

# Computer Tips

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## Michael's Computer Services

### Maintaining Your Hard Drive - 2

In our last column, we began to discuss how to use the hard drive maintenance programs built into your Windows operating system. We talked about Scandisk, and then Disk Defragmenter (DD). In this week's column we will discuss more fully how best to use DD to improve your hard drive's performance.

As mentioned last issue, DD scans the file structure of your hard drive, looking for gaps that might have occurred. DD then takes files from the end of your hard drive to fill any gaps it finds. This keeps all the file structure together, and shortens the time needed for the hard drive to find the file you want.

However, to do this operation, DD needs exclusive access to your hard drive. This means you should not work on your computer, or have other software programs running while DD is operating.

In keeping with this requirement, there are several things you should do before running DD. This applies only for the older versions of Windows, such as 95, 98, and ME. Windows 2000, XP, and Vista uses a different file structure, and don't require the same treatment while using DD.

Before running DD on Windows 95, 98, or ME, always turn off your screensaver. If you don't, DD is interrupted, and will return an error saying, This program has restarted 10 times, and will now close. To turn off your screensaver, right click on your Desktop, click Properties, then Screensaver. Then in the selections on the left, choose None. Then click OK to return to your desktop.

DD will also be interrupted if you leave any Antivirus or firewall programs running. In fact, ANY software, if left running, will interrupt DD. To avoid this, we recommend the following: At the desktop, press CTRL - ALT - DEL on your keyboard all at once. This opens a Program window, which shows all the software that is currently running on your PC. One at a time, highlight each software name with your mouse, and click End Task. The software may take a minute or two to disappear. If another window appears, click the End Task in that window as well. Repeat this process until all software entries are removed, EXCEPT Systray and Explorer. It is VERY important that you leave these two, for if you remove them, your computer will shut down.

Once you have all except Systray and Explorer closed, you can open DD, and it should run without problem. Once it has done its job, which, depending on the size of your hard drive might take several hours, you can restart your PC. All the software you closed previously will reappear, and your hard drive will be faster and more efficient.

For Windows 2000, XP, and Vista users, simply go to DD in the location stated in our previous column, and run it. DD will first analyze your hard drive, and then defragment it. When DD is complete, you will not need to restart.

You are welcome to contact us on 4171 0981, or email us at [info@mcsit.com.au](mailto:info@mcsit.com.au), if you have any problems or questions on using DD or Scandisk.



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