

John's PC Troubleshooting Tips

[Do It Yourself](#)

[Good Internet Resources](#)

[Good Software](#)

[Other Resources](#)

Do It Yourself!

Run Disk Cleanup!

This will clear a lot of the clutter out of your system. To run it from Windows XP, click on Start, then All Programs, then Accessories, then System Tools. Then select Disk Cleanup. Make sure you check all the items, then click Okay. It may take some time, especially if you haven't used it before. Your system should work better once it finishes, though.

I run this daily.

Run Disk Defragmenter!

Defragmenter is another of the tools Microsoft provides. In XP, click on Start, then All Programs, then Accessories, then System Tools. Then select Disk Defragmenter. It gives you two options: Analyze and Defragment. You can click analyze if you want to, but I suggest you go ahead and click Defragment. It will analyze for you. Again, it may take awhile if you haven't done it before. Your system will work faster when it finishes, though. When it finishes, it will give you a report of what it did (not that you'll understand what it tell you . . .).

At the suggestion of my friend, Stephen Blanck, I now run Defrag two times in succession each time. The first time takes awhile. The second run through goes a lot faster and cleans up any of the loose ends the first one left.

I defrag my system almost every day.

Good Internet Resources

Crucial.com. This website will look at your system's RAM, tell you what's in it, and tell you if you can upgrade it. More RAM works out to a faster system. When I installed the RAM this site recommended, it was like getting a new computer.

PCStats.com. This free site is full of useful tips for computer users. The articles aren't for absolute beginners, but they are useful to non-techies who've been using a computer for awhile.

Good Software

First of all, some bad news. I've heard and read bad things about Norton's most recent system tools software. I would stay away from them for now.

I recently bought Iolo Technologies' System Mechanic 7, though, and found it to be a great tool. It isn't intrusive. It works quickly. And it really fixes up your system. Type "Iolo" into a Web Search slot and it should take you where you need to go.

Other Resources –

Good . . .

Troubleshooting Your PC for Dummies. Excellent! An A+ book! This is an excellent addition to any non-techie computer user's library.

Upgrading and Fixing PCs for Dummies. Another Excellent, A+ book! Slightly more of a techie book than Troubleshooting Your PC for Dummies, but not overwhelmingly so.

Upgrading and Fixing Laptops for Dummies. Excellent. A+. Also a bit more advanced than Troubleshooting.

PC World Magazine. A great resource, though for beginning to intermediate users a lot of the information might as well be written in Mandarin. Still, there's enough that we can understand to make wading through (or skipping) what we can't understand bearable.

Not So Good . . .

Networking All-in-One Desk Reference for Dummies. Get the feeling I'm a "Dummies" fan? Well, this is one you can skip. There's too much detail for a beginner and not enough detail for someone who already knows something.

Excel 2003 All-in-One Desk Reference for Dummies. I had the same problem with this one as I did with the Networking book. I set out to build a particular spreadsheet, using this book, and wasn't able to do it. What does it mean when someone winds up being too dumb for Dummies?

and Totally Unrelated . . .

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism. A wonderful, succinct, book. I'd recommend it for those who simply want to know more about Hinduism and "Eastern Thought," and for those who might be looking for spiritual insight as well.

Toromillo the Hunted, Flames in the Jungle, and Flames of Faith. Books of sheer genius . . . everyone should buy multiple copies!