



Tips to Fix a Slow-Running Computer

Whether you use a Windows or a Mac OS X computer, there are some simple steps you can take to help keep your machine running more smoothly. These quick tips will get you started.

What are some common reasons that your computer may be running slowly?

- Virus or malware has found its way onto your machine and is actively running at all times
 - There is an accumulation of unneeded files on your Desktop, in your Recycle Bin/Trash Folder, or in your Internet cache
 - You are having network connectivity issues
 - The amount of storage space available on your hard drive is too limited (i.e., there's not enough room left)
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What can I do to help fix the problem?

- **Perform a Virus Scan**
All University-owned computers (both Windows and Mac) have Symantec Antivirus software installed. Run the **LiveUpdate** feature in your copy to ensure that you have the most current virus definitions, then run a quick virus scan on your computer. Be sure and report any findings to the C&NS Help Desk if you are unsure how to proceed. (While Mac OS X computers are not affected by most computer viruses, they can still pass viruses on to Windows machines, so Mac users should also scan their computers regularly.)
- **Empty the Recycle Bin / Trash**
 - *On Windows:* Right mouse-click on the Recycle Bin, then click on **Empty Recycle Bin**. Confirm file deletion by clicking **Yes**.
 - *On Mac OS X:* Click and hold the mouse button on the Trash icon in the Dock, then click “Empty Trash.” Confirm the action by clicking **OK**.
- **Delete Internet Cache files**
 - *On Windows - Internet Explorer:*
 - From the **Tools** menu choose **Internet Options**
 - In the center of the Internet Options window that opens click **Delete...**
 - From the window that appears, click **Delete files...**, **Delete cookies...**, and **Delete history....** These actions may take several minutes.
 - *On Windows - Firefox:*
 - From the **Tools** menu select **Clear Private Data**
 - Check the boxes for **Browsing History**, **Cache**, and **Cookies**, then click **Clear Private Data Now**. This action may take several minutes.

- *On Mac - Safari:*
 - From the application menu (**Safari** in the upper left-hand corner) select **Reset Safari**
 - Check **Clear history**, **Remove all webpage preview images**, **Empty the cache**, **Clear the Downloads window**, and **Remove all cookies**, then click **Reset**. This action may take several minutes.
- *On Mac - Firefox:*
 - From the **Tools** menu select **Clear Private Data**
 - Check **Browsing History**, **Cache**, and **Cookies**, then click **Clear Private Data Now**. This action may take several minutes.
- **Backup files to an external storage location**

If a hard drive is getting close to its full capacity, the entire system and all applications can slow down. It's always a good idea to monitor your **My Documents** folder (on Windows) or **Documents** folder (on Mac OS X) for documents, spreadsheets, images, downloads, and other files that are not regularly used and move them to an external storage location or device. Among your options are:

 - Xythos, an online file storage and sharing service that is available both on and off campus. You can log in to Xythos using your NetID credentials by opening any browser and going to <https://files.fairfield.edu>.
 - An external USB or FireWire hard drive. These are usually small in size and large in storage capacity, and you can either drag files from your Windows or Mac computer to the drive icon to copy them, or use a program that will periodically and automatically back up designated folders and files to the drive.
 - A USB flash drive. These are relatively small in capacity but are also highly portable (they can easily fit in a purse or pants pocket).

No matter which storage method you choose, be sure that you understand how to use the device properly. And once you have successfully copied your files to Xythos or the USB drive, make sure you clear the files off your computer and empty the trash - the entire point, after all, is to get the unnecessary files *off* your machine to free up space and resources.

If you need additional assistance, please take the time to jot down the answers to the questions below, then call the C&NS Help Desk at 203-254-4069 (x4069 on campus) so we can help to diagnose specific problems your computer may be experiencing.

- Is the computer particularly slow at startup, but then runs fine?
- Does the computer run slowly only when a certain application, or multiple applications, are running? If yes, which application(s)?
- Do internet websites take excessively long to load? If yes, are there specific websites or internet activities that are presenting the difficulty?
- Is your computer used for functions other than everyday work? (For example, is your computer sharing a printer to others in the office? Do multiple people log on to or use your computer?)
- Are there certain times of day or certain circumstances under which the computer runs slowly?