The Maestro's Guide to Better Computer Management

Special notes on Windows 10
Recommendations for improved security and performance on all computers

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Windows 10
Privacy - Performance - Protection

Privacy

- Disable any privacy components enabled
- Settings – Privacy
- All sub-menus

Performance

- Close all background apps
- Settings-Privacy
- Background Apps

Performance-non windows app abusers

- Chrome
- Default setting to keep browser open even if browser is closed
- Chrome Settings
- Uncheck keep browser open when browser is closed

Performance-Surprise Windows Updates

- Manage Windows updates
- Settings- Windows Update and Security
- Windows Anniversary Edition-1607- Change Active Hours
  - Limited to a 12-hour window
- Windows 1511 Edition (most users)
  - Notify to restart – change from
  - automatic restart without notification or warning
  - Advanced Options- choose how updates are delivered
  - Updated from more than one place - Turn off
  - Set to PC's on local network

Start Menu

- The standard menu items have been changed to symbols, icons only after the Anniversary Update. If you click on the hamburger symbol at the top of the menu, the wording returns with intuitive icons.

TSR's?

A carry over from DOS

Performance-Manage all auto-start apps

- Review System Tray (lower right corner)
- Show ALL icons in System Tray (see Windows settings below)
- Identify and Manage every icon
- Close/exit unknown
- Disable from autostart unless absolutely needed (AV, Spyware, Backup)
- Preference options for each icon/app
- Some items may be controlled as Windows Services

Common Abusers of auto-start options that consume memory

- Chrome –remains running in background even after browser is closed ○
- Option within Chrome to disable this feature
- Outlook remains running in background
- Dropbox (if rarely used)
- Skype (if rarely used)
- Microsoft One Drive (backup is enabled by default even if not used or no MS account is active)
- Old printers that have been retired but software remains active (disable/uninstall old printers)
- AOL Desktop (still being used?)
- Messenger/chat options
- Weather channel options
- Other social media or utility apps

Terminate and Stay Resident (TSR) apps and utilities

- If you are old enough to remember DOS (and its many flavors) you might remember the concept of Terminate and Stay Resident.
- TSRs have not gone away, and their impact on computer memory and performance is critical.

- Regardless of the name, many programs and apps are set to automatically start, load and login when you start your computer.
- Some appear in the system tray/notification area so they can be identified and possibly controlled and disabled from auto-start.
- Others are set as Windows Services
- Some Windows services can be disabled, stopped or restarted.
- Be careful what you stop or disable but take a good look at what's consuming your precious limited computer memory.

Performance and Security management --Windows settings
- Personalization
- Task Bar
- Notification Area
- Select which items appear on task bar
- Always show ALL icons

Protection- Antivirus /Spyware
- Windows Defender
- Default AV protection from Microsoft in Windows 10
- A poor choice?
- Hidden from view by default
- Is it working and protecting or do you really know?
- Cannot disable if needed except by advanced Windows Services management
- Use 3rd party more powerful reliable AV protection
- Use Spyware/Malware protection **IN Addition** to AV protection
- AV Protection alone is never adequate protection
- Make sure AV Protection and Spyware Protection are both showing as active in system tray /notification area

Protection/Performance/Backups
- Microsoft One Drive enabled by default with Windows 10
- Do you have a One Drive account?
- Do you use this for cloud backup?
- Save files to local computer, then backup to cloud
- Avoid saving directly to any cloud which may not be a backup but only a synchronization

System Protection and Exposure
- System Restore Points have been known to be disabled after windows updates and Windows Anniversary Update.

- Make sure System Restore Points are enabled and working
- Create Recovery Media from original control panel onto Flash Drive
- Enable Firewall if disabled
- Make sure you have a working backup
- Follow the Maestro's 4R's Notes for better backup

Remote Desktop
- Enabled by default
- Disable to avoid unwarranted remote desktop access
- Use 3rd party Remote Access tools (Logmein, GoToMyPC, AnyDesk, etc.)

Internet Access
- All Wi-Fi is not the same
- Wi-Fi is not as fast as wired connection
- Public Wi-Fi may be unsafe for all Internet activity
- Be careful what secure websites you access on public computers:
  - Financial, on line purchasing, even webmail
  - Anything where you provide a username/password to login

Browser usage
- Microsoft Edge-the replacement for Internet Explorer 11
- Edge may be set as default browser- yet may not be compatible with all websites
  - Is Edge ready for Prime Time?
  - Compatibility issues with secure websites
  - It's not just about browser speed!
- IE 11 is still available though it has been demoted and found under Windows Accessories in the Program Menu.

Common and dangerous browser usage mistakes that can compromise security

- Manage All Browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari, others)
  - o Tool Bars (excessive)
  - o Add-ons
  - o Extensions
- Sign out/logout of all websites that require username/password especially if using public internet or public computer (library, hotel business center)
- Avoid having the browser save your passwords
- Firefox-saved passwords can be shown in plain English (not encrypted)
- Watch out / beware of changed browser home pages that you did not request
- Use Bookmarks and Favorites to return to your preferred websites
- Do not use Internet history
- If you know the actual website address (myplace.com), don't search for it but enter it into the browser address bar.
- The top results of a search bar/search engine request will result in advertised misleading websites and not the "official" site where you thought you were going.
- This can lead to dangerous, infected websites, false reports of infected computer and suggestions to allow "us" to fix them for a fee.

Tune up that computer

- Restart or shutdown daily (sleep is overrated)
- Use Free (or paid) CCleaner to clean out the junk files
- Show Windows hidden files and folders so that CCleaner can delete them
- If you have multiple users of the same computer with different logins/profiles o Run CCleaner when logged in under different users to clean all junk files.
- CClceaner is more than just a junk file cleaner
- CCleaner tools can manage /uninstall programs or enable/disable programs-apps to autostart
- CCleaner tools can manage system restore points and delete old ones to reclaim disk space

- Malwarebytes is a powerful free (or paid) malware/spyware protection utility
- Compress /Compact your email message database (Outlook, Thunderbird, eMclient, AOL, etc.) Not applicable to web based email
- Use email client software instead of webmail (Outlook, Mozilla Thunderbird, eMclient, MAC Mail, others)
- Manage your cluttered desktop
- Manage your downloads folder

Tune-up that Smartphone/Tablet
- Yes, even smartphones and tablets need junk file cleaning and performance management
- Restart the device
- Close /exit all open apps
- Delete unused apps
- Clear the browser cache and history
- Delete your old outdated chat messages
- Consider Antivirus protection on Android based systems (they have been known to become infected)

Backup that Computer
- Follow Maestro's 4R's model for better backups
- Purchase Maestro's "Perfecting Your Computer Backup" workbook
- Never rely on one single external drive
- Never keep your only backup drive plugged in at all times (it can become infected)
- Use proprietary built-in backup utilities for specialized software (Quicken/Quickbooks, SQL, Outlook, other CRM software, other industry-specific software apps)
- Use Built-in backups in addition to larger system backups

Backup that Smartphone/Tablet

- Hundreds of pictures and pictures are captured on these devices.
- Your address book contains massive amounts of contact information
- You listen to music regularly
- Make sure you have backed up as much of the saved information in your smartphone/tablet as possible and do it regularly.

Software Management and Backup

- Software is an investment in your technology
- Manage your software purchases
- Save and backup any downloaded free or purchased software in case it needs to be-reinstalled.
- Include the software activation keys, serial #'s, etc. in all backups.