

Lesson 2: Periodic Maintenance

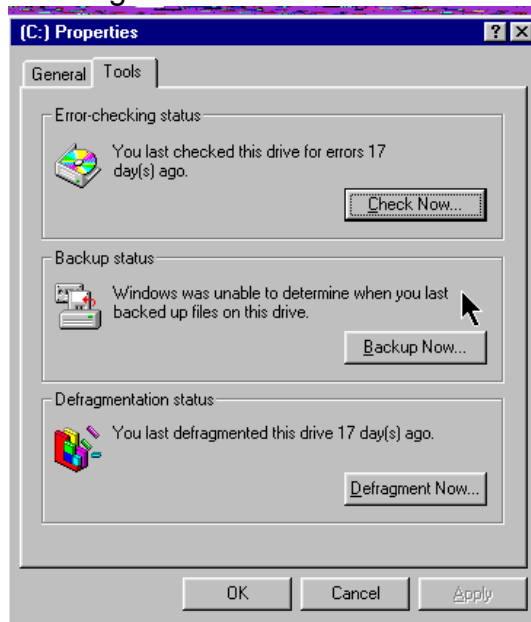
Looking after your computer is a simple task, apart from the obvious “don’t get mad, get even” & “I thought I would give it the bounce test” there are relatively few things to keep a watch on.



Deleting loads of rubbish may ultimately free space on your disk drive but until you empty the Rubbish you can still restore them, the quickest way to do this is to right click the bin icon and select empty recycle bin, however until you are confident of the contents I suggest going into the bin and inspecting its contents first.

Emptying the rubbish does free extra space on your system however the files are stored in random order on your disk drive. To truly clean your hard disk run a Scandisk & a Defrag. You may be familiar with the Dos version of scandisk, it is the Blue screen with yellow writing you get after you turned your computer off in a hurry, it is Microsoft checking your pc will work and the operating system (o/s or Windows) is still ok.

Running Scandisk from within windows



From the Desktop go into my computer, this will display all of your hard drives; select the C drive then Right click with your mouse, scroll down to the properties option, a pop up menu appears, select the Tools tab, you will see the graphic above. The top box 'check now' is scandisk, I tend to run this once a month, (the system may do it more times when I have been bad though). The second box 'back up now', this is great if you have a tape drive attached to your system I use this a lot. The third option Defrag Now, this recovers all the free space and restructures the data on your disk drive accordingly, this is really useful if you are low on space. Once a quarter I run this, after a scandisk.

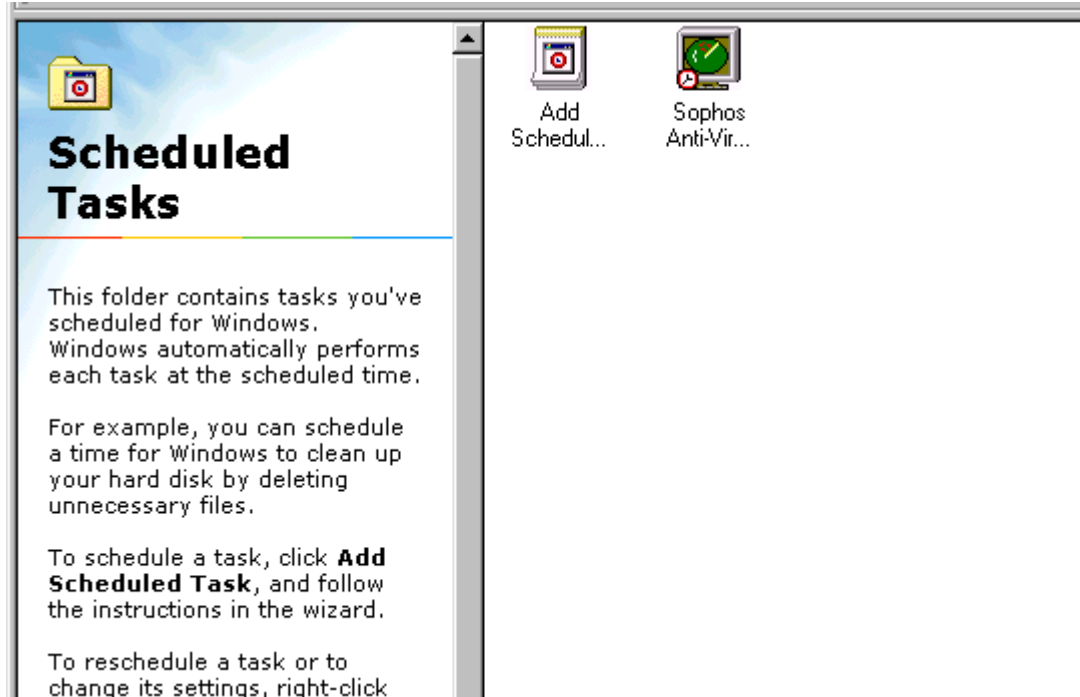
Automating Maintenance

First off we need to check your 'system tray', don't worry that is Lizard speak for the bottom right of your screen, take your mouse down to the bottom right, we are looking for the task scheduler icon



(I suppose I better explain Lizard: a while ago, 5/6 years I did a 2 year course in IT, and one evening in a systems analysis class the lecturer was boring me silly, my mind started to wonder down that slippery slope where by you grade your classmates ability and classify their usefulness, to cut a long story short I had worked out the best programmer etc and was searching for a way of remembering the higherachy, Sir David Attenborough popped into my head and hey presto the Lizard was borne. Serious IT manager= Monitor lizard, Floor running help desk staff = Abalon, right down to the trainee=Gecko, ever since then I always refer to my IT colleagues as Lizards.

Back to business: Task Scheduler



I don't really use this, however you can see my anti-virus sitting there, if I am working at home lunch time is usually just after mid day, if not I will stop anyway for a coffee. I know I am going to be gone for at least 15 minutes so I have scheduled a full virus sweep at this time. Adding Scandisk / defrag would not be beneficial as if you are going to keep an eye on your Hard disk etc. the system will tell you when you last ran the function.

The most important thing you can do for your computer is invest in a decent anti-virus. McAfee bought Dr Solomans resulting in a second rate product, yes it will detect viruses, granted but when the detection engines have each other as viruses in the program it becomes confusing. When it comes to this sort of thing, remember Buy cheap pay twice. The only one I rate is Sophos, in 1992 their product saved my life, I looked into all products and discovered their backgrounds and tested them, consistently Sophos beat the competition. They were developed by the military for life critical systems.

WWW.sophos.com for more info.