

June 2003

Help Your Computer to Stay in Good Working Condition

~ By Bill Holmes



Many computer owners do not realize that a computer has limitations. The desire to download and install every nifty utility, screensaver, and other miscellaneous software we come across as we browse the Internet inevitably leads to problems. Not all software is created equal, and some downloadable software products may not get along with other products installed on a system. As a result, many computer-users experience slowness, lockups and other frustrating quirks as their system gets bogged down with unnecessary junk. The more software you load, the bigger that Start Menu gets. If your menu scrolls for five minutes before you see the end, it's time to uninstall those rarely used applications. To do this, always use the Add/Remove Programs applet in Control Panel! This is the only way to safely remove software installed on your system.

If you save picture files or music (MP3s) and you need to free up some hard disk space, you may want to purchase a Zip Drive or CD-RW (Burner) drive. These files take up a lot of room and saving them to one of these high-capacity drives will prevent your hard drive from becoming too full. A Zip or CD-RW drive is also a good place to save downloaded installers and other data. Just remember to be selective and cautious about what you download and install on your machine.

Another pitfall to avoid is a desktop cluttered with dozens of shortcuts, and loading a large graphic for your back-

ground. Animated icons are even worse since too much of a fun thing can reduce system performance. Also, do not save files to the root directory (C:\). When you open Windows Explorer and click on the hard drive (C:) located in the area on the left, you should only see folders on the right, and very few files (maybe four or five at most). One odd secret about hard drives: they have a limit to the number of files that can be saved on the root directory (\). Actually, that limit is somewhere around 450 to 500 files. Let's say you

have a 30 GIG drive, and you save 500 1K files on the root directory. That only amounts to about 500K of disk space on a 30 GIG drive, but the drive will behave as if it is full.

You will not be able to save any more data or install software on that drive until those 500 files get removed!

If you can keep a simple, "clean" machine, you are off to a good start. Use the utilities that come with Windows to fine-tune your system. Double-click the My Computer icon on the desktop (that's a system icon, do not try to delete this one!), and then right-click on the hard drive icon (C:). A series of menu items will appear. From that menu, choose Properties and left click. When you do, the properties of the C: drive appear. You will see a Pie Chart that lets you know how much room you have left on the drive (a drive with less than 150 MB will slow down a Windows computer—uninstall some things to make more room). Below that is a Disk Cleanup button; click it. The next view lists any items that can be safely deleted to create more space on the drive. Place a check inside the box next to each item you want to remove, and click OK. Click OK once more to confirm deletion, and now you're done.

At this point you should be back at the drive properties and the pie chart. Do you see the Tools tab at the top? Click on it to locate the Error Checking Status section at the top. If you click the Check Now button, Scandisk will run. You only need to run Scandisk once or twice each month, and only run the Normal Scan unless you are experiencing problems. It can take Scandisk 30 minutes to complete, so run it when you don't need to use the computer. No other programs should be open when Scandisk runs.

... remember to be selective and cautious about what you download and install on your machine.

The last item under the Tools view is Defragmentation of the Drive. Click the Defragment Now button (these buttons could be labeled differently depending on your version of Windows. Windows 95 does not have a

Disk Cleanup option). Run this option only once every few months after you have run Scandisk. This utility could take an hour to run, so go read a book or just let it run overnight. If either Scandisk or Defrag takes more than an hour to run (they keep restarting), you need to hit the CTRL+ALT+DEL keys on your keyboard at the same time to bring up the Close Program window (Windows 98 or ME only, not XP or 2000). Highlight each item listed and click End Task until all items are gone (except Explorer and Systray). This will require hitting CTRL+ALT+DEL multiple times before only Explorer and Systray remain. Then attempt to run Scandisk/Defrag again.

Following these suggestions will help to keep your system running more efficiently. Always, remember to keep those Virus definitions updated!

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Computer Classes

~ written by Gina Lehman

Spreadsheets. Jasc. Databases. Mail merge documents. Yes, this is English, but until a few weeks ago, it was "Greek" to me! I am a happy graduate of the most recent "Computer Basics Level II" class taught by Jake Esh at Esh Computer Center. Contrary to my fears that it would be way over my head, I found that "Computer Basics Level I" had effectively prepared me for this class. It was a very helpful experience. The four classes were presented in a computer lab. We could watch what Mr. Esh was doing on his computer on a large screen using Microsoft Power Point, and then do the assignments for ourselves on a lab computer. Mr. Esh and his assistant were

available and happy to help with any questions or problems we had.

The first night we learned how to use Microsoft Word more effectively. We were shown what all those obscure buttons mean which reside along the top of the screen, and learned little tricks to make an impressive document. The second night was about Microsoft Excel. It is a powerful program that makes complicated tasks manageable by automatically calculating long lists of figures and accomplishing other time-consuming jobs. The third lesson was a fun one – desktop publishing and computer graphics. We discovered how to use Microsoft Publisher to craft beautiful projects. With this program, you can create business cards, calendars, cat-

alogs, and even websites. We also learned about Jasc – an incredible program that will allow you to "fix" photos. You can scan a picture into the computer and eliminate red eyes, remove unwanted objects, cover scratches, and brighten dark photos; the end result looks like a brand new picture! The final night concentrated on using the internet and e-mail, and creating information databases and mail merge documents.

I now have a much greater understanding of how to use the incredible power of my computer to simplify many complicated tasks. Taking the class was well worth it, and now, if you'd talk me about Jasc and mail merge documents, it would no longer be "Greek" to me!



Esh Computer Center Classes

~ FALL 2003 CLASS SCHEDULE ~

Computer Basics Level I - \$75.00

Thurs., September 11 - 2 weeks

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Computer Basics Level I - \$75.00

Thurs., October 9 - 2 weeks

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-OR-

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TO SIGN UP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION:

~ CALL KAREN at 717-442-1080 ~

All Classes Meet from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The lab will be open 1/2 hour before the class begins (no instructor) and 1/2 hour after class ends (with instructor). Using the double policy means that two people will share a computer with the second person paying only 1/2 price for the class. To insure placement in the class, payment needs to be made when signing up. A full refund can be made up to two weeks prior to the class should you need to cancel. If you have any questions, please contact Karen at (717) 442-1080 or kkeller@eshcom.com.

COMPUTER BASICS I

Identifying the basic components of computer hardware, the basic functions of the operating system, and getting started with computer software.

COMPUTER BASICS II

Prerequisite - Be able to identify basic computer hardware, operating system functions, and software features.

Lots of hands-on training with a computer. Includes:

- Organizing data files; copying, moving, and creating data and documents
- Installing software and making basic computer configurations
- Creating word processing documents, spreadsheets, and a database
- Using e-mail and the internet

"We Make Any Fireplace Beautiful"

~ By Ken Esh & Bill Holmes

Many factors can influence the success of a business: timing, talent and opportunity to name a few. When Bill Stoll moved to Abbeville, South Carolina in 1969, he started a small machine shop with his sons. He never dreamed it would grow into a manufacturing company that would meet the needs of fireplace owners across the United States. It all started as a home-improvement project to fix his drab fireplace. Soon, neighbors requested that Bill do the same for their fireplaces.



Over time, the word continued to spread that Bill Stoll knew how to transform a simple fireplace into a work of art. In the mid 1970s, heating oil prices made fireplaces more popular, which increased the demand for Bill's fireplace doors and enclosures. By the 1990's, Stoll's fireplace doors and enclosures were being marketed nation-wide through a network of dealers. Today the business operates in a 25,000 square-foot building managed by Bill's two sons, Dennis and Robert. Stoll Fireplace has produced over 10,000 fireplace doors throughout the United States.

Increased sales and reduced office staff personnel are only a few benefits that Stoll Fireplace has experienced.

As demand increased, the needs of the business grew. Quality control, customer service and shipping issues became overwhelming tasks for the small work force. There were also the demands for more options in color and design and all of these elements required some way to be recorded, measured and tracked.

For the solution, Dennis Stoll sought out the creators of Eagle Business Management System (EBMS). Dennis did not feel confident that just any store bought system was capable of applying itself to every aspect of the fireplace business. So in the summer of 2001, Jake Esh of Eagle Solutions spent two days evaluating and analyzing the needs of the business. The customizable nature of the EBMS software made it possible for Eagle Solutions to offer a solution that

would reduce office labor, simplify order entry, and improve inventory tracking and management.

The system also included a barcode scanning solution that tracks the time and dates that orders are completed. Automatic sales order faxing was also added to send order confirmations to customers after an order was entered, thus eliminating many hours of manual faxing with a fax machine. EBMS software even tracks multiple orders for the same customer, which makes it easier to group orders into one efficient shipment.

Increased sales and reduced office staff personnel are only a few benefits that Stoll Fireplace has experienced. If you need to collect more data or make business tasks easier, please call Eagle Solutions today for your business software needs.

The staff at Eagle Solutions and Esh Computer Center would like to express our thanks to Stoll Fireplace for being a valued customer. We have enjoyed working with your friendly Stoll Fireplace staff.

Many factors can influence the success of a business, and EBMS now has the flex-

ibility to fit your business needs. For eleven years Eagle Solutions has serviced a wide range of business customers

– retail, plumbers, builders, lumber yards, feed mills, equipment manufacturers, orchards, repair garages and furniture manufacturers to name a few. Each business has its unique needs and can be accommodated by Eagle Solutions' custom programming. The team at Eagle Solutions will do their best to ensure that your system will work for you and your growing business needs.

Check out more details regarding EBMS on the web at www.eagle-solutions.com.

Contact Jake Esh at Eagle Solutions for a free consultation regarding your e-commerce needs. (717) 442-3247

Tip ...

I have suggested using caution and discretion when downloading utilities and other items off the Internet. However, there are some useful utilities in cyber-space. One of them is TClock, a system-tray time utility with other options to modify how your taskbar looks. Aim your web browser to <http://homepage1.nifty.com/kazubon/tclock/index.html>. Scroll down to the TClock 2.2.9 Beta3 Download section and click on "English." Then scroll to the bottom of the next page to click on the file named 000105en98.zip. Remember where you downloaded this 178KB file, and unzip it (you can use XP's native unzipping tool, or download Winzip if you don't already have it).

Next, create a folder to put the unzipped files into, and run Tclock.exe. Your system tray will be changed. Right-click on the time and select TClock Properties. Under the format tab, check the boxes next to 12H and Customize format. In the window below Customize format enter: dddd, mmm d -- h:nn tt. Now your system tray shows the day, month, date and time in AM/PM format.

Now, click on the Synchronize tab. In the Server box type: 129.6.15.29. Check the Adjust Regularly box and select how often you would like your computer's time to be adjusted to the Naval Observatory's Atomic Clock (I have it run every 60 minutes—you will need to be connected to the Internet for this to work. If you do not have a cable or DSL Internet connection, skip the Synchronization setup and manually synchronize when you are connected. To do this, right-click on the time in the System Tray, and select Synchronize on the menu bar).

Finally, put a shortcut to TClock.exe in your Startup Folder so TClock will run each time you start Windows. To do this, click on the Misc tab and click the "Create a shortcut in Startup folder" button. Click on the OK button to exit TClock properties. Now you will have the exact time appear, which includes the month and day of the week at a glance.

Need help but don't know who to ask when you call in? Following is a list of contacts here at Esh Computer Center.

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Staff Changes at Esh Computer Center

Welcome To Julie Beachy who came back on staff in February of this year. Formerly she worked as a secretary at our Churchtown office.

She is now filling the role as a full time receptionist and has been a real asset to our business.



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