Article: Registry Cleaners and Speed Boosters – DON’T DO IT!

Registry Cleaners and Speed Boosters – DON’T DO IT! | Tech Tips Article by PcCG

I often receive calls from customers with slow computer issues. Very often when I plop down in-front of their computer I notice they have installed registry cleaners and “speed boosting” programs such as RegCure or "double my speed". One of the first things I do is kick those bad-boys to the curb.

I ask my customers if they noticed any speed increase by using said programs – and the answer has always been “no”. Of course I should probably have guessed this – I mean they are calling on me the super awesome PC Computer Guy to save the day. Never-the-less I like to still ask, just in case I get a yes one of these days.

It gets better.

Not only do these programs not help in speeding up the system, the often make it worse! They can (and frequently do) slow down your system, or even break it.

“How,” you might ask?

Good question Timmy! Someone pass that boy a piece of candy.

To answer this question we have to briefly discuss what these programs do… and that is mess with the registry. The registry is a massive database that the computer uses to keep records on where files are, what files are used by what programs and so on. They even contain information as to how the files are supposed to act. Anything from the screen saver to your background is stored in your registry. When you click on a “.doc” file, the registry is what tells the computer “Hey, this .Doc file is supposed to be opened by Microsoft Word.”

Messing with the registry can have very bad results.

For the sake of my customers, years ago I decided to try a couple of these registry programs. I made the foolish mistake of loading it onto my personal computer, curious to see the results. And as we all know… curiosity killed the computer.

Not only did I get no benefit in terms of speed, but the program actually destroyed critical information pertaining to my icons. I spent hours trying to restore those little boogers – but finally gave up. It was a pointless task to try and sort through the hundreds of thousands of entries stored in the registry to try and find what had been broken.

Now most of the time these programs offer a restore feature. Fortunately for me, the restore was somehow corrupted, leaving me up the creek…
The only way I was able to ultimately fix my icon problem was to format and reload windows on my system which had been running perfectly fine before the use of said programs.

The actual reason for writing this article has to do with a customer that called me a few days ago with a computer that had been working fine… until he started messing with these registry programs and speed boosters. And my first bit of free advice to him was – uninstall that crap and never use it again.

The most common reasons for slow computer speeds are…

- **Lack of Memory (RAM):** RAM is like your computer's "short-term memory". It's fast but doesn't store things for a long time. When you actually "load a program" what you are doing is reading it from the hard drive and putting it into the "RAM" for use. A lack of RAM makes your computer work much harder at getting things done, slowing everything down.
- **Start-Up Programs:** These little devils over time load into your system startup – often needlessly. Programs that are behaving, sitting nicely in your computer, NOT in the system startup actually have very little impact on the speed of the computer. It's those gremlins like Adobe Reader that load in the system startup that slow things down. If you only read PDF files (adobe reader files) once in a while, then why the hell does it need to load every-single-time I boot my system? The answer: it doesn't! But people like Adobe want to make you feel like adobe reader is a super-fast program – when you need it, it's there instantly! But you pay for this in the over-all system performance, because when you don't need it… it's still there! In fact it's in the way of other things you actually do need! Apple is another great offender of this.
- **Perception:** yep – I said it. It's all in your head. Ok, not all of it, but some of it. It's similar to the road-hypnosis phenomenon. When you first get on the highway and gun it to 148MPH in your 2002 GT Mustang out in the desert you feel like you're flyin'. But after 30 minutes, it doesn't seem so fast anymore. The same thing happens with computers. When people get a brand-spankin' new computer they compare it to the old junker on the way out the door and it seems like lightening. But after a year or two, we no longer remember that old junker… we now compare it to our faster machine and it's no longer so fast… just like 148MPH isn't that impressive anymore.

Registry cleaners definitely cannot address reason a lack of RAM or the perception of speed. And the only slightly tinker with the startup… because there is no way they can know what you actually need and what isn't important to you anymore.

What they can do is possibly mess up the registry by changing settings and deleting old entries – which typically have a very small impact on speed.
So unless you want to risk harming the registry or even killing your computer – "just say no". I will only use registry programs in my computer-repair business as an absolute last resort. If I'm going to have to format the system anyways, I don't have too much to lose… but this is strictly a last-resort tactic.

Save the money on the junk-ware and put it to some RAM… and actually get a speed boost for your dough.

We will discuss how you can optimize your computer and get a nice boost in speed for free in another article.



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