

## Spring Clean

"My laptop has a tendency to freeze on me about once a week."



"I keep receiving pop up's when trying to use the internet."



"My computer takes forever to boot up and load Microsoft Word".

These are just some of the issues users experience when computers are running slow. It's important to keep the inside and outside of your PC clean and tidy. Not forgetting what actually is on your hard disk.

Here is an overview of what will be covered in the following tips:

- **Re-seating of CPU & RAM**
- **Removal of dust & dirt within computer case**
- **Check drive cables and connectors**
- **Full Virus Scan**
- **Full Spyware Scan**
- **Review hardware specifications & operating system to consider upgrades**
- **Defragmenting of hard drives**
- **Cache & Temporary systems directory clean**
- **Cleaning the exterior of the computer**

## **Spring Clean Your PC: 8 Ways to Spring Clean Your Computer**

The advent of spring inspires thoughts of cleaning for some of us — scrubbing the toilet, sifting through the wardrobe, wiping away grime and fashion faux pas as some good music wails in support.

And yet, there is one spot our rubber gloves tend to skip over, an appliance we use far more than the bathtub or the kitchen sink: the computer.

"It's easy to take it for granted that your computer will be working fine," said Scott Krajewski, director of Augsburg's Information Technology Services. "But taking advantage of a regular event like daylight saving time or spring cleaning to do basic preventative maintenance is a great strategy."

Here are some practical ways to clean your computer this spring:

**1. Organize your desktop.** Storing a ton of files or folders on your desktop can slow your computer down. Make a few folders and organize those icons. Handy as it may be for an item to pop up on the desk top, it's worth the extra click.

**2. Run a disk cleanup.** Windows has several built-in utilities that can improve your computer's performance. Click on the "Start" menu, then "Accessories" and then "System Tools." From there, select Disk Cleanup and, later, **Disk Defragmenter**. (Doesn't this feel good?)

**3. Scan for spyware and malware.** If you don't have an anti-spyware tool yet, grab a free one like [Spybot](#) or [Ad-Aware](#). Anti-spyware tools can both clean and protect you from spyware programs that range from the benign (pop-up ads) to the malevolent (password theft). Do a full-system scan after updating the spyware definitions. "This can take a while," Scott warns, "so reorganizing that kitchen cupboard can keep you busy while your PC churns away."

**4. Back it up.** Burn all the files you'd be lost without onto CDs or move them to external media. Label them with the date and description of contents and you'll earn a gold star.

**5. Put it in storage.** Transfer large files that you don't need to access regularly, such as pictures, to CDs or external media. This will free up valuable hard-drive space. If you're really swamped in pictures, consider transferring them onto DVDs or external hard drives.

**6. Organize files.** Revamp your organizational system by deleting unneeded files and creating new folders to make it easier to navigate your hard drive. (Be sure to do this only in your My Documents folder or on your desktop, though, to avoid changing important system files.)

**7. Sort through the inbox.** Start with your oldest e-mails and delete the outdated and unnecessary. Be on the lookout for junk mail to mark as spam. Devise a better organizational system for remaining emails by creating folders or starring important messages. Then take a meander through the spam folder to see if any legitimate messages have slipped in.

**8. Clean external components.** Use soft cotton wipes on your computer screen (but no chemicals to avoid damage). On other surfaces, an all-purpose cleaner such as 409 will remove dust and residue. Canned air, available at any computer store, is helpful for cleaning out the keyboard and the inside of a computer tower. If you dust the inside of your tower, be sure to blow the dust away from the computer to avoid embedding dust within the hardware.