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Windows Housekeeping

From: Start – All Programs – Accessories – System Tools...

Disk Cleanup

After scanning your hard disk(s), the Disk Cleanup window will open. For the selected disk (usually **C:**), tick all boxes except 'Office Setup Files' (if you are in a hurry, you may also want to uncheck 'Compress old files'). Click Ok and confirm to perform the actions. The cleanup will proceed.

Disk Defragmenter

When the program launches, click the 'Analyze' button. After analysing, Windows will probably tell you that you don't need to defragment the disk. Close that box, and look at the display. If there seems to be quite a lot of red (bad) relative to blue (good), go ahead and click the 'Defragment' button. Doing this once every couple of months whether 'needed' or not won't do any harm, and will probably help keep the PC running smoothly, especially if you often work with big files (such as video editing or burning DVDs) or have been installing/uninstalling lots of programs/updates.

If you have been experiencing freezes or forced reboots, it may be a good idea also to run the **Disk Check** utility:

- Open 'My Computer'
- Right-click on 'Local Disk (C:\)' and select 'Properties' from the popup menu
- Click the 'Tools' tab, then the 'Check Now...' button
- Tick both boxes and click 'Start'
- Confirm to run check at next reboot

Backups

If you are running XP Professional, the windows Backup program is in the same folder as the other system tools. If you have XP Home Edition, the backup program is available for installation from the XP CD (if you have one), or can be downloaded from Microsoft.

You should remember to keep up-to-date backups of (at the very least) all of your important documents. If you keep them on an external (eg USB or firewire) hard disk, then they can easily be accessed from any working computer. You should also perform regular backups of your system files, so that Windows can be more easily restored in case of problems.

