

THE REGISTRY

This week I want to touch on the most important component in your Windows operating system. It is very important that you have a basic understanding about what it is, and more importantly, and what it does.

The single most important part of your Windows is something you are not normally even aware of - the Registry. The registry is a set of files that Windows uses to keep track of absolutely everything: the programs that are installed, and how they are to run, the location of files, what screen saver you will use, which program opens your picture files, how big your email program window will be, what web sites you have been on, what colour your desktop is, how your menus are arranged, which documents you last opened, etc. The registry is so complex, that it is the source of the chaotic behaviour of Windows. As you install more and more programs, even as you just *change* things, like resizing your mail program window, the registry changes.

Here is the most important thing to know about the registry:

The more stuff you install into your Windows, the fatter and slower and stupider your Windows will get. Avoid installing anything you don't absolutely need.

The registry gets bigger every time you install a program, thus taking up more of the system memory, and thereby slowing down your PC. If you never changed or installed a single thing on your PC, you would never have a problem with it, it would work like a refrigerator or a toaster. We solve the vast majority of problems in Windows through registry repair and adjustment.

A note of warning here: there are many registry "repair" programs that claim to clean things up for you. It is our experience that these programs cause more harm than they are worth, so don't waste your money. We don't use any of these in our shop; we clean up your registry manually. It is better for you to keep your machine running clean and fast from the start.

If you would like to look at the registry, just click on Start>Run and type regedit then click on OK.

WARNING!! You can destroy your Windows if you delete anything in here, so just look.

The registry is navigated by clicking on the little plus signs in the left window. It should not take you too long to realize just how complex this thing can be. There are five main sections in the registry, each of which has its own particular purpose. There are programs that, when installed, add THOUSANDS of entries into the registry. We call these programs "fat". A good example is Norton AntiVirus 2005, it is a giant program that we cannot recommend because of its sheer registry size. It can slow down a brand new PC 10-15%.

Software developers are more interested in writing feature-laden programs to more effectively compete with other developers, than in writing good, fast software. If you are ever wondering about how good a program is for your Windows, contact us and we can give you our opinion.

If you have question or comments, I can always be reached via email sean@intrex.ca or join our forums at <http://intrex.ca> for more in-depth conversations.