



Message from the CIO

Just as the recent dust storm reminded us all that it is time for spring cleaning, the TTU IT Division encourages you to “spring clean” your data, systems, and electronic mail. In this Special Edition of our bulletin, we offer practical guidelines for **data management** and **email cleaning**. If you have traded, received, or inherited a used system, we provide guidelines for **sanitizing your hard drive**. Digital spring cleaning is an important Safe Computing Practice, as you don’t want old, forgotten, sensitive information to end up in the wrong hands. In an age of information explosion, routine digital cleaning will help you to better manage the flood of electronic information that we all receive, store, and collect. So, join us in the next month and clean out your files, email, and hard drives; remove the “digital dust bunnies!”

-Sam Segrant
Associate Vice President for IT and Chief Information Officer



Cleaning Out the Digital “Attic”

We all have one; that place where we store those items that we don’t use much anymore but are still dear to us. Our attics and garages are filled with them; items such as a trunk full of old clothes or a box of old photographs begin to pile up. Likewise, most of us have a digital “attic” where we have accumulated data and files over many years. This may be a drawer full of floppy disks or a stack of CDs, but it still represents items that we consider important. Just as it is important to clean out the garage or attic periodically, it is important that we “clean out” our digital storage from time-to-time. The following tips may help as you tackle this digital “spring cleaning” task:

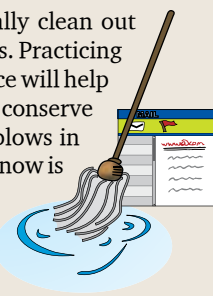
1. Move from floppy disks to optical media (e.g. CD or DVD). Floppy disks have a much shorter working life and smaller capacity than CD or DVD media;
2. Create folders to group similar files. Just as you label boxes in your attic, putting similar items in a descriptive folder will help you find that important file when you really need it;
3. If you keep multiple versions of a file or document, consider including the file creation or revision date in the file name. Using a file name such as “MyDocument_Mar2006.doc” will allow you to quickly find the latest version of your document and delete older versions;
4. Periodically review the files on your USB key and delete/archive outdated files;



5. Delete those files that you no longer need. Schedule a regular review of your external media and “sweep away” those files that make up the dust bunnies in your digital “attic.”

Spring Clean Your Email

It is important to periodically clean out your email inbox and folders. Practicing regular mailbox maintenance will help you stay organized and conserve storage space. As the dust blows in and encourages us to clean, now is the perfect time to start an email cleaning routine. We recommend the following regular routine:



- Delete old and unwanted emails
- Empty the Deleted Items folder regularly
 - Manually in Outlook: Go to “Tools;” and click on “Empty Deleted Items Folder”
 - Automatic in Outlook: Go to “Tools;” click on “Options;” click on “Other” tab; Check “Empty the Deleted Items folder upon exiting”
- Empty Sent Items and Junk Email folders regularly

Archiving email is another important way to manage mailbox size. When you archive, your default Outlook folders (Inbox, Calendar, Contacts, Deleted Items, Journal, Notes, Sent Items, and Tasks) are stored in a file on your local hard drive (.pst file). Instructions for setting up a personal folder can be found at <http://www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/directions/2003-pst.php>.

- Suggestions for managing your personal folder:
- Develop an easy naming system for your .pst files to identify the contents. For example “Personal_Folders-2006.”

- Save .pst files in My Documents or another easily found folder.
- Ensure that a copy of the .pst is copied to a CD, DVD, or backed up to a server.
- When it comes time to purge messages, delete older .pst files first. Deleting one .pst file will delete all contents of the file (Inbox, Sent Items, Contacts, etc).

AutoArchiving is another useful mailbox management tool. To setup AutoArchiving, go to “Tools,” “Options,” “Other” tab, “AutoArchive.” For more detailed instructions on setting up AutoArchiving please visit http://www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/directions/XP_autoarchive.php.

We recommend these global archiving settings in Outlook:

- Run Auto Archive every **7** days.
- Prompt before Auto Archive runs: **Unchecked**
- Delete expired items (email folders only): **Unchecked**
- Archive or delete old items: **Checked**
- Show archive folder in folder list: **Checked**
- Clean out items older than **2 Weeks**
- Move old items to: **Varies**

If you do not wish to archive a specific folder, right-click on the folder in the Folder List, choose “Properties,” “AutoArchive” tab, and choose “Do not archive items in this folder.” Repeat the process for each folder that you do not want to archive.

Managing your archives:

- Separate archives by year and keep the current year active
- Archive your messages before leaving for vacation and extended university holidays. Go to “File,” “Archive,” Select “Archive all folders according to their Auto Archive settings,” and click “OK”

- If your mailbox continues to fill, increase the frequency for running AutoArchive and/or decrease the time frame to clean out items
- Manually archive large email messages with attachments by dragging the item to your current *Personal Folder*

View your mailbox size on the server by clicking on “Go” in the menu, “Folder List,” then in the folder list click on “Folder Sizes.” Compare Total Size (including subfolders) to your storage limit by dividing the size in kilobytes (kb) by 1000. You can locate your storage limit by logging into <http://eraider.ttu.edu> and clicking on “TechMail.”

As you clean away the clutter and dust this Spring, we encourage you to do the same with your email. For additional information on Outlook please visit http://www.helpdesk.ttu.edu/info/mail_maintenance.php or contact IT Help Central at (806)742-HELP (4357).

When Cleaning Up That Old PC, “Sanitize” the Hard Drive!

If you think “deleted” information can’t be retrieved from an old hard drive, think again. The fact is that when we press the delete command, the file isn’t really deleted, but the operating system simply removes it from your file list and makes the space available for rewriting new data. Similarly, when we format a hard drive, the data that was there isn’t deleted, making it possible to recover with an advanced data recovery tool.

If you think it isn’t all that important to erase the data from your hard drive before you “donate” it to another user or department, consider a bit of springtime levity;

Top Ten Reasons to Clean That Hard Drive:

10. Easier than cleaning the garage.
9. If you don’t have your identity, you don’t have anything at all.
8. “Share and Share Alike” doesn’t really work too well when it comes to all those bank account records.
7. You just made “Big Brother’s” job pretty darn easy.
6. Did you really want that hasty Word doc you wrote but never meant to go public?
5. Make the identity thieves work harder for their money.
4. The next owner of your PC could take the term “e-Raider” literally.
3. Those guys in the black suits who just showed up looking for you are not from the “Men In Black” cast.
2. What do you mean you received an order for 10,000 watermelons with my digital signature?

#1 And the **number one** reason – If you don’t ... someone else will!

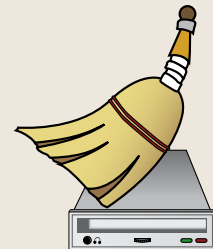
Seriously...

Last year, MIT graduate students Simson Garfinkel and Abhi Shelat revealed findings of a two-year project in which they collected and analyzed 158 hard drives bought from computer stores, businesses, and eBay. The researchers discovered that most computer users don’t bother to properly clean their hard drives before selling them. In fact, on the 129 drives that actually worked, they found more than 5,000 credit card numbers, financial and medical records, personal emails, and other information.

In another instance, Washington Mutual bought back some of their old computers at a hefty price which they had once sold as surplus to a self-employed programmer. The company realized that confidential financial information such as Social Security numbers, loan applications, and job histories of Washington Mutual customers would be compromised through these computers.

At Texas Tech University, older PCs are frequently “passed down” to other employees or departments as newer ones are purchased to replace them. The Information Technology (IT) Division and TTU Operations Division offer **Raider PC Mart** (www.raiderpcmart.ttu.edu) to help both donating and receiving departments recycle PCs that are still usable. Unless the previous owner cleans the hard drive with a secure data erasure program, all of the data can potentially be retrieved by the new owner.

To ensure that all data is permanently erased from a hard drive, the Information Technology (IT) Division is evaluating and pilot testing a free utility called **KillDisk**, which rewrites every “bit” of information on hard drives or other media several times, making recovery of any data extremely difficult. We will provide further information to the TTU community after we analyze results from our testing.



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