



Parts 3 & 4 - How do I Speed up my Computer?

Welcome back to a series of computer related articles brought to you by VistaSol Computer Solutions. Over the coming weeks we will be featuring articles based on the theme of 'How do I ...?'

In Parts 1 and 2 we showed you how to remove temporary files, free up some disk space by removing unnecessary 'downloaded' files, and how to back-up 'data' files to removable media.

In Parts 3 & 4 we'll be continuing with the theme of 'How do I Speed up my Computer?', and showing you:

- ❖ How to stop programs from running in the 'start up tray'

What is the 'Start-up Tray'?

The 'Start Up Tray' is the area located in the bottom right corner of your desktop - where it displays the current time (and date in Win 7). Programs that are running in the start-up tray are using up vital resources on the computer i.e. the amount of Random Access Memory (RAM) available to you, and they are also wasting valuable processor time of the Central Processing Unit (CPU). Most of these 'start-up programs' serve little purpose other than to slow your computer down!



How Do I Stop Programs from Running in the 'Start Up Tray'?

There is very little you can do to prevent these start-up programs from being installed in the 'start-up tray' from the outset, but you can at least prevent them from running every time your computer starts-up. **Here's how:**

You'll need the program **CCleaner**, which we introduced to you last week for cleaning out 'junk' files from your hard disk. If you missed last week's article, CCleaner can be downloaded by typing this link into your browser:

http://www.vistasol.co.uk/free_downloads.html

Once you've downloaded and installed CCleaner, double click on the desktop icon to start up the program.

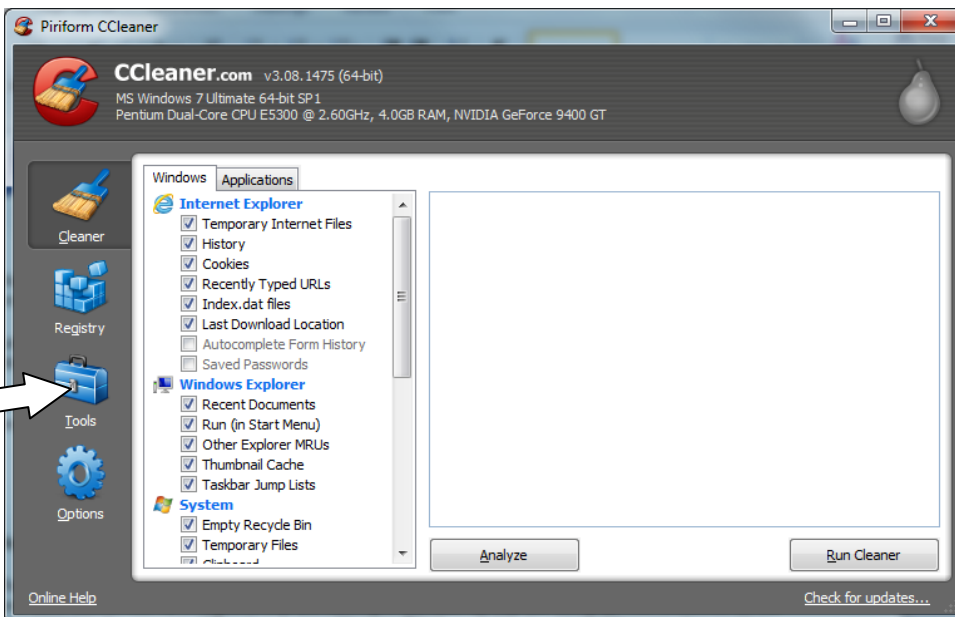


Figure 1

Look at the options in the left column of Figure 1 above and click on 'Tools', you will then see an extra column appear with an option called 'Startup' – click on this option. You should now see something similar to Figure 2 below. (Some of the 'start-up' items at the top of the list need to be there, so please tread carefully!).

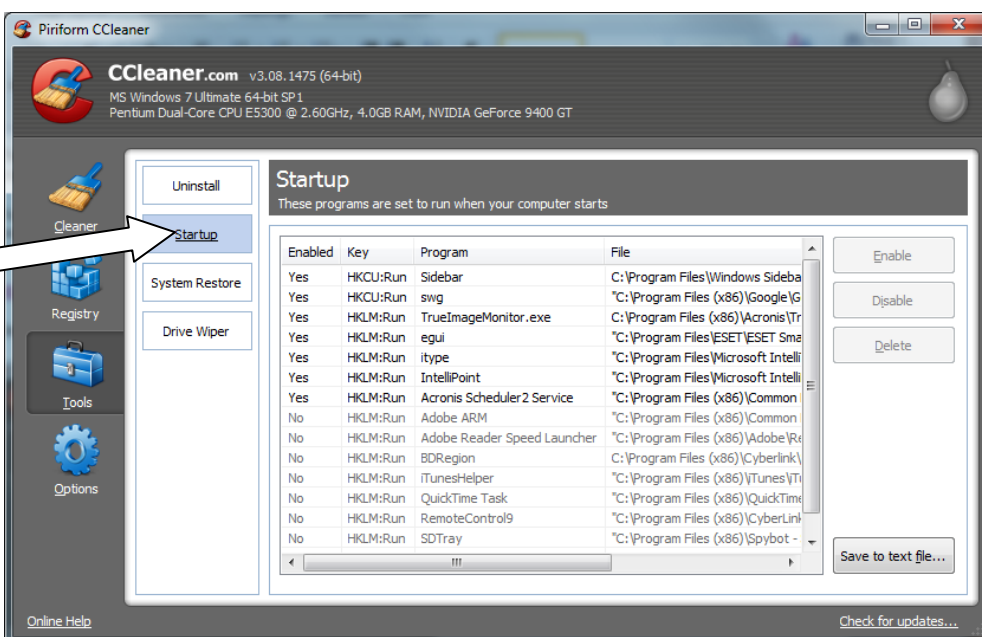
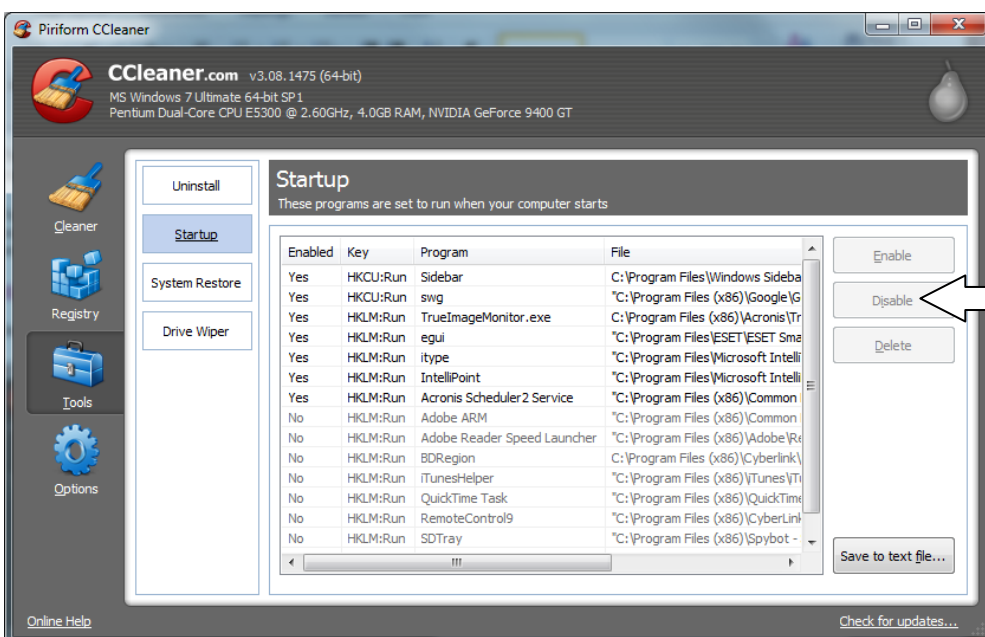


Figure 2

Look down the listing for any of these common start-up programs:

- a. Adobe ARM
- b. Adobe Reader Speed Launcher
- c. iTunesHelper
- d. QuickTime Task
- e. SD Tray (SpyBot S&D)
- f. SunJavaUpdateSched
- g. NeroFilterCheck
- h. uTorrent
- i. NBJ (Nero Backup)

If you have any of these listed, click on the line containing the item, then in the right hand column, click on 'Disable' (NOT 'Delete'). Continue this process for any other entries.



These are just examples of programs you may have listed, if you have others which begin "**C:\Program Files** . . . ", you can safely 'Disable' those too.

Once completed, close CCleaner and restart your computer.

If you receive any error messages on start-up (which you were not receiving before), make a note of the program concerned and start CCleaner. Follow the steps above and look for the entry relating to the error message, if it is one of the entries you have 'Disabled' previously, click on the line containing the entry – the 'Enable' button will now be available to click on, click on this to re-enable that start-up program. (You will have to re-start Windows to correct the earlier error).

There's lots more to discover about CCleaner, but we'll cover those other features in another article.

Part 4 - How do I Speed up my Computer?

Welcome back to a series of computer related articles brought to you by VistaSol Computer Solutions. Over the coming weeks we are going to be featuring articles based on the theme of 'How do I ...?'

In Part 3 we showed you how to disable 'start-up programs' from running in the start-up tray.

In this week's article we will be continuing with the theme of 'How do I Speed up my Computer?', with the next subject:

- ❖ How to repair hard drive indexing problems

How Do I Repair Hard Disk Drive Problems

The hard disk drive is where all your programs and data files are stored. There may be as many as 50 to 100 thousand files stored on a well established hard disk drive. In order for the system to be able to save and retrieve these files quickly and efficiently, the hard drive needs to maintain an 'index' of the location of each of these files. Using this index, the system knows exactly where to find a file on the hard drive – think of it as a library index. When you ask in the library for a particular book; the librarian can check the index and tell you exactly where to look for it on the shelf in the library.



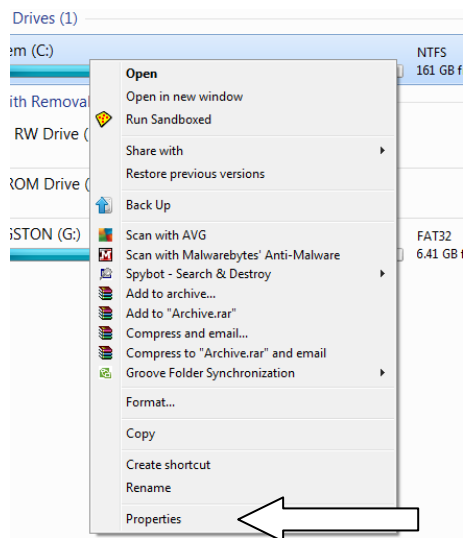
There are occasions however when files are not indexed successfully, or become damaged. This is most likely to happen if the computer has not shut down 'gracefully' i.e. because of a power cut. In this case the computer will appear to be very slow, or even 'freeze' because it cannot find the file or files it is looking for.

Help is at hand however, because Windows comes with its own great utility called ‘**Check Disk**’. Using this utility we can fix most file index problems and thus speed up the process.

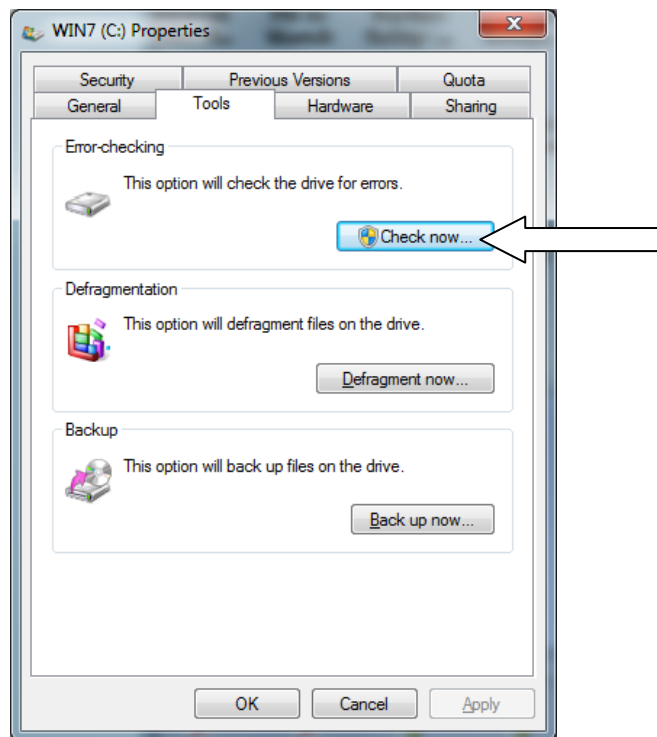
Check Disk

Whichever version of Windows you may be using, the following procedure is more or less the same (but the dialog windows may vary slightly in XP):

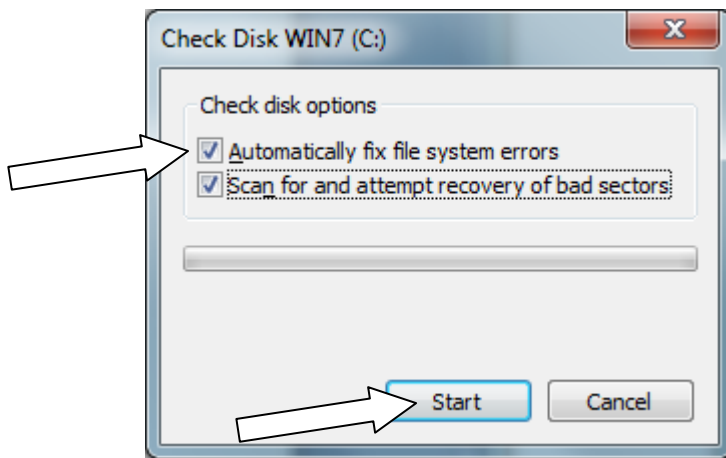
1. Double click on the ‘computer’ icon on the desktop (or single click in the start menu)
2. In the list of drives, right click on the ‘C’ Drive, and select properties from the menu.



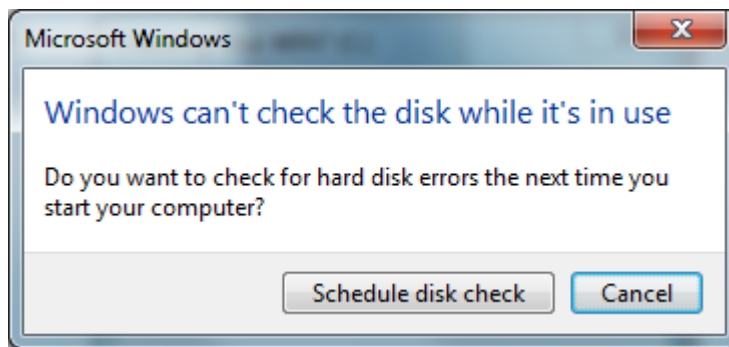
3. In the ‘Properties’ window look for the ‘Tab’ labelled ‘Tools’
4. Click on the button labelled ‘Check Now’



5. Make sure there is a 'tick' in the boxes labelled "Automatically fix file system errors" and "Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors", now click 'Start'



6. You should then see another window with a button labelled "Schedule disk check" (or 'YES' in XP) – click on this button



Why is nothing happening?

Windows is unable to fix file problems while they are being used, so you will need to restart your computer and allow the automatic 'scheduling' of the disk scan to be carried out. When Windows restarts you will see a pale blue screen with white writing – wait 10 seconds, then sit back and watch it fix the problems (or go and make yourself a cup of tea!).

That should do the trick – if not, it may be time to give us a call . . .

In Part 5 we'll be covering "Disk Defragmentation"

Until then, we hope you are now well on your way to speeding up that 'ailing' computer and beginning to enjoy your computer once again.