

Your Guide to a Healthy Computer

Part I: How to Avoid having a "Hard" Attack.

In many ways, computers are like people. Sorta. Actually, they are probably more like teenagers who got in with a bad crowd at a very early age (like at birth). They don't always take good care of themselves, can be influenced by others, don't necessarily do as they are told and get themselves into trouble if not closely supervised.

Just about any human ailment or aberration has it's silicon counterpart. The worst of which is a complete hard drive failure, which is your computer's version of a massive heart attack. While hard drives can be replaced, the data on your old hard drive (all of your documents, spreadsheets, accounting records, etc) can be hopelessly lost.

A spokesperson for Hewlett Packard recently said "...it's really not a matter of *if* your hard drive will fail, so much as *when* it will fail." Luckily, there are several preventative measures which you can take to keep your hard drive in good health.

Scan, Scan, Scan!

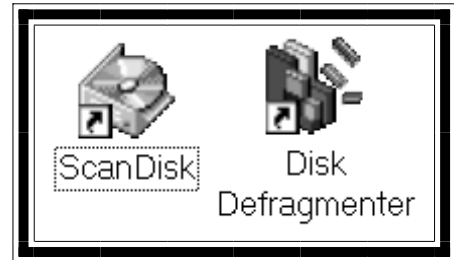
Even brand-new hard drives can have damaged areas or "sectors". If your hard drive tries to write information on these sectors, the data can be corrupted or lost. Long file names (in Windows 95) can be lost or your system can simply lose track of files. Normal use will eventually cause spots on the hard drive to become unusable.

You can protect yourself from such problems by using "ScanDisk" - a Windows 95 utility which checks your hard drive and resolves errors caused by damage on the hard disks writing surface.

How to Run ScanDisk in Windows95:

Start•Run•SCANDISK•OK

Scandisk presents a dialog box with choices of "Standard" or "Thorough" and has a checkbox to "Automatically fix errors". Choose your hard drive/"Standard"/"Automatically Fix Errors". Select "OK" and let Scandisk do the rest. If there are errors, don't be too concerned. Scandisk will tell you what has happened and will recommend solutions to your problems. Once a week, Scandisk should be run on "Thorough". A thorough scan can take up to an hour, and should be run when you are not running other programs.



Two Windows 95 programs can be the key to preventing a hard drive failure!

Defragment your Files

When Windows saves your files, they aren't always saved in one piece. Larger files are chopped up into smaller pieces and made to fit into available spaces on your hard drive. As your hard drive becomes more "fragmented", your computer slows down and files can be lost or damaged. The solution to this is to run the Win 95 "Disk Defragmenter".

How to Run Disk Defragmenter in Win 95:

Start•Run•DEFRAG•OK

The Disk Defragmenter will ask you which hard drive you want defragmented (if you have more than one hard drive) and will tell you what percentage of the drive is fragmented. If the percentage is low, it will ask you if you really want to defragment the drive. Click on START, even if the fragmented percentage is very low. Defragmenting can take up to an hour to run, so schedule a time that you will not be using your computer for a while.

PLUS Means "Better"!

Microsoft "Plus!" is a companion program to Windows 95 and is magnificent. Among other things, it will run your Scandisk and Defrag programs on an automatic and regular schedule. For \$49, I feel it is one of the best things you can do for your computer's health.



Bryant Enterprises
Computer Consultants

...The Better Solution!

10402 North 10th St. Suite #3
Phoenix, AZ 85020
(602)861-1738
john@helpmedoc.com