

COMPUTING RESOURCES

Ultimate Boot CD lets you run diagnostics from CD, not from an unwell hard drive. You can create a boot CD with any of a variety of hard drive diagnostics, hard disk management programs, memory diagnostics, Linux-based rescue discs, and more.

Experts strongly recommend that you look at the FAQ at the vendor's Web site before using this program.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23100,tk,hsx,00.asp

Ask-Leo.com is a consumer-oriented technical question and answer service operated by industry veteran Leo Notenboom. Leo brings his experience, including over 18 years as a software engineer at Microsoft, to bear on problems and questions submitted by visitors to the site. Answers are posted as articles for all to view. www.ask-leo.com

LockerGnome offers excellent daily tips, advice and downloads for all flavors of Windows from Chris Pirillo. www.lockergnome.com

Tidbits is a wonderful newsletter for Mac aficionados, published since 1990 by noted author Adam Engst. www.tidbits.com

FILExt is a detailed database of file extensions and programs that use them. When you click on a file type that Windows XP does not know how to open, a dialog appears asking if you want to search the Internet for a program. If you click that link you are taken to a Microsoft Web page that suggests you come to FILExt to do the search. www.filext.com

Research Buzz covers the world of Internet research, with almost daily updates on search engines, data managing software, and browser technology. www.researchbuzz.com

SeniorNet provides access to computer technology for older adults. All seniors are welcome to participate in hundreds of SeniorNet RoundTable discussion groups. SeniorNet members learn and teach others to use computers and the Internet to accomplish a variety of tasks. www.seniornet.org

AT&T is striving to make text-to-speech sound as authentic as possible. Listen to male and female voices say whatever you type in-even foreign languages. Type in your name and listen.

<http://www.research.att.com/projects/tts/demo.html>

To find out who owns a particular URL, you must visit a special reference site. You enter the domain name (e.g. landsend.com) and get the facts about its owner, including name, address, and sometimes contact information. www.whois.org
www.interne.net/whois.html

Sometimes a program starts going out of whack for no reason. It could be that a patch is in order. A patch is an update that fixes known problems. You're probably familiar with the updates associated with Windows, but any software needs to be patched occasionally. That goes for hardware, too. While you can go to a specific software or hardware company's Web site for patches, this site seems to round them all up for you. But unless it's a security update, don't install patches if everything is running fine. <http://www.softwarepatch.com/>

Belarc will tell you exactly what is inside a computer. After you Download and run it, you get a report that includes the computer's Components (CPU, motherboard, RAM, adapters, cards, etc.), make and model, along with serial numbers and all the software installed on the system complete with license numbers. http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html

If you're looking forward to a holiday such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, let your computer reflect that. Change your computer's theme--the picture that shows on your desktop, cursors, screen saver and more! There are several sites where you can download free themes. Here are two to check out:

<http://www.ezthemes.com>

<http://www.themeworld.com>

If you enjoy sending and receiving e-mail cards, you will want to check this site. This site doesn't have your normal cartoon cards. All of the cards here feature animals. They're funny, adorable and bound to brighten up someone's day. There's an assortment of cards here for any occasion -- birthday, romance, thank you, etc. So, if you know someone who loves a critter, check out this site.

<http://www.crittercards.com/>

Sometimes your computer just won't boot up. It's one of the scariest things to happen. You don't know why it won't boot up and you can't troubleshoot it. Essentially you're locked out of your computer. This site is a preemptive step to take before this happens. You can access and download a boot disk for just about every version of Windows! <http://www.bootdisk.com/>

Get a .dll (dynamic link library)! They're very important files that have an annoying habit of disappearing. This free Web site is a great resource for whenever you receive that Windows message, "Couldn't find XXX.dll". Surf over here, download and install! The FAQ has great instructions on how to install the dll (dynamic link library) that you need. <http://www.dll-files.com>

Design your own animated cards. This is a new favorite e-card site. There are plenty of pre-designed cards here to send for birthdays, holidays, best wishes, etc. They're cute and fun. What really sets this site apart from the rest is you get to make your own cards! You have three scenes to work with. Add scenery, music, animated characters and more. The only limit is your imagination. http://www.playtonium.com/ecards/ecard_index.htm

This System Analyzer/Diagnostic and Reporting Assistant is a series of tests and analyzers that lets you know what is going on inside your computer. It will test your system memory, temperature, processor speed and other hardware. <http://www.download.com/SiSoftware-Sandra/3000-2086-10556571.html?part=dl-SiSoftwar&subj=uo&tag=button>

Removing programs using Add/Remove in Windows doesn't always work. Sometimes the program is removed but is still listed. MyUninstaller removes programs safely and eliminates the listing. It also provides the program's name, version number, company information, description and more. Don't give up while trying to find this product. It's close to the bottom of the list. <http://members.lycos.co.uk/nirsoft1/>

OpenOffice is an open source product that satisfies all of your office needs. In a nutshell, it's like having a free version of Microsoft Office. Included is a spreadsheet, presentation and drawing program, plus a text and HTML editor. OpenOffice allows you to work with files from other applications such as Word, Excel and Lotus 1-2-3. You should read the installation instructions carefully before installing. Also note that the file is large and can take some time to download if you are using a dial-up modem. <http://www.openoffice.org>

If you subscribe to the hunt and peck method of typing, check out Typing Master Pro. Learn to touch-type. It creates tailored exercises based on your trouble areas. To keep it interesting, there are a number of games. Track your improvements by taking tests. <http://www.typingmaster.com/index.asp?go=tutordemo>

Startup Organizer provides access to programs that are automatically started when you start up your computer. Easily remove unnecessary programs that are automatically started and run in the background. If you're not sure what a program does, double click on it for details. Reduce the time required for your system to start up by disabling programs you don't need all the time. Define the order or specify a delay between starting programs. 30-day free trial. \$25 to buy. http://www.metaproducts.com/mp/mpProducts_Detail.asp?id=9

No! Not get a Dell. Get a .dll (dynamic link library)! They're very important files that have an annoying habit of disappearing. This free Web site is a great resource for whenever you receive that Windows message, "Couldn't find XXX.dll". Surf over here, download and install! The FAQ has great instructions on how to install the little buggers. <http://www.dll-files.com>

If you've ever tried to scan in text and edit it later, you know how frustrating it can be. Most OCR (optical character recognition) software is hit or miss. Instead of paying for a product that may not be good, try this free one! SimpleOCR is a free OCR application that converts scanned images to editable text formats. After you scan in the text, you can manipulate it easily using Word or some other text-editing software. <http://www.simpleocr.com/>

If you love digital photography and love free things, you will love this site. You can download an incredible image viewer. It supports many image file formats, does batch file conversions, and also lets you adjust an image's color depth, sharpen, blur, and more. <http://www.irfanview.com/>

Programs that automatically startup and run in the background can really slow your computer down. You can remove them through MSCONFIG but it's often difficult to know what is necessary and what's not. The Greatis Startup Application Database divides programs into four categories -- essential programs for Windows, optional programs, useless programs and dangerous programs. You can search alphabetically or by category. <http://www.greatis.com/regrun3appdatabase.htm>

Anyone who has a Web site must register it with a directory or registry. But it's not always easy to find out who really owns a site. If there's no contact information on the Web page, how do you know? This site will help you with that. Just enter the address of the Web site and click submit.

<http://www.internic.net/whois.html>

This is a great site for finding archival articles from Smart Computing magazine, written in "plain English". You must be a Smart Computing subscriber to access the full versions. www.smartcomputing.com

Get a free suite of hardware diagnostics, including disk health checkups, speed benchmarks, and more. The site also lists troubleshooting advice for hardware problems. www.pcpitstop.com

Best consumer computer network: www.zdnet.com

Best Search Engine: www.google.com

Best Human Web Guides: www.about.com

Best Tech Support: www.protonic.com

Best Free E-Mail:

www.mail.yahoo.com

www.msn.com

www.myway.com

www.gmail.com

Best Software Downloads: www.download.com

Best Wallpaper:

www.digitalblasphemy.com

www.webshots.com

Thousands of downloadable applications for your personal digital assistant (PDA). www.palmgear.com

This site is a vocational school for Web designers. www.webmonkey.com

The gateway to technology also boasts some of the best downloads on the Web.

www.cnet.com

Build your own site with drag-and-drop interface and add images, sound, and special effects with ease. www.homestead.com

Take your technical question to one of these message boards. Post your issue or search by keyword to see if someone has already solved your problem.
www.helponthe.net

Need advice on any computer topic? www.help.com

This tool will let you set up spies to notify you when a Web page changes, when that collectible you want goes up for auction, or when an airfare drops into your price range. www.spyonit.com

These free programs will permit you to open archived or zipped files.
www.aladdinsys.com
www.pkware.com

This software program helps you cover your Internet tracks, eradicate pesky programs from your hard drive. Download free **TWEAK UI** from
www.download.com

If you want to find out if there are upgrades available for your PC software, go to:
www.updates.com

By using this site, you can upload your favorite links from your own browser to an online site so that you have access to all your Favorites from someone else's computer.
www.mybookmarks.com

This program will eliminate all traces of net surfing each time your computer is shut down, including records in your browser's history file and cache. Free to try.
www.webroot.com

Take popular portals Yahoo! and MSN, subtract the annoying pop-up and display ads and add a Google search field and you have My Way. The pages aren't laden with flashy extras, so they load and serve up information more quickly. You can sign up for free e-mail and stock tracking, among other services, as you slowly reorient yourself to frippery-free surfing. www.myway.com

When you need facts, turn to Refdesk.com. From its plain but crowded home page, you can gain quick access to online dictionaries, encyclopedias, and myriad other reference sources: the day's leading news stories, popular search engines, and more. www.refdesk.com

Keep up with the latest technologies and the quickly evolving terminologies that grow up around them at this superb reference site. <http://whatis.techtarget.com>

KbAlertz indexes the hundreds of thousands of useful articles in Microsoft's Knowledge Base. Sign up here for e-mail notification of any new articles in your choice of more than 200 categories. KbAlertz also offers a superfast search of MSKB article summaries with direct links to the articles. www.kbalertz.com

This Outlook Express site offers explanations for error messages, solutions for common problems, tips for efficient usage, even links to third-party enhancements. Learn how to back up and restore your messages and contacts, clone your account to another computer, and improve Outlook Express's performance. <http://insideoe.tomsterdam.com>

Cool Desk is a small, simple Desktop tweak that transforms your single Windows Desktop into multiple virtual Desktops. You can use virtual Desktops to avoid clutter and separate like tasks. For instance, you can open Internet applications on the first Desktop, multimedia applications on the second, and office applications on a third. There are plenty of ways to switch between your Desktops, from shortcut icons on each, um, Desktop to icons in your Taskbar's Quick Launch toolbar where applicable. A Desktop shortcut bar provides an additional switching method. You can even easily move applications between virtual Desktops. Cool Desk runs on Windows 9x/Me /NT/2000/XP. <http://www.shelltoys.com>

We haven't met a person yet who likes pop-up and pop-under ads, but they won't be going anywhere soon. Equip yourself with the IE_Kill add-on. This 224KB file lets you close all IE windows with the click of an icon located inconspicuously in the System Tray. <http://www.codefoot.com/software/iekill>

Say goodbye to the Windows logo screen saver and turn your PC into a virtual fish tank with the Aquatica Waterworlds Screensaver. Download the trial version

and select your favorite fish (the program includes four fish, but you can download additional fish from the Web site). You can choose aquatic backgrounds and the number of fish you want to see. To download extra fish and backgrounds, buy the full version for \$19.99.

<http://www.clubaquatica.com>

Every day (even weekends!) this site will have a new tip to help you with your computing. Many of these come from questions submitted by viewers!

http://www.komando.com/tips_show.asp?feature=show

Create unique screensavers using your own pictures.

<http://www.gphotoshow.com/>

This utility places the date in Windows' task bar with the clock. Customize format, font and color. <http://users.iafrica.com/d/da/dalen/tclockex.htm>

Sign up for Kim Komando's free newsletter. It's a great tool for beginners, computer geniuses and everyone in between!

<http://www.komando.com/newsletter.asp>

Look here for Kim Komando's weekly in-depth column. Read about software, hardware, current trends in technology and more!

<http://www.komando.com/kolumns.asp>

If you do a lot of surfing, you've probably accumulated a nice collection of favorites or bookmarks. It's a good idea to back those up, especially if you're changing computers. Before you do, though, make sure all the links are valid. Luckily, you do not have to click each site to detect broken links and double entries in your browser's bookmarks. AM-Deadlink is a free program that will do this for you. In addition, you can back up your entire collection to a ZIP file. AM-Deadlink works with Internet Explorer, Opera and Netscape.

<http://www.webattack.com/get/amdeadlink.shtml>

To see how vulnerable your computer system is, try Symantec's Security Check. This free test will expose any open holes.

<http://www.symantec.com/securitycheck>

Spybot Search and Destroy will remove spyware from your system.

<http://security.kolla.de/>

The Windows XP product key is a 25-character alphanumeric code that can be found on the packaging material provided with Windows XP. It is converted to a Product ID by Microsoft in the activation process. You can't activate without it. What happens if the packaging material is lost or misplaced? You can find it with a couple programs: Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder v1.41 and ViewKeyXP. Check for viruses before you use them.

<http://www.magicaljellybean.com/keyfinder.shtml>

http://www.webtree.ca/windowsxp/tips_fixes.htm

It's not easy to stay current with Microsoft's security updates. Two or three alerts are issued weekly. It's good that they take it so seriously. But customers are likely to be confused. The company has a free program to remove some of the confusion. Called the Microsoft Baseline Security Analyzer, it checks your system for vulnerabilities. In addition to Windows, it checks Office, Internet Explorer and Outlook Express. It gives you a readout of flaws it finds, and recommends corrective action.

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/tools/Tools/MBSAhome.asp>

If you set up your computer to require your password, you may regret that. But getting rid of that prompt can be difficult. That is, it's difficult if you don't have Windows PowerToys. That's a free download from Microsoft. PowerToys installs in Control Panel under the name Tweak UI. Double-click it and select the Logon tab. Check "Logon automatically at system startup."

<http://www.komando.com/bestshareware.asp#powertoys>

Keep your computer in tip top shape by following Millman's guide to a spotless computer system.

<http://www.microsoft.com/canada/familywave/articles/style/clean+your+computer1.asp>

Ever wonder what type of information Web sites gathered about you when you visited? BrowserSpy allows you to spy on yourself. It tests your Internet browser and computer and reports on your: operating system, browser and version, connection to the Internet, cookie information, versions of various software and more. Why does it do this? It shows you what other Web sites can potentially find out about you. Of course, most of this information is mundane and harmless. BrowserSpy is best used to identify what needs to be upgraded.

<http://www.gemal.dk/browserspy/>

You can test your computer for vulnerabilities. This site will tell you if you have open ports. To run the test, go to: <http://www.dslreports.com/scan>

Have you ever upgraded to a new version of software and absolutely hated it? Have an older computer that won't run the latest and greatest? It's so frustrating because you usually can't go back to the old version. Now maybe you can! This site has over 300 versions of 44 popular programs. Choose from a variety of programs such as AOL Instant Messenger, Internet Explorer, Acrobat Reader and more! <http://www.oldversion.com/>

There are programs that will help you identify computer intruders. One program is called VisualZone and it's free. You will find it here online: <http://visualize.phenominet.com/visualzone/visualzone.htm>

Are you certain that vulnerabilities have been plugged in your browser? Qualys, a network security firm, has a number of tests. First, it shows you what can be learned from the information your browser makes available. No big surprise there--the information it found on most computers wouldn't help anyone break in. But it also has seven tests patterned on common hacker attacks. If you run these tests, please note that you might get a virus message. **THESE TESTS WILL NOT GIVE YOU A VIRUS!** Any virus message stemming from these tests is a false alarm. <http://browsercheck.qualys.com/>

Just about every component hooked up to your computer has a driver. These drivers help your computer talk to your monitor, printer-even your mouse! If something is not working properly, perhaps an updated driver is the fix. Drivers HQ searches your computer and let's you know if there's an updated driver available. If there is a newer driver available, go to the manufacturer's Web site and download it. It could potentially speed up your PC! There's also a pay version that automatically downloads the newer driver for you. You don't want to update drivers just for the heck of it. If it's working, ignore the new driver. <http://www.drivershq.com/>

If you want to link your PC so that you can access your files from any other computer in the world, try this site. <http://www.gotomypc.com>

CCleaner (Crap Cleaner) is a freeware system optimization tool that removes unused and temporary files from your system, allowing it to run faster, more efficiently and giving you more hard disk space. The best part is that it's fast!

(normally taking less than a second to run) and it's Free. Use this program on a regular basis. Just don't run the registry cleaner part of the program without backing up your registry. CC Cleaner allows you to just use the cleaning tools that do not involve the registry, and once you have it set up, every time you reboot, just click on CC Cleaner, and then empty your Recycle Bin. It's a great free program. Check out the help files so you understand all that it cleans.

http://www.latest-ccleaner.com/ver2/?gclid=CPLzidX_ZACFRsFagodGwIm1w

Sun Microsystems, the software developers of the popular StarOffice suite, has released a freeware alternative to Microsoft's popular Office, in hopes of stealing market share. The offender? No, not Microsoft; it's Sun Microsystems. The company's OpenOffice productivity suite features a text editor, a spreadsheet application, a database program, presentation software, and drawing tools, all of which are built on the same proven code that underlies Sun's popular StarOffice suite. <http://www.openoffice.org/product/>

If you have one humongous folder full of files, you could use an easy way of organizing that unruly mass/mess. File Sieve creates 27 directories labeled # through Z and sorts files from the source directory you choose into them. It checks the first character in the filenames and sorts them alphabetically into the correct folders. This saves you time and fuss, and it makes sure every file gets into the right folder. (Note that Windows XP has this function built into its operating system.)

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24151&fileidx=1

If you have a partitioned hard drive, you may be wasting precious disk space harboring the same files in different areas. DoubleKiller hunts across single or multiple partitions and folders for identical files. It skips over files with important extensions like .dll, but it scans other files for duplicates. It checks the files' names, sizes, dates, and checksums to see if any of them mirror one another. Once DoubleKiller locates the duplicates, it shows you a list of all of them so you can decide which ones to keep and which ones to delete or move.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24152&fileidx=1

No matter how inspiring the desktop wallpaper, the Windows taskbar sits at the bottom of the screen, dull and gray. Transbar harnesses the Alpha Transparency feature in Windows XP to let you tweak the transparency level of your taskbar. You can make the taskbar completely see-through, letting it blend with your desktop.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24157&fileidx=1

It's not always easy to remember the exact filename of your document, and opening each file to look inside wastes a lot of time. Agent Ransack displays the text found inside each file, so you don't have to separately open each search result. You can also search for text inside of documents using this application. Agent Ransack integrates into the Windows Find menu, so it can easily replace the File Search function included with Windows.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=16100&fileidx=1

The latest version of RegScrubXP is a very popular utility designed to delete unnecessary information from the System Registry of Windows 2000 & XP operating systems. This "junk" is often left behind when programs are uninstalled, and the information is not needed anymore. Programmers load the Registry with junk as well. The result of cleaning out the junk is a smaller, faster Registry. Your operating system accesses the Registry a lot, so keeping it clean is a good idea! RegScrubXP also helps you tweak your Registry to provide a more pleasant computer experience.

<http://downloads.csnnow.com/marchtopfive.html>

HotKicks is more than just a launcher. It automates processes and does many other interesting things! HotKicks can shutdown/restart/logoff your computer now or at a scheduled time, empty your recycle bin and delete files or/and folders now or at startup, run scandisk, defragment your hard disk(s) and then shutdown the computer while you are sleeping or walking the dog! Best of all HotKicks is 100% freeware, small in size and does not write to the registry or modify your system files in any way; all its settings are stored in its own configuration file in its directory. This little program (102kb) lets you take complete (or almost complete) control of your Windows operating system through hotkeys. You can now access important areas and functions of Windows at the press of easy-to-remember hotkey combinations (and of course you can define your own key combinations and add your own programs).

<http://www.phy.uni-bayreuth.de/~btp344/hotkicks/>

Minute Timer (MinTimer) is a general-purpose, simple desktop count-down timer and alarm. It's easy to use and is perfect for reminding you to do certain things -- like getting up from the computer and stretching your legs (for example)! You can set the timer to let you know that it's a good time to eat and drink every now and then. Time always goes by so fast when you are on your pc, and this little program lets you know when to take a break, or when it's time to go to bed or watch your favorite TV show.

http://www.download.com/Minute-Timer/3000-2350_4-10773545.html?tag=lst-1

TuneXP is a radical new tool from DriverHeaven that allows you to tweak your Windows installation more easily than ever before, and with tweaks that no other tool has. This program walks you right through the program step by step, and is very easy, even if you know nothing about optimizing your operating system. Give TuneXP a try, it's free and a great little tweaking program.

<http://www.toseeka.com/search.php?q=tunexp>

Computers can slow down over time, and disk fragmentation is generally one of the causes. Fragmented files are broken up and stored on various parts of your disk causing slowdowns, crashes, and slow boot times. The new Diskeeper 9.0 keeps your PC running as fast as it did when it was new. No more time-consuming manual defragmentation jobs. Just install Diskeeper 9.0, then "Set It and Forget It". The program also uses a high-speed defragmentation engine that runs unnoticed in the background, eliminating fragmentation while you use your PC. Try Diskeeper 9.0 for free and see how much speed of which your PC is capable. <http://www.download.com/Diskeeper/3000-2094-10023645.html>

The Registry is the heart and soul of any Windows system. It contains information that controls how your system appears and how it behaves. Most applications today use the Registry to store configurations and other important data. When you install an application, new Registry entries will be created. These entries automatically will be deleted when you uninstall the application. Unfortunately, this process does not always work. Sometimes, some applications fail to remove their own Registry entries. These entries become obsolete. After a long period, after you install and uninstall a number of applications, your Windows Registry will contain a large number of obsolete entries. This will significantly increase the Registry size and slow down your computer, because Windows will need more time to load, search, and read data from the Registry. To keep your computer at top performance, it is recommended you periodically clean your Windows Registry.

<http://www.download.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-2094-10365053.html?tag=list>

Suffering from a little Mac-envy? Stardock's ObjectDock is a freeware program that can put a dock on your screen that can approximate the look and feel of most any kind of dock ever made. Being a Windows user, you might be thinking, what the heck's a dock, and why would I want one on my computer? By way of explanation, ObjectDock is a desktop toolbar that acts as an application launcher

as well as a task manager to access currently running programs. It offers mouseover animation effects and displays thumbnails of open windows to easily switch between applications. You can also drag and drop your favorite folders or programs onto the toolbar to add a shortcut for easy access. ObjectDock also includes a weather feature that displays current conditions for your U.S. ZIP code, as well as access to My Computer, analog clock display, and more.

<http://www.objectdock.com/>

EssentialPIM is a free and innovative Personal Information Manager (PIM) that enables you to automatically import existing data from Outlook, Windows Address Book, and CSV - anytime. It's an all-in-one solution! Tasks: Good-looking scheduler. Versatile and easy to use daily, weekly, and monthly schedules. Notes: Quick, simple, and yet powerful outliner with tree-like information representation. Contacts: All one would ever need for contacts management. Search, sort, add custom fields, and print. Get information wherever you need to. Print out or Save to HTML, RTF, CSV or TXT. Real information on the go. All data can be password-protected and the database file encrypted using high industry standard Rijndael, 128 bit key. EPIM is free. Completely. No tricks, no adware/spyware. Just pure, quality software!

<http://www.snapfilespro.com/gnomeapp.php?id=108946>

Fast Defrag PC speed at a crawl? It may be because your data is so scattered, your PC doesn't know where to look. Fast Defrag defragments your hard drive to free up RAM. Not only does this speed up your computer, it increases your system's stability. This defragger uses little of your system's valuable resources.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23097,tk,hsx,00.asp

Startup Control Panel. This applet allows you to automatically launch programs when your system starts up. Of course, you can do that manually, by changing entries in your Registry. But this program's simple interface lets you avoid that confusion.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7976,tk,hsx,00.asp

WinPatrol 9.0 gives you greater control over what can run on your machine. You can set it to display additional information about--and approve of--startup programs. You'll also be alerted when something tries to load an Internet Explorer plug-in or set a cookie. And to get rid of a particularly nasty piece of spyware, you can use the "Delete File on Reboot" feature, so Windows will get rid of it before any other program can protect it or relaunch it.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22728,tk,hsx,00.asp

Remap your keyboard with KeyTweak. This utility lets you change the function of almost any key. (Note: This software may not work with some wireless keyboards.)

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23203,tk,hsx,00.asp

This handy program reads temperature and fan RPM data collected by your system's BIOS, displays it in the Microsoft Windows system tray, and alerts you when there's trouble. You can use this application to manage your resources and alarms by doing things like setting an alarm to go off, or having an e-mail sent to another computer, when your motherboard starts to overheat. You could even have programs start and stop when your CPU reaches predetermined temperatures.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7309,tk,hsx,00.asp

The author of this program wrote it out of frustration at the taskbar clock for not showing the date. His nifty little freeware program, TClockEx, changes that, and adds more features to it, as well. It lets you change the font size and color of your clock; you can display available memory and system resources; you can even use the program to copy the date to your Clipboard. This update, which includes bug fixes, will give you a warning if the Windows Resource Meter applet is not available.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,6122,tk,hsx,00.asp

FreeRAM XP frees and defragments your computer's random access memory. As you use your computer, open applications, surf the Internet, and navigate Windows, your system's memory usually decreases. FreeRAM XP Pro frees up this memory, thereby increasing system response time, stability, speed, and efficiency.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22441,tk,hsx,00.asp

MyUninstaller is a freebie that replaces Microsoft's Add/Remove applet.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23025,tk,sbx,00.asp

It's not always easy to remember the exact filename of your document, and opening each file to look inside wastes a lot of time. Agent Ransack displays the text found inside each file, so you don't have to separately open each search result. You can also search for text inside of documents using this application. Agent Ransack integrates into the Windows Find menu, so it can easily replace the File Search function included with Windows.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,16100,tk,sbx,00.asp

Windows' Task Manager lets you see what's cooking under the hood. But for a better look, including the process or program's path, version number, and a list of affiliated DLLs, you want PrcView. It's free and a copy's being processed for you right here:

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,6102,tk,sbx,00.asp

CoolMon: CoolMon helps you keep tabs on your PC's internal goings-on. This utility shows you up-to-the-moment information about how many processes are running, how much RAM is being used, and the exact time of day. In its standard configuration, it also tells you important information like your IP address and the name your PC uses on the local network. Best of all, a little extra work and a little in the way of geek smarts will let you configure the window to show exactly what you need it to show--even the local weather.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23831,tk,hsx,00.asp

NISTime is a 260KB application that sets your computer's clock to the atomic clocks operated by the National Institute of Standards and Technology atomic clocks, in either Colorado or Maryland.

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23895,tk,hsx,00.asp