



## Computers and Stuff.

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### Slow shut down.

If you're running Windows XP on your computer and it takes a long time to shut down, it could be chock-a-block full of junk files. If the "*Windows is shutting down*" message appears on your monitor for ages before the machine eventually goes to bed, when once upon a time you would turn it off and it would be off in about 10 seconds, then it's definitely time you gave it a bit of TLC.

You don't have to be a super computer nerd either as luckily there some very good FREE programs out there that will do it for you. A couple we've mentioned before, one of these is called CCleaner and you can get your copy [HERE](#). CCleaner is a freeware cleaning tool. It removes unused files from your system, allowing Windows to run faster and freeing up valuable hard disk space. It also cleans traces of your online activities such as your Internet history. Additionally, it contains a fully featured registry cleaner. But the best part is that it's very easy to use and it's fast and contains NO Spyware and NO Adware! I would suggest running CCleaner once a week.



People that sell PCs very often will want to sell you an anti-virus product too, they have nothing to gain by telling you that there are excellent free anti-virus products available. So generally they don't. There is a downside to the commercial anti-virus products, there is a risk that you will be tempted to not pay the subscription for the next lot of virus definition updates, or to run with an older version of the installed software if upgrading to a newer version costs extra. And sometimes the commercial products seem to use computer resources inefficiently and slow down your PC excessively. I would suggest you consider replacing a commercial anti-virus with one of the several alternatives out there that do the job better, faster and are FREE, especially if your subscription is approaching renewal time.



One I suggest is AVG and you can get your FREE copy [HERE](#). You can configure AVG to check for updates on a daily basis so you're always up to date, and you can configure it to do a daily scan of your computer and remove any viruses. If your pattern of usage means you're not likely to pick up viruses very often, and want an occasional scan, do what I do and configure a daily scan for 4am. Every now and then leave your PC on overnight and the scan will have finished when you get up in the morning. This stops you from being slowed down by a virus scan when you want to get some work done during the day. Other free anti virus products that seem to be ok are Avast and Avira, although I suggest not using free Avira if you use a classic

email product like Outlook, Outlook Express or Thunderbird since last I heard it didn't scan individual incoming emails. But if you use only webmail it seems like an excellent product. It can be quite inconvenient if your anti-virus decides to quarantine your entire inbox, which technically is a single file.

Another excellent program which will keep your computer running like an Olympic sprinter is "Advanced SystemCare v3". You can get your FREE copy [HERE](#). ASC is very quick, it will



scan all your files and make any repairs in about a minute. It will remove spyware and adware and it prevents spyware, hackers and hijackers from installing malicious items on your computer and slowing it down. It also boosts your system's performance by cleaning out junk files and eliminating corrupt registry entries. (Click [HERE](#) to see how a hard drive searches for data.)

It also has a very good defragmentation (defrag) facility. Fragmentation is caused when ever you create and delete files and folders, install new software, and/or download files from the Internet. Computers do not necessarily save an entire file or folder in a single space on a disk; they're saved in the first available space. After a large portion of a disk has been used, most of the subsequent files and folders are saved in pieces across the drive, a bit here and a bit there.

When you delete files or folders, the empty spaces left behind are filled in randomly as you store new ones. This is how fragmentation occurs. The more fragmented the drive is, the slower the computer will be. Defrag is the process of finding all the bits of a file from various places on your hard drive and rewriting them in the one spot. Once that's done, when that file is needed, your computer does not have to search all over the hard drive for it but can pick it up from the one spot – a regular defrag is vital for optimal system performance.

ASC works on Vista, XP and Windows 2000 and it will improve your system and Internet performance. You can use it daily.

## **Wipe your Hard Drive Clean.**

If you've just upgraded your computer by installing a larger and faster hard drive, you're probably wondering what to do with the old drive. There was probably nothing wrong with the old one, apart from being a bit small for your requirements, so you could install it in one of your kid's machines, or give it to a mate, or just toss it out, but what about all that data that you had on the drive – how can you be sure you've wiped it before giving it away.

Well, unfortunately, the answer is, you can't.....

First off, deleting files, even reformatting the drive, will not get rid of your confidential data. If the person to whom you are giving the HD is your average run-of-the-mill computer user, then there shouldn't be a problem, but if the person knows a bit about computer stuff, then they wouldn't have any problem in recovering your data. Scary isn't it – so what do you do??



There is really only one sure way of destroying the data on your old hard drive, and that is to take a very large sledge hammer to the thing - with a vengeance. So, be warned, if you're a secret KGB sleeper or you're a mule for one of the Columbian cartels, I would suggest giving the old HD a severe biffing then tossing it into a very hot fire.

However, if, as I suspect, you are a "normal" person, you can make the data on the hard drive difficult to recover by simply "overwriting" the data. For a "normal" person, a simple overwrite is enough. You can do this by copying a bunch of songs onto your HD, then copying and pasting them, then copying the lot and pasting again, etc etc until you get a "disc full" error. Then you just delete everything, resulting in an apparently blank hard drive. Now, if someone goes in to "recover" what was there they will only recover all those songs again.

The CIA or ASIO or Mossad or a Sumpie could get your original data off the HD, but your average Radio Tech couldn't.

Those that still work for the Gov't know that there is a government specification for wiping HD's that contain "Classified data" before sending the old computers off to Board of Survey. Computers that contain "Top Secret" stuff are destroyed as there is NO way the data can be wiped completely clean.

Interestingly, for about 10 years now every new hard drive made has included a "secure erase drive" command, but almost no one knows about it. This command is basically a "destroy yourself" command issued to the drive. "Destroy yourself" means destroy the data, the drive itself is not harmed in any way, however, some computers (in their BIOS) actually block this command, (so you don't accidentally dump all your data), so you might have to tweek the BIOS first.

The Center for Magnetic Recording Research at UCSD (Univ. of Calif. San Diego) produces and makes available a free program that will activate the "Destroy Yourself" command, if you know what you're doing and you want a copy go [HERE](#) – otherwise, my advise, DON'T!!

While attending a marriage seminar on communication, Wally and his wife Sue listened to an instructor declare: "It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other". He addressed the men "Do you know your wife's favourite flower?"

Wally leaned over and touched his wife's arm gently and whispered "Self raising", isn't it honey"? And thus began Wally's life of celibacy.

## Searching.

Everyone knows how to search the web and everyone knows there are two main search engines, Google and Yahoo. You can use either one, they both do a very good job, but Yahoo has made available some very handy little hints that are designed to make your searching life a lot easier. Let's say you were looking for a boat. You type in Sea-Ray and click Go and before you know it, you've got thousands of pages on Sea-Ray boats. But, by understanding how the Yahoo search engine works you can limit the results to include only



those pages most relevant to you--saving you the time of looking through thousands and thousands of pages.

## Country

The first and easiest filter to use in a search is to click on whether you want to search the whole Web or just stuff that originated in Australia. Simply click on your selection.

## Keyword.

By default, Yahoo searches for all of the words you type into a search form. If you type Sea-Ray into the search form, Yahoo will return documents that contain the word Sea-Ray. A search for Sea-Ray Sundancer will return documents that contain both words somewhere within the document, but not necessarily together.

## Complete phrase.

To search for words in a specific order, enclose the words in quotation marks. A search for "**Sea-Ray Sundancer**" will return documents that contain the complete phrase Sea-Ray Sundancer. You can combine keyword and phrase searches. To find documents that contain the phrase Sea-Ray Sundancer and also have the word Sydney somewhere in the document, you could search for "**Sea-Ray Sundancer**" **Sydney**.

## OR.

You can change the default behavior of keyword searches by using the capitalized keyword OR between words. A search for **Sea-Ray OR Sydney** will return documents that contain either Sea-Ray or Sydney, but not necessarily both words.



## Exclude words or phrases.

To find documents without a certain word, you can use the minus sign (-) along with the word you want to exclude. If a search for Sea-Ray Sydney returns too many pages for boats at the Spit, you could type **Sea-Ray Sydney -Spit** to exclude any pages with the word Spit from the results.

## Meta Words

These allow you to limit your search to a single web site – say the Australian Government site. If you were looking for information on *Old age pensions* but only wanted information from the Australian Gov't site you would type **Old age pensions:gov.au** into the search box. All of the results will be from sites hosted at the gov.au domain. If you were looking for (say) kids holidays that relate to the Queensland Gov't Department of Education you could type **holidays:qld.edu.au** or if you wanted the school holidays for all the states you would omit the **Qld** from the search and just type **holidays:edu.au**

## Linkdomain

This search looks for any links to a specific domain. If you wanted to know how many pages were linked to the Eastcoastcool.com or the Austradesecure.com sites, which host the RAM, you would type **linkdomain:eastcoastcool.com** or **linkdomain:Austradesecure.com**

## inURL

Use this to find sites that have a specific word within the URL. For instance, if you want to find all the Radschool sites you would type ***inURL:radschool***



## intitle:

Like inurl:, this returns documents that have a specific word in the document title. To find documents with Radschool in the title, use ***intitle:radschool*** You can also use the basic search operators in combination with the search meta words to refine your search. Say you'd like to search for the word Radschool across documents, but you don't want pages from the eastcoastcool.com site; type ***radschool -site:eastcoastcool.com***. Because Yahoo supports very long queries, you could specify a whole list of sites that you don't want information from: ***radschool -site:eastcoastcool.com -site:RAAFMuseum.com.au -site:NAVY.gov.au***.

## Definitions

If you want the definition of a word, say an aeroplane, Type ***define aeroplane*** and Yahoo will provide a brief dictionary definition for the word and a link to the full dictionary entry for that word at Yahoo Reference.

## Encyclopedia.

If you want to know something about a specific topic, say boats, type the word followed by the word Facts, eg: ***boats facts*** and Yahoo will display an excerpt of the Wikipedia entry for that word and a link to the full entry.



## Airport information

Yahoo provides quick links to maps, flight information, and local weather if you type the airport code followed by the word airport. For example, the shortcut for Brisbane Airport is BNE so you would type ***BNE airport***.

## Hotels

If you want info on all the hotels in a particular city, type the city name followed by hotels, eg: ***Tamworth hotels***. You can also look for a specific hotel chain by typing the name of the city followed by the chain--for example, ***Tamworth Comfort Inn***.

## Weather

For a quick look at the current weather for any city, type the name of the city followed by the word weather, eg: ***Launceston weather***. Yahoo will give you the current conditions and the expected high and low temperatures.

The bigger the hat, the smaller the farm.

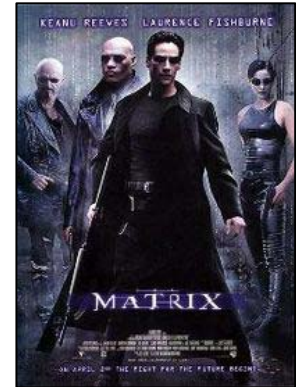


## Matrix XP??

Science fiction has long been popular with computer geeks: sci-fi films such as Total Recall, Blade Runner and The Matrix glorify the techie life. Supercomputer fantasies are all well and good, but come on! How do the movie folks get that big iron to run so darned smoothly?

What if big Arnie in Total Recall and characters Neo and Morpheus in The Matrix had to deal with the same technological frustrations that plague the rest of us? What would happen if Neo and Morpheus were controlled by a computer that used Microsoft's Windows XP platform.

We reckon it would look like [THIS](#)



Three boys were heading home from school one day when one started the time-honoured game of paternal one-upmanship. He said, "My dad's way faster than any of yours, he can bowl a 160kph fast ball from one end of the wicket then run down the other end and catch it just after it crosses the stumps!" One of the other boys said, "Oh yeah? Well, my dad can shoot an arrow from his bow and run to the target and hold it up to make sure the arrow hits the bull's eye!" The last boy said, "Your dads don't even come close to being faster than mine. My dad works for the government, and even though he works every day until 4:00 he gets home at 3:30!"