



CCleaner

CCleaner is a utility program which comes in a free version and a paid version.

Why should you be interested?

(There can be many reasons, depending on your interests)

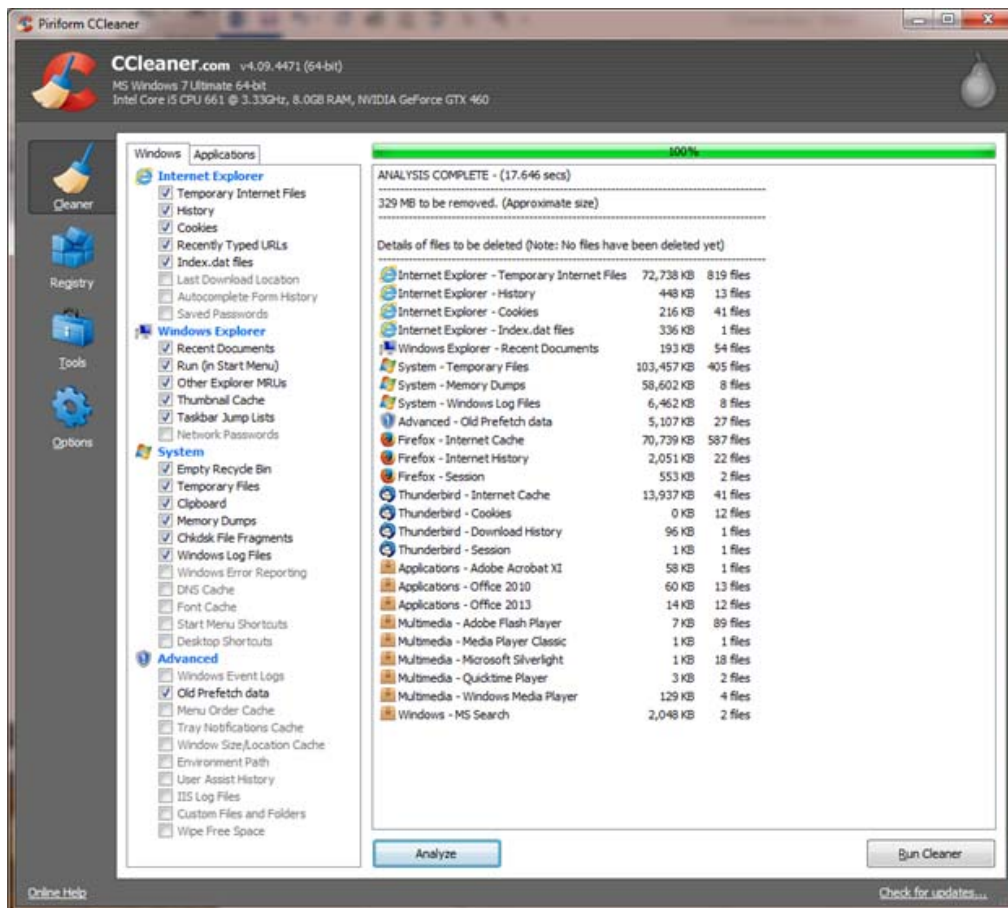
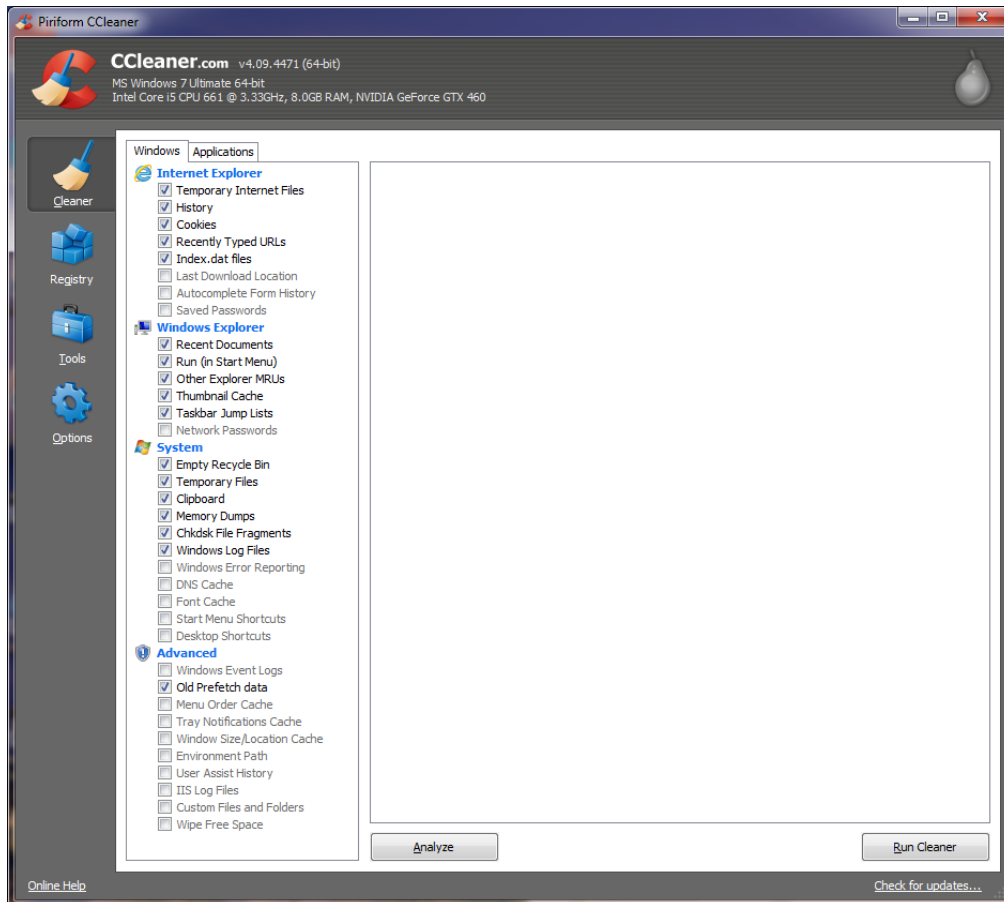
Several members of the Computer Club were hit by the Conduit hijack, a type of ‘virus’. Fortunately, it did not strike me but did hit my wife, who uses a Dell Laptop running Windows 7 Ultimate and Firefox. This invader takes over your browser. Among other nasty things, it changes your Home Page to the Conduit home page. That hijack is NOT the subject for today but it is relevant because even after the hijacker was removed, often remnants were left in various places. CCleaner was very useful to me and at least one other experienced user (He suggested I discuss the program and may join in). First the Free Version.

CCleaner was originally written by an amateur to clean up his computer. He used a different name which you may be able to guess from the “C” in the name. As the program became more sophisticated and mainstream, the name was cleaned up. The name tells you what it does; it cleans up your computer. I will tell you how to obtain the program and install it on your computer later. First, let’s go through some of the things it does and why you may want to use it.

There are screen shots on the next page for the archived version of this presentation.

Cleaner The opening screen starts with ‘Cleaner’ in the left navigation menu. This was the original program. There are dazzling array of choices. My advice is simply to use the defaults. You may want to get fancy and choose some of the unchecked places to clean – I never have used any of those in five years. You may want to uncheck ‘Cookies’ if you find that you have lost one or two of your favorites. Normally, CCleaner will leave the cookies you use often.

Click the ‘Analyze’ button at the bottom. This does nothing to your computer. The items it wants to delete will show in the window and you have a choice. I have never chosen not to clean and never had a serious problem. Occasionally, I have to login to a site where I used to login automatically. Usually, that doesn’t happen. You may be asked to close your browser and/or your email client in order to clean their cache. I think that you want to do that but, again, your choice.



At this point, you don't have only two choices, Clean or Not. Your choices were made before you clicked 'Analyze'. If you see something that concerns you, just uncheck it on the left and click 'Analyze' again. As mentioned, I always choose the defaults and clean everything suggested. After you use the program, you may find something you don't want to clean. Please let me know.

Notice that not everything to be analyzed shows on the left screen at the same time. There are two tabs; 'Windows' and 'Applications'. Naturally, not everyone has the same applications and I probably have some you don't have. Interestingly, some widespread applications you don't have may show on the list. Don't worry; they won't cause any problems.

If you click 'Run Cleaner', the deleted files will show. At this point, I click 'Analyze' again. I am sure you notice I am suspicious of everything. Quote "Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean that nobody is after you" Unquote. Often, I have to do this twice. It seems impossible to delete Windows Thumbnail Cache.

Why Clean? I don't have a complete answer. I just don't like junk laying around. In principle, all these useless files could slow down your computer but in practice, processors are so fast now that I seriously doubt that this is noticeable. **HOWEVER**, if you were hit by a hijacker or virus such as Conduit, there may be remnants left over which are potential problems. If nothing else, they are dead weight. These are not the only places you want to clean. More to come.

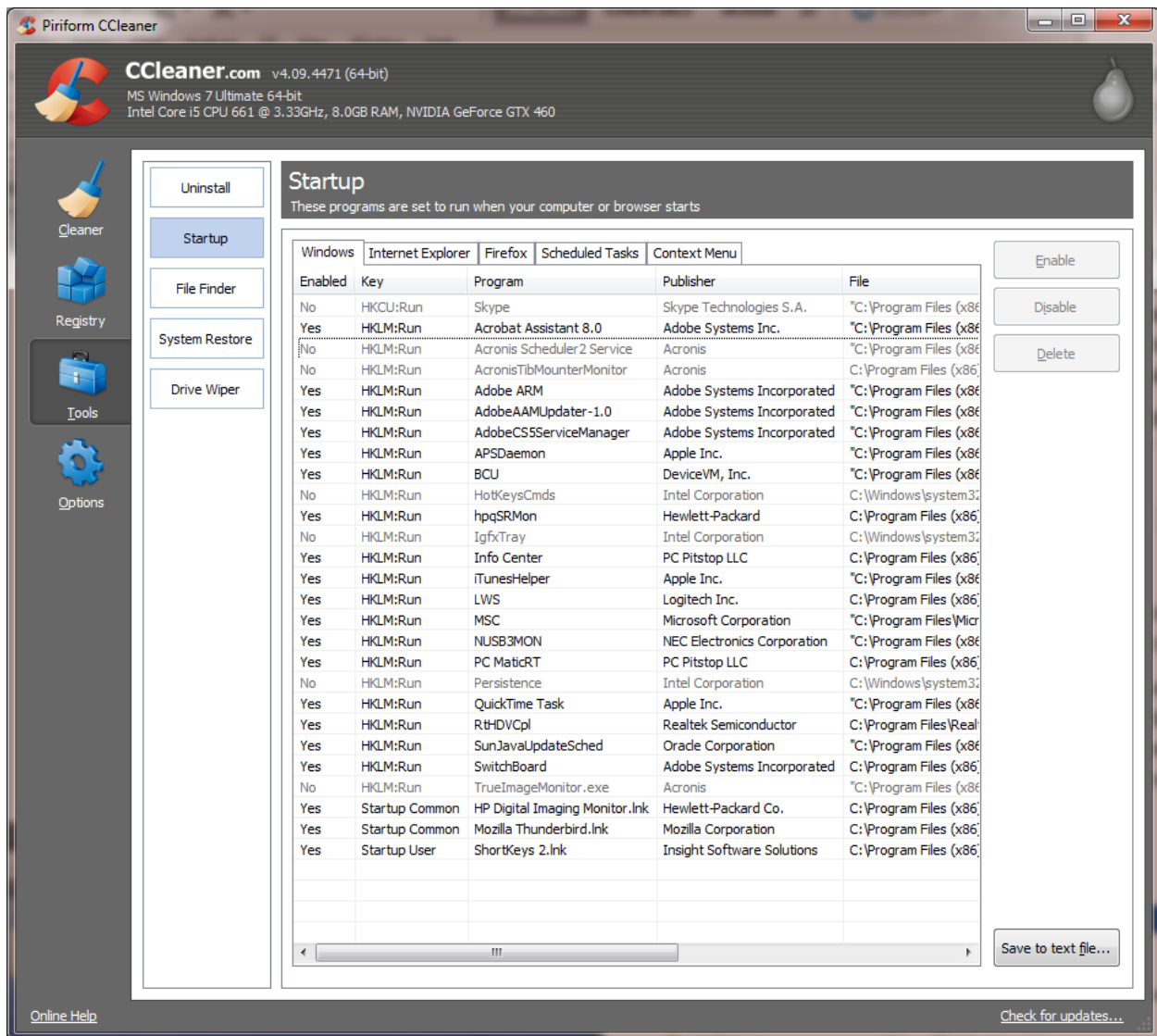
Registry The next selection in the left menu is 'Registry'. General warning: Messing with the registry by yourself can be dangerous. Worst case is that your computer won't work and you have an expensive paperweight. I consider CCleaner safe. I have **never** had a problem, **never** heard of a problem and **never** seen a complaint posted on the Internet anywhere. That said; be more careful with the Registry than almost anything else related to your computer. On the other hand, please do not let that stop you from having CCleaner work on your Registry. I have **NEVER** seen a computer which did not have some clutter in the registry; sometimes some really nasty stuff.

When you choose the Registry option in the left Navigation pane, you will have the option to uncheck various issues to be scanned of the Registry. I always choose the default which is to scan for all issues. As before, you can safely click 'Scan for Issues' because you will be given a choice on what to fix. Fortunately, you can choose individual issues to Fix or not Fix. Hoorah!! I usually fix them one by one.

You may think you can't understand the issue. Actually, often you can.

Note: When you click 'Fix selected issues', you will be given the option of saving the registry. I recommend you skip this. I will discuss that further at the end.

Tools There are quite a few very useful tools. The most important is probably 'Startup'. This shows you all the programs which run when you start Windows; some before Windows fully installs, some after but all before you get to do anything. This is where most people experience unnecessary delays in getting started; i.e. 'booting'. It is worth understanding at least the general idea of 'Startup'.



You have the option to Enable or Disable a program. Sometimes you can Delete its entry. If an unnecessary program runs at startup, you are wasting valuable time. There are horror stories of waits as much as 30 minutes. I can't discuss every single possibility here. In fact, I gave a whole presentation on this last year. For today, let's just say this is almost certainly worth some of your time. Future topic??

Uninstall This is very similar to the standard Windows Control Panel to uninstall programs. You may want some small feature like ‘Save to text ...’.

File Finder Not quite what you may think. Finds duplicate files.

System Restore Again, not quite what you may think. Never used it.

Drive Wiper Very specialized function. If you want to make sure deleted files can never be restored, use this to Wipe Free Space; i.e. write nonsense in the sectors containing the files you marked ‘deleted’ but were actually left on your hard drive. This is absolutely the best program for that. If you want to securely ‘erase’ a hard drive, including the operating system, this is not the program you want. You can’t completely erase your primary hard drive anyway. For that extreme case use a program called DBAN which is run from a CD or DVD when you boot up.

Options There are several choices. **Settings** lets you change the way CCleaner works. For most of the settings, you need to know a bit more about Windows and how it works than I can describe here. **Cookies** shows your cookies and lets you delete them. You are better off working with the cookie options in your browser of choice. The rest of the settings are for advanced users who are more interested in the details than I am. If they put me to sleep, you may not want to discuss them.

Final note on the Registry. This is a very large file that Windows uses to keep track of your files. Personally, I think it’s insane to keep information that way. Mac, for example, Mac has no Registry, per se. Each file keeps its own information. If Mac loses a file, it keeps going. If Microsoft loses the Registry, it ceases to function. Therefore, beware of the Registry. I trust CCleaner to deal with the Registry.

If you do save the Registry, you may want to use an external hard drive. Why? If there are no problems, you don’t need the copy. If you have problems, the registry copy on the hard drive with the problem may not be a good idea. If you have problems but can still boot your computer, your best bet is probably to fix problems you can identify or do a System Restore for those you can’t identify. Restoring the Registry can just make the problem worse, not better. Again, your choice.

You can get CCleaner from many places; e.g. type ‘Download CCleaner’ into your address bar or Google. I avoid CNET whenever I can. I recommend the web site for people who wrote the program; <http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/download>. If you are going to type a URL, type ‘piriform.com’ into your address bar. This will take you to: <http://www.piriform.com/> where there is a Download button.