

PC Maintenance for the average user

If you have a late model PC (say with Windows XP) you should keep the operating system up to date with “security” and “Critical” updates. This is usually done through the automatic update feature in XP. If possible avoid the non critical and non security updates like “I.E. 7” and “the genuine advantage tool”. The I.E. 7 *“Update”* will install Internet Explorer version 7 on your machine, and the “genuine advantage tool” checks your copy of Windows XP to make sure it’s legal.

In most cases this is not an issue, I just don’t like the idea they are automatically installing this stuff on your machine as an update!

As far as user performed maintenance goes, there are three things all users should be doing. The frequency of which is determined by how much you use the internet/email and where you go on the web and how often.

1. Delete your “temporary internet files” regularly (once a week is OK, but at least once a month). Click on “Start” then “control panel” (may be necessary to click on settings to get to the “control panel”) then double click “Internet Options”, then click the delete temporary internet files button. (wait for the operation to complete)
2. Always have a running/up-to-date “Anti-Virus” program installed on your PC. You don’t need any of the additional features they want to sell you, just “Anti-Virus”. Open the AV program and check to see that your subscription date is OK. Also check to see when the last update was loaded (don’t confuse update with upgrade). These AV programs should automatically update themselves on a regular basis, just make sure yours is doing so and have it perform a “full system scan” every 3 months and no longer than every 6 months.
3. Run 1 or 2 “Anti-Spyware” programs. Ad-Aware Se and Spybot Search and Destroy are available from the web for free. If you already have them (or another program of your choosing) run them frequently and remove the “Malware” they find. Again, once a week is not too often. The instructions on how to run Spybot and Ad-Aware are on my website at <http://sic90272.com/> , just click the How to Use buttons to get a .pdf file with detailed instructions. Also the link there to “Best PC Practices” and “General PC Maintenance” have more information.

Happy Computing, Mike Mills
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