

Spring-Clean Your Machine

How and Why to Remove
Unwanted
Files and Programs
and
Maybe Make Your Computer Faster

© Paul Lewis
ComputerHomeHelp.com

Who Thinks Their Computer is SLOW?

Have we morphed from spring-cleaning to speeding?

- Is it slow to boot?
- Slow to open a browser?
- Slow to open a web page?
- Slow to open a Word document
- Slow todo ANYTHING....

Introductory Note

- The content focus is software with a brief mention of hardware changes that can improve performance
- Slides have rather a lot of text -
 - - so that you can refer to them as your notes
- Tasks are graded - we look at easy ones first, tricky ones later
- This presentation does not include details of removing "difficult" malware (though malware is one of the greatest cause of poor performance IMHO)

Order of Business

1. First - Clean-up
Remove unwanted programs and files
2. Second - Speed-up
Actions that may improve performance

Note: See Microsoft articles

<http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/maintenance/speed.aspx>

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/setup/maintenance.aspx>

Clean-up Actions

Reasons To Remove Stuff

- **The more obvious reasons**
 - You have run out of disk space
 - Your machine takes forever to boot up
 - Your machine "runs slowly" or seems to respond very slowly to your input
- **Other reasons**
 - Reduce your exposure to malware
 - Reduce anti-malware scan-times
 - Reduce subsequent maintenance tasks
 - Reduce the size of (some) backups

Things You Can Do to Cleanup -1

- Remove "Dust Bunnies" using CCleaner
- Remove redundant registry entries using CCleaner
- Remove programs you don't use
- Remove surplus Restore Points
- Remove redundant Windows Uninstal files
- Remove browser "barnacles"
Note on IE 9 !

Things You Can Do to Clean-up - 2

- Deal with the Disk

- Check your disk drive is not FULL
- Disk Cleanup
- Disk Defragmenter (needs 15% free space!)
- Check Disk

For a "HowTo" see the afore mentioned Microsoft At Work article

<http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/maintenance/speed.aspx>

and

<http://www.piriform.com/defraggler> (nicer interface)

- **Note:** Windows 7 and most versions of Windows Vista are preconfigured to automatically run Disk Defragmenter on a weekly basis.

Using CCleaner to Remove "Dust Bunnies"

- CCleaner is a FREE program that is easy to install and use
- Download from: <http://www.ccleaner.com>
- The site provides plenty of help in using the program

- Suggestions:

Beginners - Use only the Cleaner tab (top tab) use both

- Windows and
- Applications sections
- These two are very safe (little risk)

Advanced Users - Use the registry cleaner and be sure to use the built-in backup feature. Then go round this "loop" again until there are no further issues.

Using CCleaner

With this program you may safely accept all the default settings.

OR

You may wish to set the program to not remove some data, for example:

- your cookies
- your saved passwords
- your browsing history

Removing Programs You Don't Use

This means removing legitimate (not malware) programs

Go to the Control Panel

(If Vista/W7 switch to Classic view)

- In XP select Add and Remove Programs
- In Vista/W7 select Programs and Features
 - Click selected program then click Uninstall
 - Repete as necessary
 - Advanced: Turn Windows features on or off

Restore Points Consume Disk Space (settings)

Restore Points (registry and system file backups) can consume up to 12% (XP) 15% (Vista/W7) of your hard disk drive space (Min 300MB Vista)

To change settings:

- XP - Go to Start -> Help and Support -> System Restore -> System Restore Settings
- Vista - Go to Start -. Help and Support ->
 - Security and Maintenance ->
 - Backup and Restore (Backup your files ->
 - "Click to open Backup and Restore Center"
- Win7 - Go -> Control Panel -> System - select System protection then select

To Clean-up see next slide

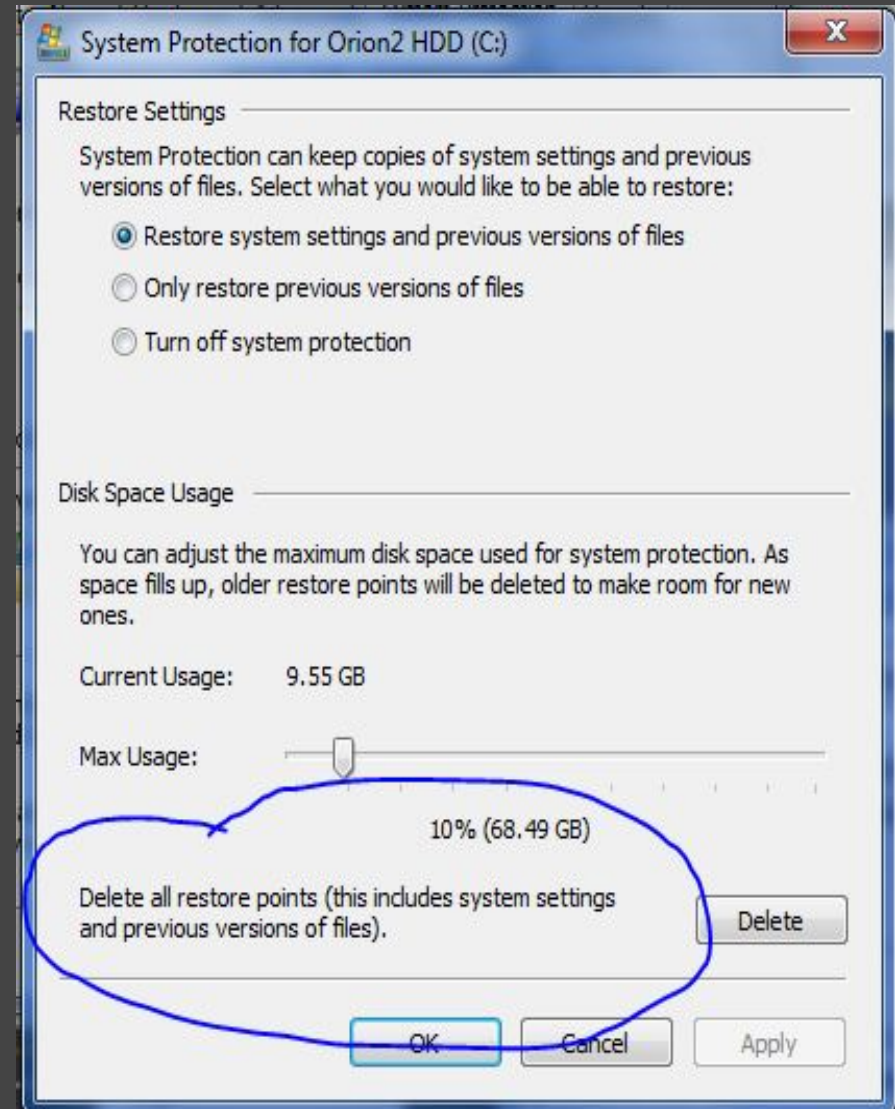
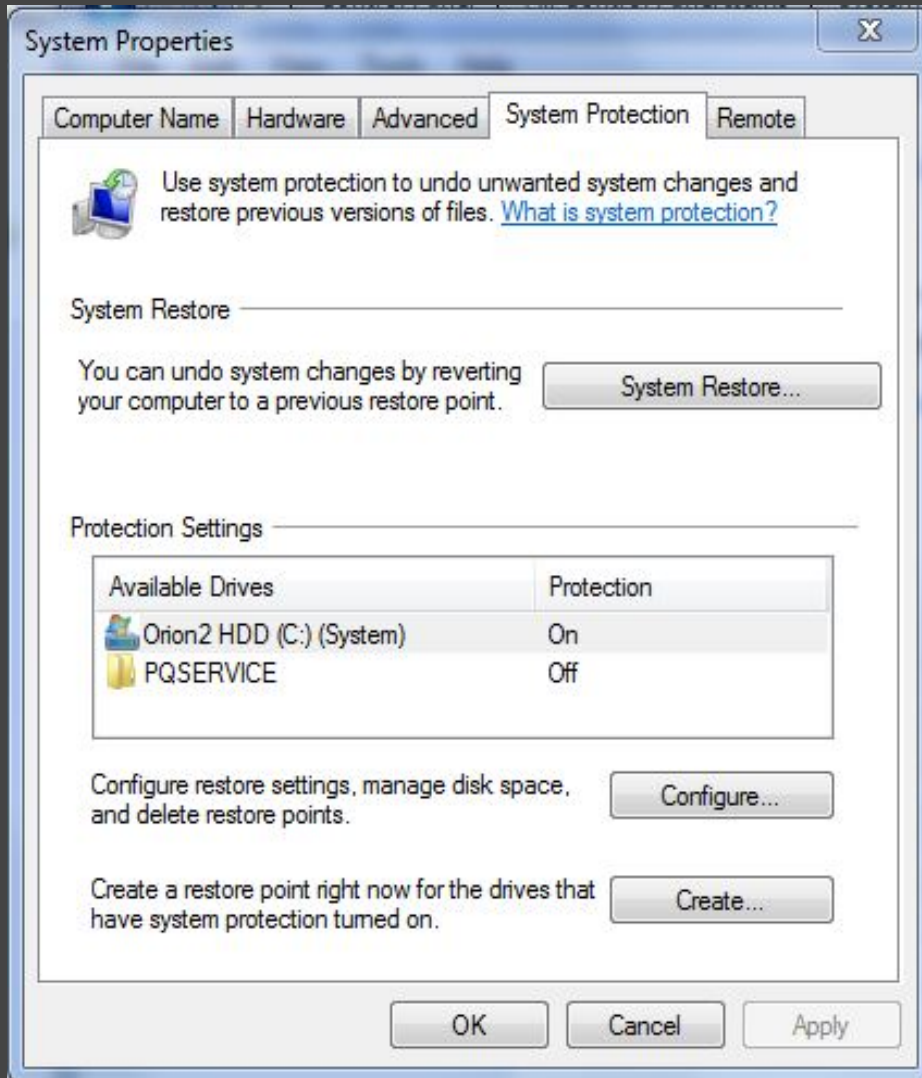
Delete Surplus Restore Points (How-To)

- XP - Go Start -> Run -> Type into the box "cleanmgr" (no quotation marks) box and wait..
- Vista - Go Start and Type into the box "cleanmgr" (no quotation marks) and wait ...

In the window that appears,

- select More Options ->
- in System Restore click Cleanup...
- then answer Yes
- Windows 7 Go -> Control Panel -> System - select System protection then see next slide

Delete Restore Points - Windows 7



Remove Windows \$ntUninstall{xxx}\$ files ???

If you know that you will not need to uninstall any of the (many) Windows Updates that you have made, you can remove the uninstall files and potentially free-up several GB of disk space.

If you need to do this, "Google it"

<http://forum.ccleaner.com/index.php?showtopic=4288&>

Speed-up

Maybe

Speed-up

Curing performance issues depends on the cause of the problem

Suggested order of approach:

What are the symptoms - Slow to:

1. boot-up
2. open a browser
3. open a web page
4. open other programs
5. respond to general user-input

Hardware Note: A simple and effective way to improve performance is to increase the amount of physical memory
For XP - 2 GB for Win 7 - 3GB or more if 64-bit OS

Frequent Reason for Poor Performance *Malware!*

If your computer performance degrades rapidly from one day to the next, it is very likely that your computer is infected by malware.

As a first attempt to rectify the situation, you should attempt to remove the infection.

Malware is likely to affect **numerous aspects** of performance and therefore should be the first issue you address.

If Your Machine is Infected - 1

- ***Try*** to update your security programs
 - virus definitions (fingerprints)
 - the whole program
- Clean with CCleaner
- Scan with your primary security programs
Norton, McAfee, ESET, TrendMicro, (antivirus first -
antispyware next)
- Scan with a second and third program (on-line scan)
- Also try Safe Mode - etc...

(Malware removal - Postponed for a future meeting)

If Your Machine is Infected - 2

- If you are unable to perform updates or a scan -
- Malware infection may have:
 - blocked access to your protection program updates
 - disabled
 - your protection program
 - Task Manager
 - Windows Update
 - Safe Mode

Slow to Boot
Managing Start-up Programs

Manage Startup Items (there are lots of them)

- Upon installation, many applications configure themselves to start automatically when you log on. Applications do this so that they can:
 - automatically check for updates
 - use system tray icons to interact with users
 - add functionality to Windows components such as Windows Explorer.
- However, most such applications don't ask permission before inserting themselves in your logon process and almost never provide an interface to let you disable their autostart functionality
- Startup Control Panel (free) allows you to disable and re-enable these startup items

Quick-Check

A quick-check to determine if diddling with your start-up items is going to make a difference in your boot time, try this:

1. Measure your "time to boot" (Show all icons in system tray - observe last icon to appear)
2. Open msconfig:
Run -> type msconfig hit enter
3. Click Startup items
4. Click disable all
5. Restart and measure your new boot time

System Configuration



- General
- Boot
- Services
- Startup**
- Tools

Startup Item	Manufacturer	Command	Location	Date Disabled
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Synaptics Po...	Synaptics Inco...	%ProgramFiles...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intel(R) Com...	Intel Corporation	C:\Windows\sy...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intel(R) Com...	Intel Corporation	C:\Windows\sy...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intel(R) Com...	Intel Corporation	C:\Windows\sy...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IDT PC Audio	IDT, Inc.	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Se...	Microsoft Corp...	"c:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> InstallShield ...	InstallShield So...	C:\PROGRA~2\...	HKCU\SOFTWARE\M...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WinPatrol M...	BillP Studios	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gmail	Google Inc.	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HP Wireless ...	Hewlett-Packar...	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HpqSRmon ...	Hewlett-Packard	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> hpwuSchd A...	Hewlett-Packard	C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Off...	Microsoft Corp...	"C:\Program Fil...	HKLM\SOFTWARE\...	

Enable all

Disable all

OK

Cancel

Apply

Help

Some Choices to Manage Startup Items

- **Startup Control Panel (free)
Very popular and has been in use for many years
- **WinPatrol (free and paid-for versions)
Has many other tools in addition to Startup control
- Windows Defender (free download from MS)
This program is recommended by Microsoft
(Displaced by Microsoft Security essentials)
- CCleaner (free)
This popular cleaning tool is/not? recommended for managing startup items
- Autoruns (free) Very full featured. Not for the feint hearted
- msconfig (build-in Windows tool) Good for diagnosis but Microsoft advises not appropriate for managing start-up programs
- <http://lifehacker.com/#!/5425289/five-best-startup-management-tools>
- <http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-startup-manager.htm>

WinPatrol (Free version available)

A more comprehensive and user-friendly tool than Startup Control Panel is **WinPatrol**

- Winpatrol (free) gets very good reviews and provides several tools including the tool to manage startup programs
- WinPatrol PLUS (\$29.99) also includes access to an **online database** that answers many of the questions like:
 - "What does the file **IGFXSRVC.DLL** do?" and do I need it?
 - To compare free and PLUS see:
 - <http://www.winpatrol.com/compare.html?download>

*****Note: Some malware files have names similar or the same as legitimate windows files to trick the unwary - ******

Sources of Information on file purpose

Google.com

ProcessLibrary.com
dllinformation.com

LiUtilities.com

Greatis.com
BleepingComputer.com

AND for START-UP programs - - - -

Pacmans -Portal

**START-UP APPLICATIONS
DO YOU REALLY NEED ALL OF THEM?**

All is revealed!

A gigantic library of Start-up Programs

http://www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup_content.php

Note of Caution

- If you disable a startup item using the previous tools, some programs will attempt to re-insert themselves into the startup list whenever you next decide to run the program by clicking its icon. (eg. AOL)
- There is a danger of "complications" if you uninstall a program that has had its entry in a startup location disabled or deleted.
This opinion is Web "gossip" ie not exactly an authoritative source.
- If you find files with random /unverifiable file names, it's an *indication* that your machine is infected with malware

For the Easy Solution try Soluto

- Soluto is a semi-automatic way to reduce the number of programs that load into the memory at Boot time.
- This will result in a reduction in the time it takes to boot the machine
- This **may** also improve the responsiveness of the computer to your instructions
- Be aware that if you uninstall SOLUTO the changes that it makes to your machine will be undone
- (You could re-insert the changes manually if you have the patience)

**Browser Slow to Open
or Open Web Page**

Browser Slow to Open

Most probable cause (apart from malware)

- Browser Add-ons
 - Extensions
 - Plug-ins
 - Tool Bars
 - Browser-helper Objects
- Note: In Windows 7 - try running Internet Explorer without Add-ons (to check if there is a difference in performance)

Go -> Start and Type Internet Explorer into the box ->
Select Internet Explorer (No Add-ons)

Remove Browser "Barnicles"

Barnicles (my term) for extra programs that get added to browsers to make them "better" such as Tool bars.

These add-ons are a common cause of browser slow-downs!

- Internet Explorer calls them: Add-Ons
 - Go to Tools -> Manage Add-ons
 - This opens a window where you can
 - Enable, Disable, or Delete
- Firefox - Chrome calls them: Add-ons, Extensions, Plug-ins
 - Go to Tools -> Add-ons
 - This opens a window where you can select a tab for
 - Get Add-ons, Extensions, Themes or Plugins ->
 - Enable, Disable, or Delete

Chrome - Extensions - Plug-ins - Add-ons

To manage Extensions - Go Tools - Extensions

To Manage Plug-ins - Go Options -> Under the hood -> Plug-ins -> Disable individual Plugins

NOTE: In Internet Explorer 9

Browser feature shows how much time each Add-on adds to the browser-opening time.

Neat!



Extensions

Extensions (11)

Developer mode:

[Load unpacked extension...](#)

[Pack extension...](#)

[Update extensions now](#)



[AdBlock](#) - Version: 2.3.27

The most popular Chrome extension, with over 2 million users! Blocks ads all over the web.

ID: gighmmpiobklfepjocnamgkkbiglidom

Inspect active views:

[background.html](#)

To inspect a popup, right-click the page or browser action's icon and choose Inspect popup.

[Disable](#) - [Uninstall](#) - [Options](#) Allow in incognito



[Docs PDF/PowerPoint Viewer \(by Google\)](#) - Version: 3.3

Automatically previews pdfs, powerpoint presentations, and other documents in Google Docs Viewer.

ID: nnbmlagghjjcbdhgmkedmbmedengocbn

Inspect active views:

[background.html](#)

[Disable](#) - [Uninstall](#) - [Options](#) Allow in incognito



[FlashBlock](#) - Version: 0.9.31

FlashBlock for Chrome. Block them all, or be selective with the embedded whitelist manager

ID: gofhjkmkpinhpoiabjplobcaignabnl

Inspect active views:

[background.html](#)

To inspect a popup, right-click the page or browser action's icon and choose Inspect popup.

[Disable](#) - [Uninstall](#) - [Options](#) Allow in incognito



[Google Voice \(by Google\)](#) - Version: 2.2.3.4

Make calls, send SMS, preview Inbox, and get notified of new messages. (US only)



Plug-ins

Plug-ins (17)

Flash (2 files) - Version: 10.2.154.27

Shockwave Flash 10.2 r154

[Disable](#)

QuickTime (7 files) - Version: 7.6.9.1680.9

The QuickTime Plugin allows you to view a wide variety of multimedia content in Web pages. For more information, visit the [Quick](#)

[Disable](#)

Java (2 files) - Version: 6.0.240.7

NPRuntime Script Plug-in Library for Java(TM) Deploy

[Disable](#)

Silverlight - Version: 4.0.60129.0

[Disable](#)

Windows Media Player - Version: 1.0.0.8

np-mswmp

[Disable](#)

Microsoft Office (2 files) - Version: 14.0.4730.1010

Office Authorization plug-in for NPAPI browsers

[Disable](#)

Chrome PDF Viewer

[Disable](#)

Slow to Open a Web Page

Verify if the slow-to-open is

Across ALL web sites or pages

Consistently slow at any time of day

Check Internet connection speed

Try another browser IE (No Add-ons) / Firefox / Chrome

Try:

Uninstall the browser

Run CCleaner BOTH files and registry

Re-install the browser

Switch to Verizon FIOS ;-)

Slow to do Anything

If you've done everything prior to this slide

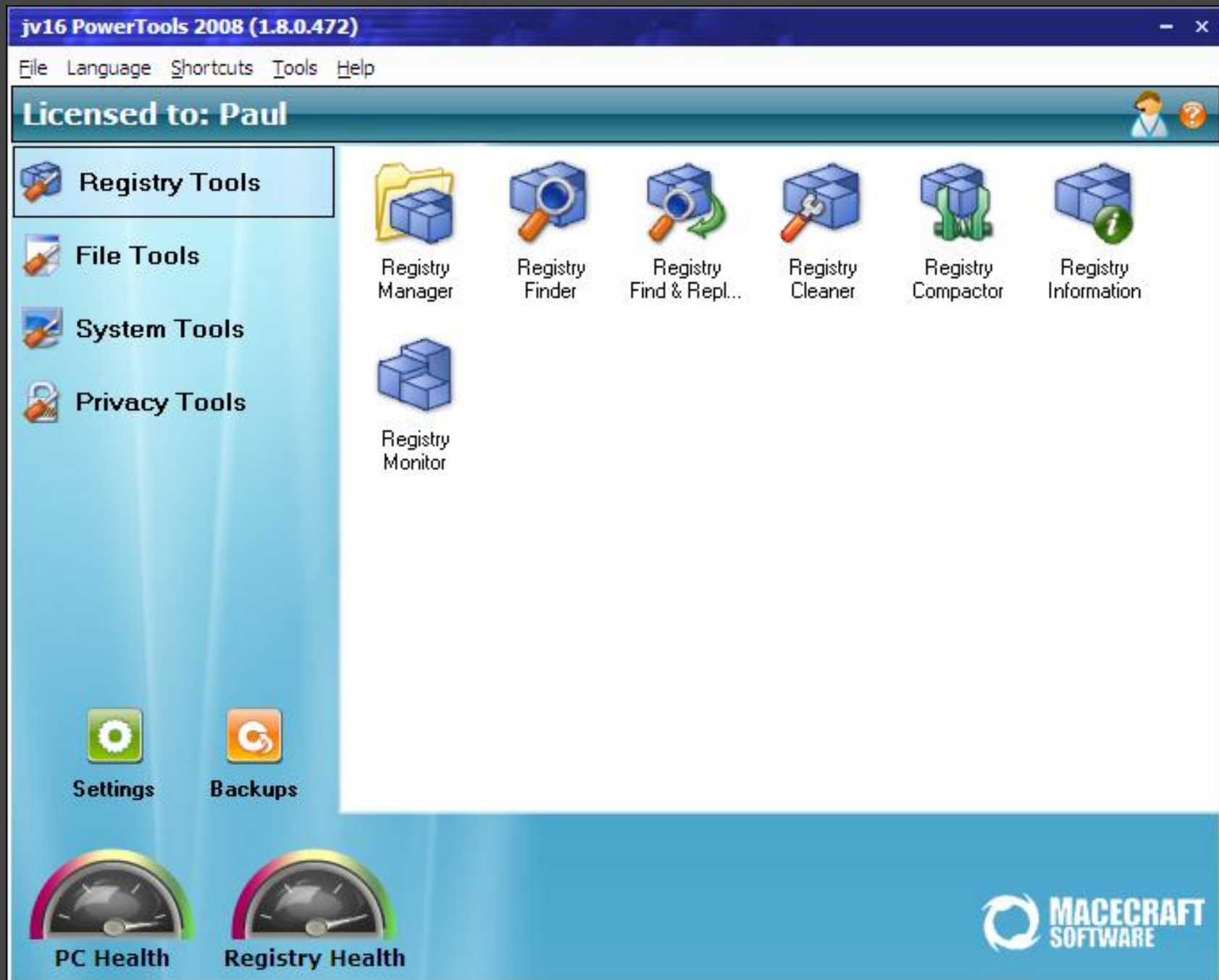
- Go on vacation
- Format the hard drive and reinstall Windows
- Upgrade to Windows 7
- Buy a faster computer
- Buy a Apple Mac and enjoy life ;-)

Meddling with the Registry

The usual advice is "Meddle with the registry at you own risk"
If you want to do this:

- Use the registry section of CCleaner and be sure to use the backup facility built into CCleaner
(I've never needed to restore a backup)
- Numerous programs are available to clean and optimise the registry. Seek advice elsewhere ;-)
- Try jv16 Power Tools. This is a full-featured application that I have used occasionally.
- NOTE: The Microsoft tool **Regedit** is "unforgiving" if you make an innapropriate change, there's no "undo" button!
Be warned!

j16 Power Tools by Macecraft



Other Tips and Tools for your review:

List of Startup locations: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/ee851671.aspx>

Decrapifier

TweakHound

Autoruns

HijackThis

Doug Knox Utilities (eg remove Hotfix backups)

<http://www.soluto.com/>

And <http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-tips-for-troubleshooting-pc-system-slowdowns/1834>

And if you want to get really serious and disable some of the many **Windows services** try:

<http://www.blackviper.com/2010/12/17/black-vipers-windows-7-service-pack-1-service-configurations/>

OR: <http://www.techknowl.com/disable-unwanted-services-and-speed-up.html>