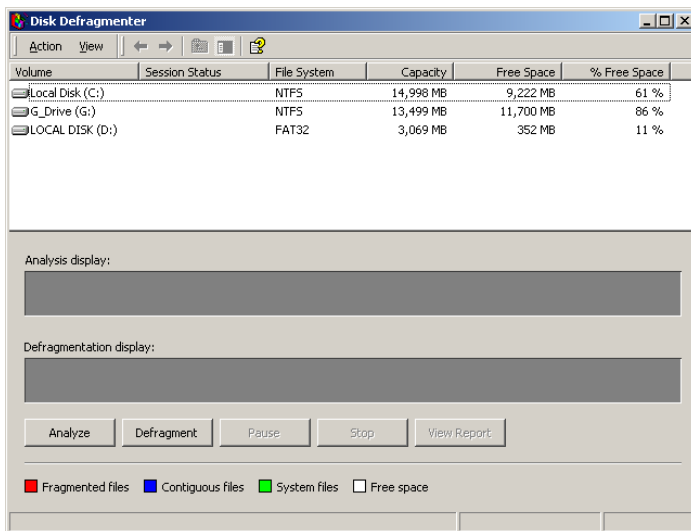


Computer Problems ?

I decided to switch courses for a while in the CADNET Corner. All of the previous articles have dealt with CAD related issues. I have heard some good things about the articles, and I hope they are of use to you. Some of the major problems I run into in my daily work is people having difficulties with their PC's. So, I am dedicating this article to some problem solving tips for your computers.

Problem #1. "My computer is running too slow." This is probably the most common complaint I hear from computer users. Aside from replacing the computer with a new one, there are a few things you can do to help speed things up. First, is a command called Defrag. When files get scattered around on the hard drive, the system is forced to work harder and longer, resulting in a slower system. The Defrag command sorts the files back into order. This allows the system to find the files faster.



Defragging is best done at a time you do not need your system. Nights or weekends are the most likely time to defrag your hard drives. It is also good to defrag on a regular basis. One of the best ways to do this is to set it up as a recurring scheduled event. Set it for nighttime or over the weekend, and forget about it. Make sure you disable screensavers or other programs that might interfere with the defrag, otherwise the interruptions will cause it to fail.

Of course, adding additional RAM may also help speed up your system. This will not make it much faster, but it will take some of the performance diminishing load off the hard drive.

Problem #2 "My system locks up all the time." This problem is not always that easy to fix. This can be caused by many factors from incompatible programs to viruses to bad hardware. Troubleshooting these problems can be difficult.

One recommendation I always make is to install only the software you need to work with on your system. As you install more and more programs you run the risk of corrupting files needed by the operating system or other programs. Also if you install and uninstall many programs over time, the registry will be full of unneeded information.

The best solution to this problem is to start with a clean slate. Remove all your data and any settings you may have for programs, such as your AutoCAD profile, from your hard drive. Then format the drive, cleaning off everything. CAUTION: this should be done by the IT department or whoever is in charge of the computers in your company. Then re-install the software you need. When installing the operating system, you should also use the correct driver for each device based on the operating system. Incorrect drivers account for many system crashes.

Problem #3 "How can I protect my computer from viruses and hackers?" Another common question I get all the time. Viruses are files that make their way onto your system typically to do harm to you in some way. Some viruses delete files, some send info out from your system to others. There are some basic principles you should follow to help protect yourself from viruses.

First, obtain an Anti-Virus software package. Two of the most widely used are Norton and McAfee. Both are great programs. You can install them and then download the latest virus definitions via the internet.

With Anti-Virus software in place, most viruses will be caught as they attempt to access your system. This can be from the internet, email, diskette, or CD as well as others.

Second, is to practice safe computing. Do not open emails from people you do not know or were not expecting something from. This is an easy way to spread viruses. Perform scans on all email coming in and going out as protection against transmitting viruses. Perform routine scans of all your files on your systems as well as your servers. Do not use file sharing services such as Kazaa or Morpheus on vital company computers or servers. That song you download may wipe out the companies servers.

When I started this article, I had a list of ten things to write about. I only got to three. I will continue on these topic next month. In the meantime, if you have any questions on these or any other CAD or IT topic, you can call me, Rick Ladd at 1.866.522.3638 toll free or email me at rladd@cadnetserv.com.