

Radio Days – 2010-10-23

Tip of the Week – KIS: Keep It Simple

I have seen a number of clients recently who managed to make simple tasks into monstrous abominations which they hated. A prime example was a client who took some two hours to do his weekly payroll. This was a task which, by the time that we had finished, took only 5 minutes. If you are doing a regular task on your computer which always gives you a headache it may be worth your while seeing if there is an easier way to do that task. My best result was saving one client about four hours (yes, *hours*) each week. This is the sort of thing which makes my job worthwhile.

Computer Maintenance

On many occasions I have suggested that you should perform regular maintenance on your computer. This regular maintenance should not take more than a few minutes each time you do it. How frequently you do your maintenance depends on how you use your computer. If you are a heavy user, like me, you will do this once a month. If, however, you rarely use your computer, and then only for a few minutes' surfing the net, then once a year should suffice. This maintenance is like the maintenance you perform on your car: keeping it running as well as possible at all times.

My favourite programs for maintaining my computer and yours are CCleaner and Defraggler.

- **CCleaner** is designed to clear away the rubbish which accumulates on all hard discs. It checks the areas on your hard disc where unwanted files accumulate then presents the results for you to clear these areas. I suggest that you run this program each time you do your maintenance.
- **Defraggler** is designed to tidy your hard disc's contents. It does this by moving all the parts of a file into the one area of the disc. This tidying gives your hard disc less work to do to display a file and so saves wear and tear on your hard disc. Because this is the main mechanical part of your computer it does the most work and is the slowest part of your computer. Defragmenting your hard disc thus speeds up your computer and gives it the best chance of a long life.

Another part of computer maintenance is to ensure that you have copies of all your important files on another physical device, which can be an external hard disc or a USB thumb drive.

For many people their photos are probably their most important files to copy. These photos can be copied (or backed-up) using a program like SyncBack. This program comes in two versions: free and SE. The main difference between them is that SyncBack SE will keep more than one copy of a file and this makes recovery easier if something goes wrong.

For only \$35 US the SE version of SyncBack is my preferred option and is the one that I am now using after having used SyncBack Free for some months. You can download both the free and SE versions at no cost and try them out: the free version will work for ever and the SE version will work for 30 days as your trial period.

Setting up a backup program, even one as easy to use as SyncBack, may take some time to get right so it is worth getting someone who knows what they are doing to perform the setup task and ensure that all your files are being backed up correctly.

You may also need to buy a backup medium like a USB thumb drive or an external hard disc.

Further Information

CCleaner & Defraggler www.piriform.com
SyncBack Free & SyncBack SE www.2brightsparks.com