

Cleaning out your closets!

November 1, 2005

As I write this article, it's nearing the holiday season and most of us are already making plans for 2006! For many innkeepers, the winter season is a time to do some repairs, cleaning and purchase decisions for the next busy season. As long as you are cleaning out closets, here are some helpful tips for keeping your computer clutter free!

Year after year, we see the improvements in computers – bigger hard drives and faster speeds. The availability of Gigabytes of space often makes us sloppy in using a computer effectively. Downloads and files just pile up and pretty soon its just like an overstuffed closet. It takes forever to find what you are looking for! So here are some tips on keeping your computer neat and organized, and how to get rid of the junk you don't need!

1. Identify key data and computer programs

Almost any computer you buy includes some kind of "Free" software. This "Free" software is often programmed to load automatically every time you start your computer. If you don't use the software, uninstall it! It may speed up your booting time, and be one less icon on your desktop. Also review your menu of programs, to see if there is any other software you installed once upon a time, but never use.

- To uninstall programs, go to your Control Panel and click on "Add/Remove Programs"

2. Archive old files

If you have been using the same computer for more than a year, chances are you have lots of outdated documents and excel files on your computer. If you don't have a need for those old files, of course feel free to delete them. The other option is to copy all the files to a CD, label it and file the CD. Any files loaded onto a CD can then be deleted from your computer. If you ever need to refer to one of those files in the future, you can easily search the CD and retrieve the file you want.

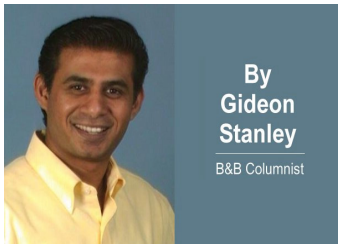
3. Remove all temporary files

Anytime you download or browse from the web, your computer usually automatically stores files in a "temporary" location to speed up the response time. If you don't take time to clean these out, they can significantly slow down your computer.

- Open up "**My Computer**"
- Select "**Local Disk C**" and click on **File>Properties**
- On that screen you should see an option for "**Disk cleanup**" Follow the instructions and it will automatically scan and detect all temporary and junk files. Please be patient – if you have never done this it will probably take a *long* time for the scan to complete. When scan is complete you will be prompted to delete these files.

4. Option 3 – Hire a Professional

It is possible to hire a computer consultant to clean your computer for you. I have done this before. I request the company to backup everything on my computer onto CDs, and have them reinstall the operating system and programs. This basically provides me with what looks like a brand new computer. Then, using the backup CDs, I restore only the files I need onto my "clutter free" computer.



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- a. Be sure to use the services of a company you have good experience with
- b. Provide all original program CDs that you want re-installed (e.g. accounting or guest management software)
- c. Provide any license numbers you have for software or operating system
- d. Request that the backup CDs are clearly labeled



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