The Best XP Tweaks for improved Performance!

Posted by Vairo - 2007/07/17 19:15

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Two of the most resource hungry services on Windows XP can be disabled which will greatly improve performance.

1. System Restore - If you don't use it then disable it. This saves some HD space but keeps my C drive monitored, but for max performance increase turn it off altogether. By default, System Restore Service uses a LARGE amount of disk space to store rollback points. On large hard drives, this could be well over 10 to 20 GB.

Q. How do I turn off System Restore Process?:

With the default Category Control Panel:

1. Head to Start
2. Select Control Panel
3. Select Performance and Maintenance
4. Select System
5. Select System Restore Tab
6. Check "Turn off System Restore"
7. Select the Ok button to apply the settings

After that, Disable and Stop the System Restore Service:
Start > Run > services.msc > System Restore Service > Stop and Disable

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2. Indexing Service - It uses about 500 K to 2 MB in an idle state, not to mention the amount of memory and CPU resources it takes to INDEX the drives. I have it turned off altogether. Blackviper would always recommend getting rid of this!

You can disable the service from:
Start > Run > services.msc > Indexing service > Stop it, then choose 'disabled' fro the startup option.

You can remove the function via the "Add / Remove Programs" icon in the control panel (Windows Setup Programs) to get rid of it altogether

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Turn off Automatic Updates.

If you want to be in charge of your updating and also know exactly what you're installing (always a good idea!) then u can free some resources and disable automatic updating.

With the default Category Control Panel:

1. Head to Start
2. Select Control Panel
3. Select Performance and Maintenance
4. Select System
5. Select Automatic Updates Tab
6. Select "Turn off automatic updating."
7. Select the Ok button to apply the settings

After that go into Start > Run > services.msc > Automatic upadates > turn it off and disable it from statup

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Remove Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop Sharing……unless you use them obviously!

Take note: Remote Desktop Sharing is NOT available with Windows XP Home. You may request assistance from someone ONLY using Windows XP Pro.

With the default Category Control Panel:

1. Head to Start
2. Select Control Panel
3. Select Performance and Maintenance
4. Select System
5. Select Remote Tab
6. Uncheck both "Remote Assistance and Desktop Sharing" options
7. Select the Ok button to apply the settings

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Disable Windows XP Themes

Used to display all those new XP themes and colors on your desktop. If memory conscious and does not care about the "new" XP look, disable this service to save RAM. I have observed between 4 MB to 12 MB of RAM used for the new themes.

With the default Category Control Panel:

1. Head to Start
2. Select Control Panel
3. Select Performance and Maintenance
4. Select System
5. Select Advanced Tab
6. Under Performance, select the Settings button
7. Select Visual Effects Tab
8. Select "Adjust for best performance."
9. Select the Ok button

After that, Disable and Stop the Themes Service:
Start > Run > services.msc > Themes Service > stop and disable it from startup

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Add/Remove any unused programs

Go to the "Add Remove Programs" and click the "Windows components." Here, take out all the rubbish you do not need. Such as "MSN EXPLORER" and the likes

After Removing the unused Windows components, ensure that you check back up on the services that you disabled. Some like to go back to Automatic after playing with the Windows components (namely COM+ and Help and Support).

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Clean your System Tray

Remove any excess icons (all of them, basically) from the system tray (lower right). Contrary to popular belief, those little "quick access" icons take up a lot of room.

For example, MS messenger takes up about 3.6 MB just sitting there... not even logged in... Bring it up, select tools, options, then uncheck "load at startup" and "allow to run in background."

Also, Creatives "AudioHQ" running is REALLY not required. Uncheck "Load on Startup" and "Show icon on Taskbar" in AudioHQ's Options menu.

ICQ's little "Net Detect" sucks up WAY to much memory. Make it go away.

Various Quick Tweak icons and even EZCD creator's icon annoys the hell out of me. Make them all go away. If you just HAVE to have that quick access to those programs, place them in the "quick launch bar" (located in the lower left by default, where IE and "Show Desktop" buttons are). The icons will not clutter your desktop and you can easily hit them from any normal windows application. To top it all off, they do not take up memory or resources constantly running in the background. Another plus, this will reduce your boot up time.

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Use Regedit and check your startup activities

Start > Run > Regedit
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Curr entVersion\Run

Have a look in there and remove (delete) anything you don’t want loading up on startup. Be warned, messing around with

the Reg without knowledge of it can cause you problems!! Quicktime task is one which always seems to appear in here, delete it (as it does nothing!) and then go into your program folder for Quicktime and delete qttask.exe from in there so it wont reappear in your registry later
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Use Msconfig

I run msconfig and get rid of any annoying startup programs that may be hiding from me.
Start > Run > msconfig > Startup (don't disable services from in here, use services.msc in 'run' instead)
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Disable Hibernate Function

To save on disk space is it a good idea to disable the hibernate feature from Windows. Do so in Control Panel > Power Options > Hibernate > Untick 'Enable hibernate'

Much of the XP tweaking and Services info is thanks to: (the now closed, but still available in PDF) Blackviper.com .Screen shots of most of the processes described can be found at their website.

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A Fresh Install

Ok, you've F-disked your HD, set up your partitions and you're installing Windows, here's the most common install order people use (inc me) on the forums:
1. Install Windows
2. Any Service Pack from Windows
3. Motherboard / Chipset drivers
4. Direct X update
5. Graphics Card drivers
6. Other Hardware drivers inc. sound, modem, LAN (etc)
7. Critical Updates from Windows Update

8. Install all your other programs and update them / set them up as you go
8. Full Defrag

If you have Antivirus and/or firewall software it is worth installing them early on, perhaps before you go online to get MS Critical updates. Do a Antivirus update early on too, to make sure u are fully protected.

Perhaps throw in a defrag for good measures after stage 4 just to get things running nicely from the beginning, but it's debatable whether it will make much difference, certainly doesn't hurt though!

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Defragmenting

Windows built in Defragmenter is pretty bog standard. Some good and much faster alternatives include Vopt XP and Diskeeper, try those for a good quality defrag. Before defragging it is always a good idea to delete all temporary files, temp internet files, empty your recycle bin (all in system tools > disk cleanup). There's no need for Windows to be moving these files around, get rid of them. Also empty your windows\prefetch folder every time you want to defrag,.....emptying it will speed up your performance, and defragging with it empty helps move all your system files around without moving unnecessary files like these

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Pagefile Size and Location

Ok, a very common one this…..generally it is considered that Windows is perfectly capable of organising you pagefile size so leave it to be 'system managed'. If you really want to save on pagefile size, and have enough RAM (>512MB recommended) then u can decrease the size of your pagefile. It is generally not advised to totally disable the pagefile, but if you have 1GB of RAM some ppl say they can disable it with no adverse effects.
The location of the pagefile is also a common question. The only real performance advantage is if you move the pagefile to a separate partition on a separate physical HD.

To change your pagefile size and location with the default Category Control Panel:

1. Head to Start
2. Select Control Panel

3. Select Performance and Maintenance
4. Select System
5. Select Advanced Tab
6. Under Performance, select the Settings button
7. Select Advanced Tab
8. Under Virtual Memory, select the Change button
9. Adjust as needed, or select "No paging File," then select the Set button
10. Select the Ok button to apply the settings
11. You must reboot for the changes to take effect

From Fastest to Slowest, these are the configuration you can try:

* No swap file at all. Some software may fail. You also need "much" memory to do this. Greater than 512 MB.
* A static swap file on a separate hard drive (and preferably, controller) from Windows and frequently accessed data.
* A dynamic swap file on a separate hard drive (and preferably, controller) from Windows and frequently accessed data.
* A static swap file on a separate partition, but on the same physical hard drive as Windows.
* A dynamic swap file on a separate partition, but on the same physical hard drive as Windows.
* The Default: A dynamic swap file on the same partition and physical hard drive (usually C) as Windows.

Microsofts own article about Pagefile

http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsXP/...es/03june16.asp

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Which Antivirus Program is the best?

A common question which can be answered with a quick search. This info might be helpful to ppl trying to find out.
Thread about it all: here

This is a cut and paste from a different forum by a user called kobra.

Testbed consisted of 321 Viruses, Trojans and Worms, all for the Windows32 environment, and all reasonably new samples. I don't have any data on whether some of these are zoo, or ITW, but they are all real threats I feel someone is likely to encounter, since I got them off the internet (and i've verified they are real as each sample must be detected by at least 4 AV's for me to consider it). All scanners were installed on a clean system, without any traces of other anti-virus softwares - between each test the system and directories were cleaned, and the registry was sweeped. Each AV product was treated with a double-reboot, one before, and one after installation. Each scanner was set at its highest possible settings, and was triple checked for proper options and configuration. Most products were the full registered version when possible, others were fully functional unrestricted trials. All products were tested with the current version as of 6-14-04, and the latest definitions for that date. Each product was run through the test set a minimum of 3 times to establish proper settings and reliability, the only product to exhibit some variance on this was F-Secure, which had one scan come up less than the other two without any settings changes indicating a possible stability issue.

The final standings:

1) MKS-Vir
1a) eXtendia AVK
2) Kaspersky 5.0/4.5
2a) McAfee VirusScan 8.0
3) F-Secure
4) GData AVK
5) RAV + Norton (2 way tie)
6) Dr.Web
7) CommandAV + F-Prot + BitDefender (3 Way Tie)
8) ETrust
9) Trend
10) Panda
11) Avast! Pro
12) KingSoft
13) NOD32
14) AVG Pro

15) AntiVIR
16) ClamWIN
17) UNA
18) Norman
19) Solo
20) Proland
21) Sophos
22) Hauri
23) CAT Quickheal
24) Ikarus

Heuristics seemed to play some of a roll in this test, as no AV had every virus in my test in their definitions, and products with stronger heuristics were able to hold their position towards the top of the test. Double/Multi engined products put up strong showings as well, proving to me that the redundacy method works, and I think more AV companies should considering double-engines. The strongest heurisitical AV I noticed was F-Prot/Command, picking up only 247 samples with definitions but they were able to power through 67 additional hits on "Possible Virus" indicators - very strong! Norton with BloodHound activated had 30 Heuristical pickups, and DrWeb rounded up the pack with 20 heuristical pickups. eXtendia AVK grabs the number one slot with double engine scanning, anything the KAV engine missed, the RAV engine picked up with great redundancy on the double engine/definition system. McAfee actually missed only 2 samples with its definitions, but picked those 2 up as "Suspicious File", and therefore, scores nearly perfect as well.

The biggest dissapointments for me were Norman and Nod32. Even with Advanced-Heuristics enabled, NOD32 failed to pick up a large portion of the samples. Norman, while finding some of the toughest samples, managed to completely miss a large portion of them! Showing that their sandbox-emulation system has great potetential, but its far from complete.

Actual test numbers were:

Total Samples/Found Samples (321 total possible) + Number Missed + Detection Percentage

Discovered and tested MKS-Vir2004, from Poland. Surprisingly, this one with caught every sample perfectly on Medium Heuristics. Specifically, nearly 50 samples were picked up Heuristically giving it a perfect score of 321/321. However, when I increased Heuristics to "Super Deep", it picked up an addition 10 more suspicious files. Upon further investigation, it was found that it was picking up signatures of hacktool utilities left over in some of the archives and flagging those files. Indeed, this is impressive. MKS-Vir2004 exhibits the most advanced detection algorithms i've ever seen, clearly it only had signatures for 271 of my samples, but through code emulation, it was able to pick up all 321 samples!! It clearly labeled the Heuristically found ones as things as "Likely Win32 Trojan" or "Highly Suspicious Acting File". In addition, its scanning speed was incredibly quick, and its memory footprint was quite small. Impressive! Furthermore, this is a full featured and fairly polished product that appears to update at least once per day, and tech support responded to me within 5-15 minutes on my emails. Unfortunately, it appears to not be available in the US for purchase at this time.

1a) MKS_Vir 2004 - 321/321 0 Missed - 100%
1b) eXtendia AVK - 321/321 0 Missed - 100%
2a) Kaspersky 5.0 - 320/321 1 Missed - 99.70% (with Extended Database ON)
2b) McAfee VirusScan 8.0 - 319/321 + 2 (2 found as joke programs - heuristically) - 99%
3) F-Secure - 319/321 2 Missed - 99.37%
4) GData AVK - 317/321 4 Missed - 98.75%
5) RAV + Norton (2 way tie) - 315/321 6 Missed - 98.13%
6) Dr.Web - 310/321 11 Missed - 96.57%
7) CommandAV + F-Prot + BitDefender (3 Way Tie) - 309/321 12 Missed - 96.26%
8) ETrust - 301/321 20 Missed - 93.76%
9) Trend - 300/321 21 Missed - 93.45%
10) Avast! Pro - 299/321 22 Missed - 93.14%
11) Panda - 298/321 23 Missed - 92.83%
12) Virus Buster - 290/321 31 Missed - 90.34%
13) KingSoft - 288/321 33 Missed - 89.71%
14) NOD32 - 285/321 36 Missed (results identical with or without advanced heuristics) - 88.78%
15) AVG Pro - 275/321 46 Missed - 85.66%
16) AntiVIR - 268/321 53 Missed - 83.48%
17) Antidote - 252/321 69 Missed - 78.50%
18) ClamWIN - 247/321 74 Missed - 76.94%
19) UNA - 222/321 99 Missed - 69.15%
20) Norman - 215/321 106 Missed - 66.97%
21) Solo - 182/321 139 Missed - 56.69%

22) Fire AV - 179/321 142 Missed - 55.76%
23) V3 Pro - 109/321 212 Missed - 33.95%
24) Per_AV - 75/321 - 246 Missed - 23.36%
25) Proland - 73/321 248 Missed - 22.74%
26) Sophos - 50/321 271 Missed - 15.57%
27) Hauri - 49/321 272 Missed - 15.26%
28) CAT Quickheal - 21/321 300 Missed - 6%
29) Vir_iT - 10/321 311 Missed - 3%
30) Ikarus - Crashed on first virus. - 0%

Interesting also to note, is the detection level of the US AVK version with KAV+RAV engines was higher than the German version with KAV+BitDefender engines. Several vendors have free versions of their for purchase AV's, we didn't test the free versions, as it would serve no purpose for this test, but based on the results, none of the free versions would have been very impressive anyway. The term "Heuristics" seems like it should be taken very liberally, as some products that claim to be loaded with Heuristics scored miserably on items they clearly didn't have definitions for. Scanning speed was not measured, as it was totally irrelevant to my testing, and on-access scanners were not tested, as it would have been too time consuming, but considering most products have similar on-access engines as on-demand, and use the same database, results most likely, would be very similar.

Cut through the hype, cut through the marketing schemes, this was a real test, with real samples, and none of these samples were provided to the antivirus software vendors in advance. This is real world, and these are likely badguys you'll encounter, since I got them in my real encounters, and all were aquired on the internet in daily activities which anyone out there might be involved in. (Installing shareware, filesharing, surfing, etc). Keep in mind that with ITW tests the AV vendors have full disclosure of what they will be tested on in advance, not so here, so heuristics and real detection algorithms will play a big part, as well as the depth and scope of their definition database.
''cheers to folks from www.overclockers.co.uk

Post edited by: Vairo, at: 2007/07/17 16:17

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Re:The Best XP Tweaks for improved Performance!
Posted by Edsso - 2007/07/18 03:26

Crazy staff... :P

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Re:The Best XP Tweaks for improved Performance!
Posted by Vairo - 2007/07/18 03:48

It seems to ,but i guess it is not that crazy when your sistem benefits from it :P

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Re:The Best XP Tweaks for improved Performance!
Posted by Teljair - 2007/07/21 03:51

Wow, very nice list of tweaks. I am sure it will prove to be useful.

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Re:The Best XP Tweaks for improved Performance!
Posted by scarface1429@gmail.com - 2007/07/23 18:34

Thanks for the list of tweeks. I will use them and see how my gaming performance turns out.

Thanks again!

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