

Radio Days – 2012-03-03

Discussion – Removing Duplicate Files

During last week's talk about partitioning hard discs I made the point that sometimes, when your computer seems to have run out of hard disc space, you can appear to create space by removing an unused partition and increasing the size of the remaining Windows partition. This, of course, will only work when you have an unwanted, and unused, partition.

Another way of appearing to create space from nothing is to remove unwanted duplicate files. Some users have a large part of their hard disc wasted by duplicated files. If this describes you, then you may be in luck.

The Symptoms

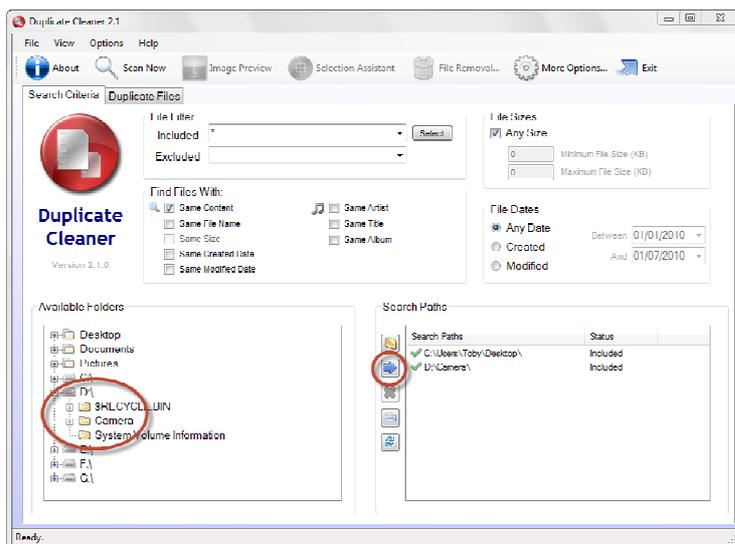
A recent client has an old laptop with a 35 GB hard disc. This is small by today's standards and, to make matters worse, his free space was down to about 8%. This is too little for comfort as Microsoft recommends that your hard disc has at least 15% free space. His small free space meant that his computer was slow, and that there was very little space to store new files. As he was a photographer he needed to store new photos at least once a week, and this was a major source of frustration.

His computer did not have a spare unused partition, so changing the partitions was not an option. The only solution was to check to see if he had any duplicate files as they can use an unexpectedly large amount of hard disc space. His timing was perfect: I had recently discovered an excellent program for finding duplicated files. My previous program found many duplicate files but was appalling at finding duplicated photos. Once I ran my old program and it was still only about 10% of the way through after some 18 hours!

This was not a valid solution!

My newly-found program, *Duplicate Cleaner*, took only 12 minutes to find all the duplicates files in my computer (instead of a few days for the old program, if I had allowed it to finish). This is such a massive improvement that I am now only recommending Duplicate Cleaner as my preferred remover of duplicate files.

Selecting Files for Removal



My client had about 5,500 duplicated file, many of them photographs. To find them, start Duplicate Cleaner, click on *OK* to start the main program then select the locations to be searched.

You will see a screen like this one. Please note that I have selected both my *Desktop* and my *Photos* folder. This folder is not in the standard position because I have partitioned my hard disc so that I have more control over where my photographs are stored.

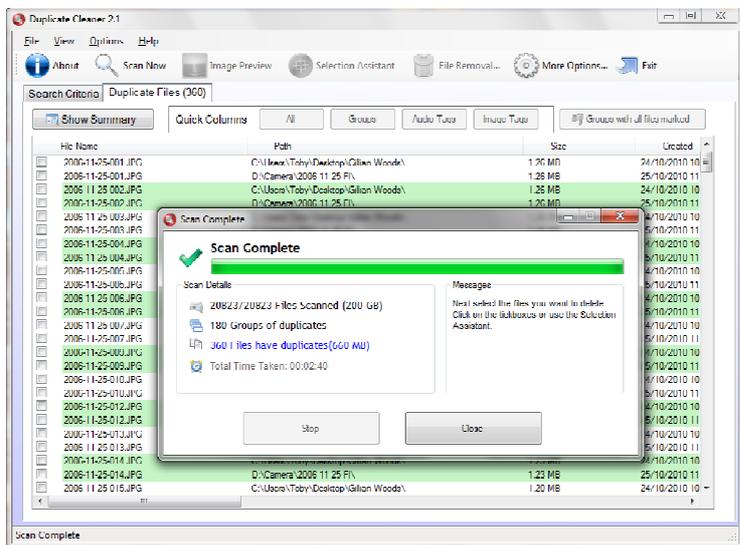
Because I know that I have duplicate photos on my desktop

and in my photography partition I have selected both for this exercise.

To specify the locations to be searched just click on the locations on the left hand side of the window then click on the blue arrow in the centre to add this location to the search paths. If you would like to remove a search path just click on that path then click the red X under the blue arrow.

I now need to ensure that I do not include files with a zero length as there are lots of these in all computers and they are not real duplicates. If you delete a zero-length file then you could be in serious trouble, so please make the following changes to your options:

- From the menu select *Options*
- From the drop-down menu select *Exclude Zero Size Files from Duplicate List*

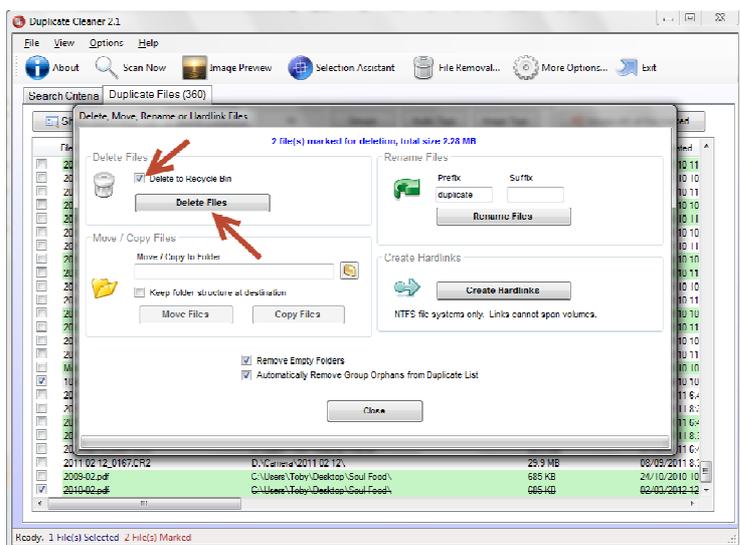


The next step is to start the search. This is simple: just click on *Scan Now*. After a short time (perhaps as much as 30 minutes if you have a really large selection) you will see this screen.

You can see from this screen that Duplicate Cleaner took under three minutes to find 180 groups of duplicate files. This is so much faster than my previous program that I wonder why I stuck with it for so long!

From here you must click *Close* to close the *Scan Complete* dialogue box.

Removing Unwanted Files



Now you can start selecting the files which you want deleted. You will notice that each group has alternating white and green backgrounds. The easiest way that I have found to select files is to click with the mouse on the top line of files (2006-11-25-001.jpg) to select it then to use the *Up* and *Down* arrows on the keyboard to move the selection line up and down the screen.

To tag or untag a file for deletion just press the space bar at the bottom of your keyboard. The first time that you select a file using the space bar it will put a check mark

in the square at the left-hand end of the selected line. If you press the space bar again you will remove the check mark. Repeating this process of up or down arrows and the space bar you can select the files for removal most quickly.

When you have selected all the files that you want deleted just click on the *File Removal* box. You will see the screen shown here. Make sure that *Delete to Recycle Bin* is ticked so that you can recover your files if you have made a mistake then click on *Delete Files*. Once you have done all these steps you will have freed up some, perhaps lots, of your hard disc.

When you are ready you can empty your *Recycle Bin* to finally remove these duplicate files.

Further Information

Duplicate Cleaner www.digitalvolcano.co.uk