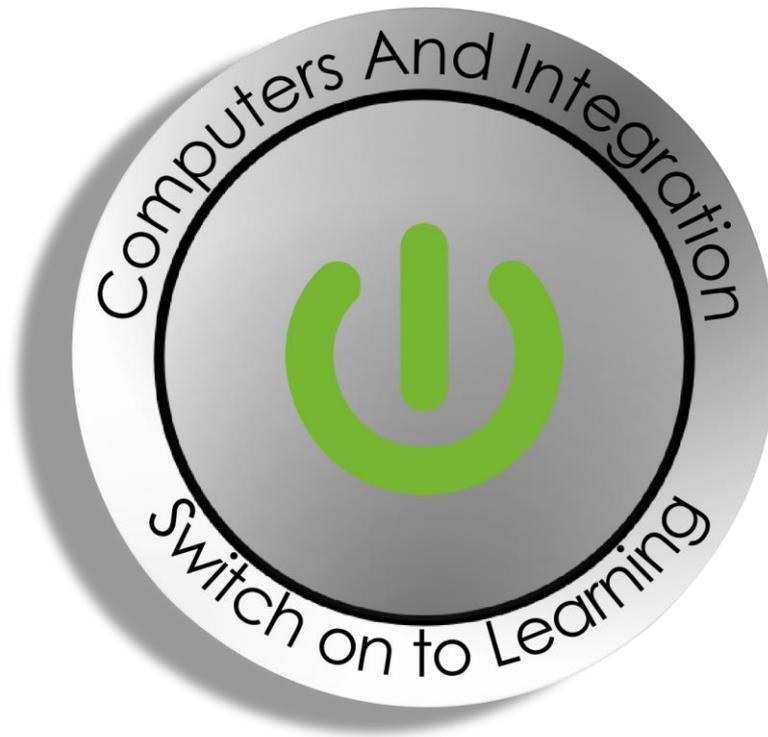How to Speed Up Your Computer
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Contents

Preface

Do you find your computer slow? If you do, this book is for you as it will help you to speed up your computer.

Note that this book will help you to:

- Clear your web browsing cache

- Remove junk files from your computer

- Disable programs on computer start-up

- Uninstall programs you don't use

- Remove unnecessary toolbars from your web browser

- Close memory hungry programs

- Remove malware, adware and viruses

- Add more memory

- Reset your PC to factory default settings

Chapter 1 — Keep Windows, drivers and other software up-to-date

Over time, Microsoft releases new updates for Windows to enhance performance and fix certain issues. Also, all other software providers update their programs from time to time. Installing updates to software programs can enhance your computer's performance and ultimately help to speed up your computer.

Chapter 2 — Clear your web browsing cache and delete cookies

Over time, as you browse the web, your computer accumulates files. These files form what is known as a web browsing cache. You don't need these files on your computer. In other words, it's safe to delete them. To clear your web browsing cache in the most popular web browser, Google Chrome, click the button with three dots (located in the top right-hand corner) and click "More tools > Clear browsing data". Select what you want to delete and then click "Clear browsing data". I recommend you select to obliterate everything from the beginning of time. Note that you can also delete cookies in this way.

Cookies are small files that track your behaviour with websites and store settings such as passwords. If you want your web browser to automatically log you into websites, then you shouldn't delete cookies. However, if you don't then you should just delete them as they can track your behaviour.

Chapter 3 — Use as few browser extensions, or add-ons, as possible

It is possible to add extensions, or add-ons, to your web browser. Often these add extra functionality. For example, a useful extension is the LastPass password manager which stores your passwords and automatically logs you into websites.

Extensions can slow down your web browsing and ultimately your computer, so you should seek to have as few extensions as possible loaded in your web browser. In other words, you should aim to lighten your web browser with as few extensions as possible.

Chapter 4 — Remove junk files from your computer with CCleaner

Over time, computers accumulate junk files, or in other words temporary files that you don't need. Also, if you share your computer with other family members, traces of what you've been doing are stored. You can clear junk files and traces of what you've been doing with a tool known as CCleaner.

CCleaner is a free download and you can get it by going to www.piriform.com/ccleaner.

Chapter 5 — Disable programs from running on computer start-up

CCleaner doesn't just clear junk files and remove traces of what you've been doing. It can also disable programs from running on computer start-up. This can speed up your computer as resource hungry programs are not loaded automatically when your computer starts.

To prevent programs from running on computer start-up, launch CCleaner, click on "Tools" and then "Startup". Click "Yes" to change it to "No" for the items you want to disable on computer start-up. Note that you can safely disable iTunes from loading on computer start-up.

Chapter 6 — Uninstall programs that you don't use

You can speed up your computer by removing programs that you don't use. In modern versions of Windows, you can remove programs by clicking the Start menu and typing "uninstall programs" in the run box. Once you've done that, from the "Uninstall or change a program" screen, select the program you want to remove and then click "Uninstall".

Chapter 7 — Remove toolbars

When you install software programs, they often add toolbars to your web browser. You should remove toolbars from your web browser if you want to speed up your web browsing and ultimately your computer. You can remove toolbars in the same way as you remove other software programs.

Chapter 8 — Close memory hungry programs

If you want to speed up your computer, you should close memory hungry programs – that is programs that take up a lot of computer memory. You can easily inspect how much memory a computer program is using by launching Task Manager and looking at what processes are running. Note that you can launch Task Manager by pressing Ctrl+Shift+Escape together on your keyboard.

Chapter 9 — Remove malware and adware from your computer

Malicious software, or malware, can slow down your computer. Fortunately, you can remove malware, and also adware (programs with ads) from your computer with a free tool known as Malwarebytes.

You can download a copy of Malwarebytes by going to www.malwarebytes.com.

Chapter 10 — Scan your computer for viruses

Viruses, nasty software that can cause mayhem on your computer, can also slow down your computer. Fortunately, you can scan your computer for viruses and remove any that are found with a free tool known as Avast Free Antivirus.

To download Avast Free Antivirus, go to www.avast.com and click on "Free Antivirus".

Chapter 11 — Run Disk Cleanup to free up hard drive space

You can speed up your computer by keeping plenty of free space on your hard drive. If you don't have much free space left on your computer's hard drive, you can run Disk Cleanup, a free tool that is part of Windows, to free up hard drive space.

To run Disk Cleanup, click the Windows logo or Start button and in the run box type in "Disk Cleanup". Once it loads, select what you want to delete and then click "OK".

Chapter 12 — Run Auslogics Disk Defrag

Computer hard drives take a scatter brain approach to storing files. Bits of files are scattered all over the place. So, when loading a file, your computer has to search for a bit. Over time, this can significantly slow down your computer.

Fortunately, you can defragment your hard drive or organise files for faster access. Auslogics Disk Defrag is a good free tool for doing this. You can also tell it to optimise your computer's hard drive.

To download Auslogics Disk Defrag, go to www.auslogics.com and click on Disk Defrag Free.

Note that it's widely recommended that you shouldn't defrag a solid-state hard drive (or an SSD).

Chapter 13 — Add more memory

A good way to speed up your computer is to add more memory. That said, this is not for the faint of heart as you've got to open up your computer to add more memory.

Note that Crucial (www.crucial.com) is a website that scans your computer and tells you what type of memory your computer needs. It also allows you to purchase compatible memory.

Chapter 14 — Reset your PC (Windows 8, 8.1 and 10)

If all the above measures have failed and your computer is still slow, you can wipe your data, remove all your programs and reload Windows.

In Windows 8, 8.1 and 10, this is painstakingly easy. Just go to Settings > Update & Recovery, or something similar, and select to "Reset your PC".