

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 201. If You Don't Have It, You Should!

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I just cannot believe that there are people who still have not put CCleaner on their machines! How can that be? Copies have been downloaded in all 195 countries, and the program has been installed more than 1 billion times, in nearly 25% of the PCs in the world! It is probably the most widely used, human-written program in the universe. And, on top of that, it is **FREE**! The poor souls who do not have it are really missing the boat. Don't be one of them.

CCleaner (originally named Crap Cleaner, but later changed to its more politically correct current title) is a simple, safe utility that you can use to help keep your machine clean. It works on any Windows machine from 2003 and 2008 servers through XP, Vista, Windows 7 and 8. It will also work on Macs and Androids (but not Linux at this time).

It is written by Piriform, a company headquartered in both New York and London. They also write other useful free software, such as Defraggler, a free defragmenting utility that also really works well.

The main value of CCleaner is that it cleans out the junk files that accumulate in any computer and slow it down, such as broken shortcuts, temporary files and the like – all useless files that have no function and eat up the space on your hard drive. You can prove to yourself that this accumulation is rampant. Run CCleaner, then reboot and run it again. More junk files will have accumulated in the interim, just by booting up!

You can also use CCleaner to delete passwords, system restore points and configuration files. Moreover, you can use it to wipe the free space on a machine you are selling or giving away, thus erasing forever the private stuff you have deleted.

CCleaner also cleans out your browsing history and other temporary Internet files, thus reducing your exposure to identity theft. The program will also clean up the all-important Registry by removing invalid entries. It will reveal and help you select what programs start with Windows so that you can speed up the boot process. When uninstalling programs, CCleaner is a whole lot faster than using the Control Panel's Add and Remove Programs applet. It can also find (and remove) duplicate files that are taking up space on your drive.

In other words, it is an anti-clutter, free utility that everyone should have. On its menu, click the Cleaner icon to remove junk files, and when done with that, click the Registry icon to clean up the registry. Those two are perfectly safe to use just as they come. There is no better way to speed up your machine. After you are comfortable with those two parts of this amazing program, you can explore its other aspects.

You can pay for this program if you wish, but the free version does a splendid job. Get it! You will be happy you did. Happy Computing!