

# Speed Up Your Computer

**One of the most** common complaints heard by Information Technology helpdesks is: “My computer is running too slowly – what can I do?” There are actually a number of reasons why this could be happening and luckily, a number of ways to solve the problem. Here are our top five recommendations to help boost your desktop or notebook PC’s speed and performance.

**1. Clean up your hard drive** – A typical hard drive is crammed full of files you really don’t need. The less stuff that’s on your hard drive, the faster your computer will be.

The best way to free up space on your PC is with the Windows® Disk Cleanup utility. To access it, go to **Start -> Programs -> Accessories -> System Tools**, and then click **Disk Cleanup**. You might need to specify which drive you want to clean.

In the **Disk Cleanup box**, scroll through the content of the **Files to delete list** and check the items you want to remove. If you’re not sure what to get rid of, the safest bets are temporary Internet files and programs you’ve installed that you no longer use. When you’re done, click **OK**.

If you don’t want to delete files altogether, such as things like photos and music or video files, consider moving them to an external hard drive.

**2. Get rid of visual effects** – Windows Vista® comes with some cool visual effects, but they can drain system resources. Disabling some will speed your system. To do this, click on the **Start** button, and then **Control Panel > System and Maintenance > Performance Information and Tools**.

Click on **Adjust Visual Effects**. You may be asked to enter an administrator password. Then click on the **Visual Effects** tab, and select **Adjust for Best Performance**. Then click **OK**.

**3. Scan for viruses and spyware** – One of the main culprits of sluggish PC performance is malware: viruses, spyware, Trojan horses, worms and other kinds of malicious unwanted software. If you don’t already have some kind of antivirus protection installed, you should do so right away! Consider using Microsoft Windows Defender, which is included in Windows Vista, and is available as a free download for Microsoft XP SP2. Make sure to schedule an automatic virus scan at least once a month. You should also always keep a firewall running to help block malware from getting to your PC in the first place.

**4. Add more RAM (the easy way)** – Adding system memory (also known as random access memory or RAM) can be a good way to improve a PC’s performance. However, upgrading memory can sometimes be difficult and costly. Windows Vista now offers Windows ReadyBoost, which allows you to add memory without having to install anything. It allows you to use a flash memory device, such as a USB flash drive or a secure digital (SD) memory card, as an additional memory cache.

**5. Run a defragmentation utility** – Disk Defragmenter is a Windows utility that consolidates files and folders on your computer’s hard disk so that each occupies a single space, which in turn speeds up reading and writing to the disk.

To defragment your hard drive, go to **Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Defragmenter**, then select the drive you want to defragment. Then go to **Settings** and make sure there’s a tick beside the two options in the section **When defragmenting my hard drive**, then click **OK** twice to begin. When the defragmentation is done, you’ll probably have to reboot your computer.

After following these tips, you should notice an improvement in your computer’s performance.

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# Spring Cleaning and Child Safety

**Spring cleaning doesn’t** have to be such a chore, especially when you get motivated by knowing that the following spring cleaning activities will help to keep your kids safe.

- Discard leftover or half-used prescriptions or expired over-the-counter medicines that you may have in your medicine cabinet.
- Dispose of toys that are broken and can’t be repaired.
- Even if your home is well childproofed, with latches on cabinets, gates on stairs and covers on door knobs, you do have to regularly inspect them to make sure they are still working properly.
- Check and see if any toys or household products in your home have been recalled.
- Check your child’s car seat to make sure it still fits and is installed properly.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors at the start or end of daylight saving time. Also, test your smoke alarms and CO detectors every month.
- Review and rehearse your family’s fire escape plan.

## Kids’ Corner Safety Poster “Do not use electric mowers in a rain storm.”



### Saige Peterson, 11 years old

*Saige is the daughter of Brad and Denise Peterson, Hitchcock, S.D. They are members of Northern Electric Cooperative, Bath, S.D.*

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you’ll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.

# Beverages & Dips



## Cheese Ball

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 2 cans Underwood deviled ham
- 1 pkg. dry ranch salad dressing mix
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup diced green peppers
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup roasted unsalted sunflower seeds

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients except sunflower seeds. Refrigerate until firm enough to handle and form into a ball. Roll in seeds; refrigerate until ready to serve.

**Barbara Putzier, Colton**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Orange Cinnamon Breakfast Boost

- 2 cups orange juice
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 navel orange, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

Place all ingredients into a blender container and blend until smooth. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Cappuccino

- 1/3 cup powdered milk
- Water or leftover cold coffee
- 1 tsp. instant coffee
- 1 tsp. chocolate flavoring or 1/2 tsp. cocoa
- 1/8 tsp. brandy or rum flavoring
- Sweetener to taste

Place powdered milk in coffee cup. Add water or coffee to fill cup. If using the water option, add instant coffee. Heat until hot but not boiling. Add remaining ingredients.

**Donna Hanson, Sioux Falls**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Pretzel Dip

- 16 oz. sour cream
- 16 oz. salad dressing or mayonnaise
- 16 oz. mustard
- 1/2 cup dry minced onion
- 2 pkgs. dry ranch salad dressing mix
- 1 cup sugar (or Splenda)
- 6 tsp. horseradish

Combine all ingredients; let set at least 4 hours. Store in refrigerator. Makes 8 cups.

**Kari Jo James, Vermillion**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Hot Baked Onion Dip

- 2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 bag frozen chopped onions, (Ora Ida brand in the frozen vegetable section)

Mix together; place in deep pie dish. Bake at 350°F. for 30 to 35 minutes. Serve with crackers.

**Ann Rieck, Montrose**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Rick's Chicken Dip

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 can chicken
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 to 1 small can jalapeno peppers

Combine all ingredients in crock pot on low until heated thru. Serve with chips or crackers.

**Rebecca Walz, Tripp**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Shrimp Dip

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 T. diced onion
- 1 to 2 T. ketchup
- 1 can shrimp

Beat together first 4 ingredients until fluffy. Add shrimp. Chill.

**Diane Bartnick, New Effington**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Pepperoni Dip

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3 oz. chopped pepperoni
- 1 can chopped green chilies, undrained
- Minced onion to taste

Combine all ingredients. Put in 7x11-inch pan. Bake at 325°F. for 30 minutes. Serve with crackers. This dip is also good served cold.

**Jane Carthel, Ward**  
**Cooperative Connections**

*Please send your favorite Ethnic and Dessert recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2009. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*