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The Tip Corner – March 2014

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Google Tips

Many of us use Google as a search engine. Others use it for mail and many other neat programs, so here are a few tips you might not know about.

Definitions

Type define followed by the word you want the definition for. For example, typing: define mountain would display the definition of that word.

Local search

Go to Google Local and enter the area you want to search and the keyword of the place you want to find. For example, typing: shoe stores would display shoe stores in the area.

Phone number lookup

Enter the area code and the other seven numbers to display the name and address associated with that phone number.

Find weather and movies

Type "weather" or "movies" followed by a zip code or city and state to display current weather conditions or movie theaters in your area. You will get the weather for the next four days. When you type movies followed by the zip code will give you a link for show times for movies in that area.

Track airline flight and packages

Enter the airline and flight number to display the status of an airline flight and its arrival time. For example, typing United 2344 will display the flight information if available. Google can also give a direct link to package tracking information if you enter a UPS, FedEx or USPS tracking number.

Translate

You can translate text that you type in as well as a web page. I have used this a few times to let renters in my condo know about a meeting. Use the Google Language Tools.

Pages linked to you

Type "link" followed by your URL to see what other web pages are linking to your website or blog.

Find PDF results only

Add fileType: to your search to display results that only match a certain file type. For example, if you wanted to display RTF results you would type for example “Windows short cuts” file type: RTF would show files that were in RTF. Searching for manuals? File Type: PDF would help you along.

Calculator

Use the Google Search engine as a calculator by typing a math problem in the search. For example, typing: 100 + 200 would display results as 300.

Stocks

Just type a stock symbol and get a stock quote.

OK! On to some other tips. This one comes up quite often, so here goes:

Speeding Up Your PC

We all experience times when the computer starts slowing down. Usually, the biggest culprits are the things that sneak into your computer such as spyware, adware and other computer threats that are unwittingly downloaded along with other content while online. It happens to us all.

A good place to start is to clean Your Computer's Windows Registry. Don't try and do it manually.

Use a program that is set up for that. One that many of us use is CCleaner. There is a free version and does a lot more than just the register. Errors, spyware and orphan file pointers build up over time. Some like to clean the registry daily, but I personally only use it about every other week. Go through the settings. For example, you can clean out your cookies, but before you do you can list the ones you want to keep such as cookies to special sites.

– you won't believe the difference that it makes.

CCleaner will also remove temporary files and other files that get added on and slowly clog your system. This program will also empty your Recycle Bin.

I don't know about you, but I collect programs like rocks rolling down the mountain side. It is very easy to download a program that sounds like the answer to a maiden's prayer, but after a month and you still don't use it, scrap it. Another way is to keep the install file on a separate external drive that you can then plug in to install a program you want to use, delete it after a while, but still have the install program.

Another tip. Reduce the number of icons on the windows screen. They do take up resources and can slow the machine down. Rather than just deleting them, you can segregate by type; such as audio/video, utilities, etc, and then put each category in its

own folder. I don't know how much this will speed up your computer, but it certainly will clear a lot of clutter.

Defragging your hard drive is another speeder upper, however most newer machines automatically defrag on a periodic basis. But perhaps a couple of times a year go into Applications and do a defrag while you drink a cup of coffee.

Finally, Get rid of a virus

As stated above, not only viruses but Trojans, worms, and other malicious programs can also slow down a computer. Even if you uninstall a program or delete a malicious program sometimes something can remain in the registry, which can also affect the speed. Sometimes malicious software can install itself again after deletion. So:

1. Install a good registry cleaner or maintainer and run it. (CCleaner as mentioned above)
2. Install a good antivirus and perform a full scan. (Install AVG free or AVAST free and Malwarebytes)
3. Install a good fire wall.

Since the way a virus infects a computer is through subterfuge, as the virus is usually hidden in seemingly harmless files, documents or programs, it is imperative for you to remove the virus as soon as you discover that your computer is infected. If the virus is not quickly removed, it can cause incredible damage to your system. Microsoft has a tool (Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool) free for Windows users to remove virus threats and to disinfect the computer system.

To find some other possible software that you can use Google Virus removal, or malicious file removal and do some research.

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