

# Cleaning Your PC

## Windows XP

### Introduction

Cleaning your PC has been quite straightforward until now. Using the Add/Remove Programs is the safest method, but it is not always the most efficient. When getting rid of applications no longer required, in almost all cases, some elements of the program get left behind. These files are useless without the main application and only serve to slow your pc down and impede efficiency.

#### Summary

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### Deleting Files

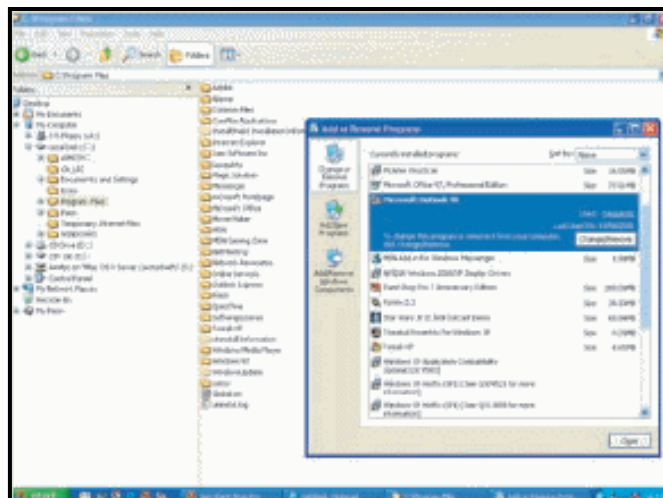
Aside from the shortcomings of software uninstallers there are other files on your PC that are created on a day to day basis. When you use certain applications, files are created that aid specific processes. However, once these are finished the files remain on your PC and are not deleted.

- Word creates .TMP files or temporary files while you are working on a document. Once your document has been saved and closed, these temporary files still remain, but are of no use.
- Another file type that can usually be deleted is .GID. When you perform a search in a help file these files are generated. They are recreated each time you perform a search so are safe to delete. See below for more details of file types, what they are and whether or not you should delete them.

### Program Files Remain After Uninstallation

While uninstalling a file, you may see a message about a shared file no longer being in use.

- This is flagged up because the temporary file was used by more than one program, neither of which needs it any longer.
- You can usually click **YES** to delete these with impunity, but if this makes you nervous you can always click **NO**. They tend to be so small that the space saving is pretty much negligible anyway.



Most software applications leave their folders behind in your Program Files directory. You've probably noticed messages such as 'unable to remove the following' when you've run an uninstaller. In most cases, this is deliberate as the data left behind can retain information about you and your system. Should you wish to reinstall the program at a later date this folder will personalize the installation accordingly.

1. Browse your Program Files folder using Windows Explorer or My Computer and compare it with the list of applications displayed in the Add/Remove Programs list.
2. **Right-click** on program directories that you're sure you don't need any longer and left-click **Delete**.

## **Defragmenting**

When is a deleted file not a deleted file? You've emptied the Recycle Bin, you've hit the delete key. The file is gone, isn't it? You would think so but the answer is, no. Although you can't see it, the file is actually still present on your hard drive. All you have done is freed up the physical space on the drive so that it can be overwritten by another file instead. Until this happens there is still a trace of your original file on the disk. Although this isn't a problem, there may be times when you want to be certain that sensitive data has been wiped from your PC, for example if you are selling it. A partial solution to this problem is to run the Windows XP defragmenter tool.

1. Click **Start >Programs >Accessories >System Tools >Disk Defragmenter**
2. Left-click on the **C:\ Drive** or the drive to be defragmented.
3. Left-click the **Defragment** button.

This will move files around and overwrite certain areas of the drive that were holding 'copies' of deleted files. However, this isn't a total solution so to ensure that everything has been thoroughly deleted you will need to use a specialist data shredder program such as Eraser 2002.

## **Using a Wildcard Search**

1. Click on **Start >Search >For Files or Folders**.
2. Type \*.tmp in the "Search for files or folders named:" field to find all files with the .tmp extension.  
Note: the Asterisk (\*) is the wildcard symbol.
3. Choose **Local Harddrives (C::D:)** under "Look in:."
4. Click **Search Now**.
5. Once all of the files have been displayed, you can delete them.
6. Repeat using \*.GID.