



Answer Quest Tip Sheet

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Training Your Future



FREE UP DISK SPACE

When your computer starts acting sluggish or you're simply running out of disk space, it's time to clean out some unnecessary files on your computer. Besides deleting old documents or spreadsheets that can be hogging space, there are some "hidden" files that could be taking up large chunks of space on your system. They aren't really hidden; it's just that the average Windows user has no idea that they are there.

Step 1: Empty Your Recycle Bin

Every time you delete a file from your system, it isn't really deleted at all. It is placed in your recycle bin. The recycle bin looks like a little garbage can icon on your Windows desktop. To empty it, double click on the trash can. Then select File, Empty Recycle Bin from the menu. You might scan the contents just to double check that you don't want anything in there, because once you confirm the deletion, it's gone for good.

Step 2: Remove Temporary Files

As Windows operates, it stores portions of the file(s) you are working on to your hard disk. When you close applications or Windows, Windows removes these temporary files from your hard drive. But, if your system shuts down prematurely (i.e. a lock-up, your child turns the computer off while running a game, or the power goes off) Windows doesn't have an opportunity to remove these temporary files from your hard drive.

The more these files stack up on your hard drive, the slower your system will operate and the more space is wasted on your hard drive. In just a short time, you could quickly stack up 40-100 Megabytes of temporary files on your computer (depending on the number of times the system shuts down with a large program running).

Here's how you can remove these files and free up space.

1. Restart your computer in DOS mode. Do this by going to Start, Shutdown, Restart the Computer in MS-DOS mode. (Never attempt to delete temporary files while Windows is running! Serious damage to programs could occur!)
2. From a DOS prompt, type `CD\` and press ENTER. This puts you in the "root directory" of your primary drive.
3. Type `DIR *.tmp/s/p` and press ENTER. This will show you all the temporary files on your primary drive. Any file ending with `.tmp` is normally a temporary file, although if you see some of these in a program's subdirectory (other than Window's) they could be templates.
4. Note any directories that have `.tmp` files in them. Write them down. They might be `c:\windows\temp` or something like `c:\progra~1\micros~9\temp`.
5. Change to these directories by typing `CD` followed by the directory name. An example command might be `CD \windows\temp` and then press ENTER.
6. Type `Dir *.tmp` and press ENTER to double check that there are temporary files in this directory. You can also note the number of bytes that are being used by these files.
7. Type `erase *.tmp` and press ENTER to erase all the temporary files in the directory.
8. If more than one directory listed temporary files, repeat steps 5-7 for each directory with temporary files.
9. When you are ready to return to Windows, type `EXIT` and press ENTER.

Cleaning Up After the Mess

Once you have deleted these clumps of files, it's always a good idea to scan your disk and defragment the files. This will make the system access files more quickly and efficiently. In essence, it removes the gaps that were left by the files you removed.

Running Scan Disk

Scandisk fixes file and directory errors like invalid file names and checks for and repairs disk errors. It's a good idea to run scandisk once a week to keep your machine in tip-top shape. Here's how you do it:

1. From the Windows 95 Start button select Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Scandisk.
2. Select the disk you would like to scan
3. Select either Standard or Thorough. Selecting Thorough scans the disk for errors.
4. Click Start
5. It may take a while for the program to scan based on the speed of your processor, the size of the disk drive and whether you are conducting a standard or thorough scan.

Disk Defragmenter

The Defragmenter arranges file fragments in order on a disk to save space and increase efficiency. According to Microsoft, this operation should be performed twice a month. Here's how you do it:

1. From the Windows 95 Start button, select Programs, Accessories, System, Tools, Disk Defragmenter.
2. Select the drive you would like scanned and click OK.
3. The program displays a report on the disk and tells you whether you need to defragment the drive or not. If it tells you that you need to defragment, click Start. It's also a good idea to run it periodically whether it thinks you need to or not.

You can even continue to use your computer while the defragmenting program works, but the system will operate slower than normal. You may wish to run the program after working hours or during your lunch hour when you aren't using the computer.

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