

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 158. Some Tips

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TIP 1: If you are the only person to use your computer and you are willing to take a security risk, it is not necessary for your machine to require a log on when booting. That is, the Welcome and Click your User Name followed by the requirement to type a password can all be bypassed. When you turn your machine on after the fix described below, it will boot right into the desktop.

In XP or Windows 7, click START, then RUN and type in **control userpasswords2** in the run box. A User Accounts panel will open, with the statement "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer". Uncheck the box next to that statement. That is all there is to it. Save your change and reboot the computer. It should boot directly to your working desktop.

A caveat: I have encountered one XP machine where this modification simply will not work (it worked just fine on six others). That machine just would not get beyond the Starting Windows screen – it froze in that position. If that happens to you, don't panic; here is the fix.

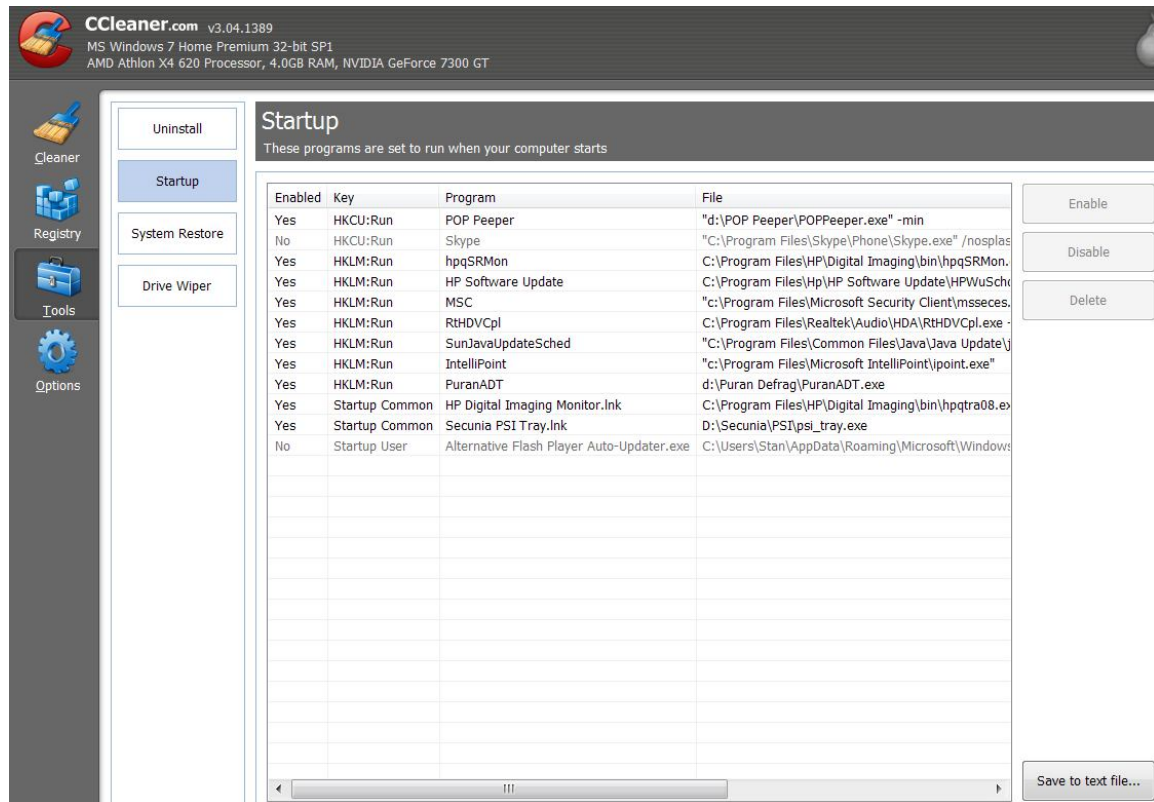
Shut the machine off then power it back on. Press F8 while it is booting, and you will be presented with a number of choices for the boot. Select just plain **Safe Mode** and press enter. It will take quite awhile to boot – much longer than usual, and you will see text scroll by describing what is being loaded – text you have not seen before during normal boot ups. Finally, a screen representing your desktop will appear, which looks nothing like your normal desktop, because it is shown at the lowest possible resolution. That is OK. Click, START, then RUN, and type in **control userpasswords2** just as you did before. Hit Enter and re-check that box that you unchecked before. Click OK and restart the machine. It should boot up just as it did before you started experimenting.

I thought I was going to have to re-install Windows on the machine where this log on modification failed, until I worked out the fix described above. The fix saved the day, although I will have to live with a standard log on for that machine. This problem is not likely to happen to you, but if it does, you have the fix in hand.

TIP 2: Ed Rate (AA9W) is always wanting to know "what are all those programs that load at startup, many of which I never heard of?" The easiest way to check up on your system and find the answer to this question is to use CCleaner, probably the best and most widely used free program in the world today. If you don't already have it, get it. It is a must-have on every Windows machine. Install and run it. Then to find out what programs are starting with Windows, click the TOOLS icon, then STARTUP. A screen similar to the one on the next page will appear, listing all the programs that are scheduled to start each time you boot your machine. Note that this list does not include Windows system programs or DLLs (Dynamic Link Libraries) or other items necessary to run Windows. Listed are just the programs that have been added since Windows was first installed and that run on boot up. Notice at the lower right corner is a box labeled Save to Text File. Save and print it for further analysis. Lets analyze mine on the next page, and I will also make some recommendations on analyzing yours.

At the top of CCleaner is the version and useful information about the machine and the Operating System, in my case, Windows 7. In the STARTUP box is a list of the programs you will be

interested in, including the path to each. The key is the Registry Key where that particular program's documentation is listed.



POP Peeper is a little program that notifies me with a sound when new email arrives. Skype is the voice-over-IP program that many people use to talk to others around the world. Note that the enabled column shows **No**, which means that it will not start with Windows. I highlighted that row and clicked the **Disable** box, and that caused it to no longer start with Windows. Why? I use Skype rarely now, and when I want to use it, I can simple click the program icon to start it manually. By disabling the startup with Windows, it is prevented from hogging resources (memory) when I am not going to use it. Make sense? The next item (hpqSRMon) can be deduced to be part of my printer/scanner/copier ... see the HP\Digital Imaging over on the right under file? That is Hewlett Packard. The next one, HP Software Update is also for my HP Printer. I really should disable it since updates occur rarely, and I can check for them myself. Next is MSC, clearly part of Microsoft Security Essentials, the virus and spyware program, which is absolutely essential – don't mess with that. Next is RTHDVCpl, part of my Realtek audio system for sounds. Next is a Java update checker, another program I can disable and check on myself. And so on. If you find a program that starts that you just cannot figure out, simply Google the exact title you find in the Program column to find out what it is. If you think you can do without it, highlight the row that it sits in and click **Disable**. Then, run your machine for a few days. If something is not working that was working before, go back into CCleaner and enable that item again to cure the problem. On the other hand, if you are later sure you don't need it, go back into CCleaner, highlight the row it is in, and click **Delete**. That will not remove the program, but it will prevent it from ever running on boot up in the future. And if you don't need the program at all, ever, uninstall it. CCleaner has a great uninstaller tool, listed under **Uninstall**. It is much faster than waiting for the Control Panel to populate the list of programs to uninstall.

I hope this was helpful. Happy computing!