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Disk defragmentation: Fundamentals and beyond, part 2

By **Frank Alperstaedt**
27 Nov 2002, **SearchWindowsManageability.com**

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*In this second installment of a two-part article on disk defragmention, SearchWindowsManageability.com's resident defrag tool expert, **Frank Alperstaedt**, continues to answer your questions on this often mysterious practice. -- David Pye*

IT pro: In some cases, should the defragmenter on my system run at a lower priority than the normal file system requests? If so, why?

Alperstaedt: Usually, you should not bother how the priority of the defragger is set, since this is its job. If you save and change files, it is definitely more important to get that data to the disk than it is to move a file around. This is for security reasons, to avoid possible data loss. But as I said before, this is really left to the defragger to decide.

IT pro: When I run the Windows 98 defragmentation tool, it shows that nothing is being done. Is there an easy way to detect why this has been shut down or is not defragmenting? When I ask to see details, I get a blank screen in response. Everything else seems to work well, except the defragmenting.

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Alperstaedt: You can check if any other applications are running concurrently. If so, shut them down. If not, you could also try a third-party tool. Trials of these tools are offered on the Web, so you can see if a tool does the job or not. If a third-party tool does not work, please get back to me with more details, and I'll take a closer look at your particular problem.

IT pro: I've tried to use a utility called Power Defragmenter Lite V-2.10. This was a free download from E-Technik.com. The problem is that immediately after running this program, I found that four or five of my applications no longer worked. There is nothing else I can attribute this problem to, and it did happen right after I ran the defragmenter. Internet Explorer and Juno were two of the programs affected. I use Windows 98SE. Do you have any ideas?

Alperstaedt: Well, there are some rare occasions where applications place files in particular clusters as some

sort of "copy protection." I personally hate this technique, but maybe some of your apps are affected by this. [Internet Explorer] does not have this mechanism, so maybe the defragger did not handle open files correctly, which corrupted them. I cannot tell you much about this defragger, but you should check your disk for possible faults. If there are no hardware defects, I guess it will be related to corrupt files. If you want to check, reinstall the apps and re-run the defragger. If the problems recur, it is some problem with the defragger. Maybe you [should] check out some other defraggers, which are available on the Web.

IT pro: On Windows 98, I have tried to defrag and failed. When I defrag, I have no programs running other than defrag. The defrag program keeps restarting, saying that the contents have changed. Sometimes, just before it restarts, the screen goes black and then goes back to the defrag screen. As a result, my computer hasn't been defragged in over 600 days. Can you help?

Alperstaedt: Usually, if some other applications change files, the Win 98 defragger restarts to adjust its settings to the new files. If there are really no other applications running that change file content, maybe there is some problem with insufficient free space for defragmenting or some clusters are corrupted. Run ScanDisk to verify that the disk is in good shape. If the problem still occurs, please get back to me, so we can dig deeper into your problem.

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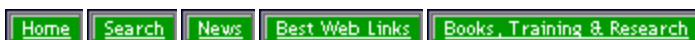- >> **Microsoft urges immediate fix of critical IIS flaw** (SearchSecurity.com)

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