

Clean Your Machine

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to clean the inside and outside of your computer.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial applies to any computer system.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standards I, II, III, IV, and V in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Dust and other debris in or on a computer can prevent it from cooling properly or functioning at its best.

Disorganized computer files can make it hard to quickly find needed files or to back-up important files.

Cleaning the inside and outside of a computer will enhance computer performance, improve its look, and help you find and save files!

CLEANING THE OUTSIDE

Take a few minutes each month to clean your computer's monitor, keyboard, mouse, and tower (if separate from monitor).

Clean the monitor:

- Use a dry cloth to wipe off dust.
- Use anti-static wipes (found at office supply stores) to wipe fingerprints or dust off the screen, or moisten a cloth with window cleaner and wipe the screen. (*Never* apply cleaner directly to the screen.)
- Make sure no papers or other materials block the vents at the back of the monitor, preventing them from cooling the monitor.
- Keep the monitor clean between cleanings by avoiding touching the monitor. Tell students to do likewise.

Clean the keyboard:

- Turn off the computer.
- Turn the keyboard over and *gently* tap it against a table (You'll be surprised at the junk that comes out!) or purchase compressed air at an office supply store, stand over a trash can, and blow out the debris. *Never* use a metal object to pry dirt from between the keys!
- Wipe the top of the keys with a moistened cloth. (Antibacterial wipes help keep infections from spreading via keyboards.)
- If water, coffee, or other liquid spills inside the keyboard, quickly unplug the keyboard, turn it over, and drain it.
- Prevent damage by not eating or drinking near the computer.

Clean the mouse:

- Turn off the computer.
- Turn over the mouse.
- If the mouse has a roller ball, remove it by turning the doughnut-shaped plastic piece counter-clockwise. (Put your fingernails in the grooves to help turn the piece, if necessary.) The doughnut will fall off and the ball will drop out.
- Wipe the ball with a tissue to remove any debris.
- You'll probably see dark trails of dust on each roller. Use your fingernail and a tissue to scrape and clean the rollers inside the mouse. Do *not* use a metal object.

Clean the tower:

- Turn off the computer.
- Wipe the plastic case with a damp cloth or anti-static wipe.
- Make sure the area around the vents in the back of the case is free of papers, books, and so on.
- Check all cables and cords to make sure they're secure.
- Do not open the case unless you've been trained to do so.

CLEANING THE INSIDE

Cleaning the inside of your computer means making sure your files are in an appropriate place and organized correctly. To do that you must find your files, create folders for them, and save those folders in an easily accessible location.

Find files:

- Locate all saved documents, pictures, graphics, and so on.
- Click and drag the files to My Documents or Documents.
- Search your Desktop and Program Files for any hidden files. Sometimes documents are inadvertently saved there. To find files that might be hiding elsewhere:
 - go to Start>Search (or Find), and type:
 - *.doc (to find any Word documents)
 - *.xls (to find any Excel documents)
 - *.ppt (to find any PowerPoint files)
 - *.jpg or *.gif (to find any photographs you've saved)
 - If you use programs besides those listed above, look at the name of a file created with that program to find the extension -- the letters after the "." Type *. and those letters to find other documents created with that program.

Create folders:

The more you organize files into folders, the easier it is to find and back up files.

To create a desktop folder:

- Right-click on any area in My Documents or Desktop.
- Left-click **New**.
- Left-click **Folder**.
- Name the folder: Type a name and hit ENTER when the words New Folder appear beneath the folder icon.

To rename a desktop folder:

- Right-click the folder.
- Left-click **Rename**.
- Type the name and hit ENTER.

To move a file into a folder:

- If the file and folder are both on the Desktop, click the file, hold down the mouse button, and drag the file into the folder.
- If the file is in My Documents and the folder is on the desktop, double-click My Documents to open, and then click, hold, and drag the file to the folder.
- If the folder is in My Documents and the file is on the desktop, double-click My Documents to open, and then click, hold, and drag the file to the folder.

JACKSON FIVE OF FILE MANAGEMENT

To keep your files organized, follow my five rules for file management:

1. Keep a file on the desktop only when using it; otherwise, store files in folders in My Documents.
2. If you have ten or more loose files, it's time to store them in folders.
3. Don't be afraid to delete files, especially if you can you make a paper copy or find the file elsewhere.
4. Create folders within folders. For example, create a main folder for a particular class, and then create a folder within that folder for parent letters or lesson plans.
5. Be specific when naming folders. *Science Lessons First Quarter*, for example, is better than *Papers*.

TELL ME MORE

Where can I find more information?

For more information on cleaning the outside of your computer, visit [Computer Hope](#). For more specific information about organizing files and folders, check out the file management tutorial [Where Did It Go?](#)