CLEANING YOUR REGISTRY AND HARD DISK WISELY

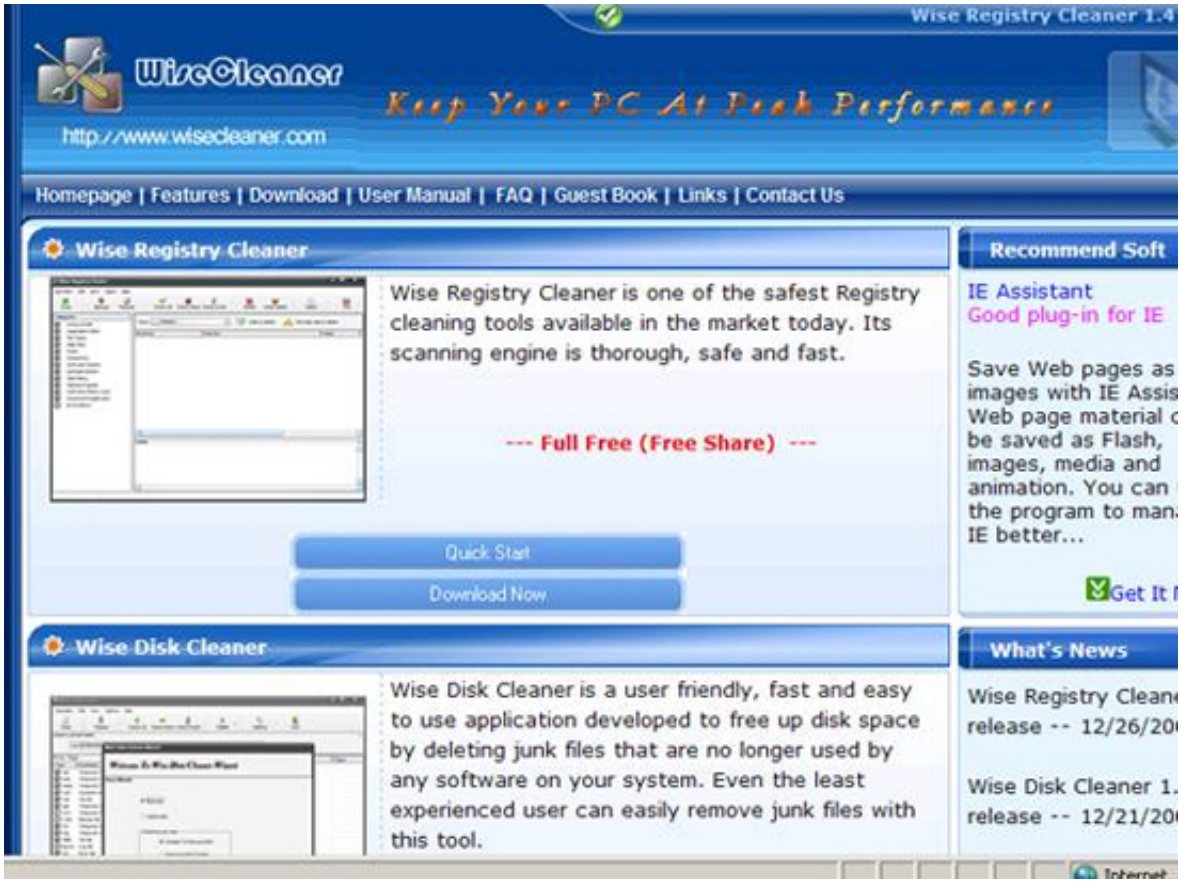
I've discussed playing with the Windows Registry in the past. Tweaking the registry is risky but necessary. As a constant reader of what's new on the net, I found a new safe registry cleaner that's easy to use and is *free*.

For Windows users, there's usually nothing riskier than playing with the all-powerful and awe-inspiring Registry. One wrong move - one incorrect click of the mouse, one letter, number or hash mark out of place - and you can kiss productivity good-bye, as you will be stuck for hours, if not days, reinstalling, recovering and retreading your computer's operating system and hard drive, seeking what once was, but has been lost.

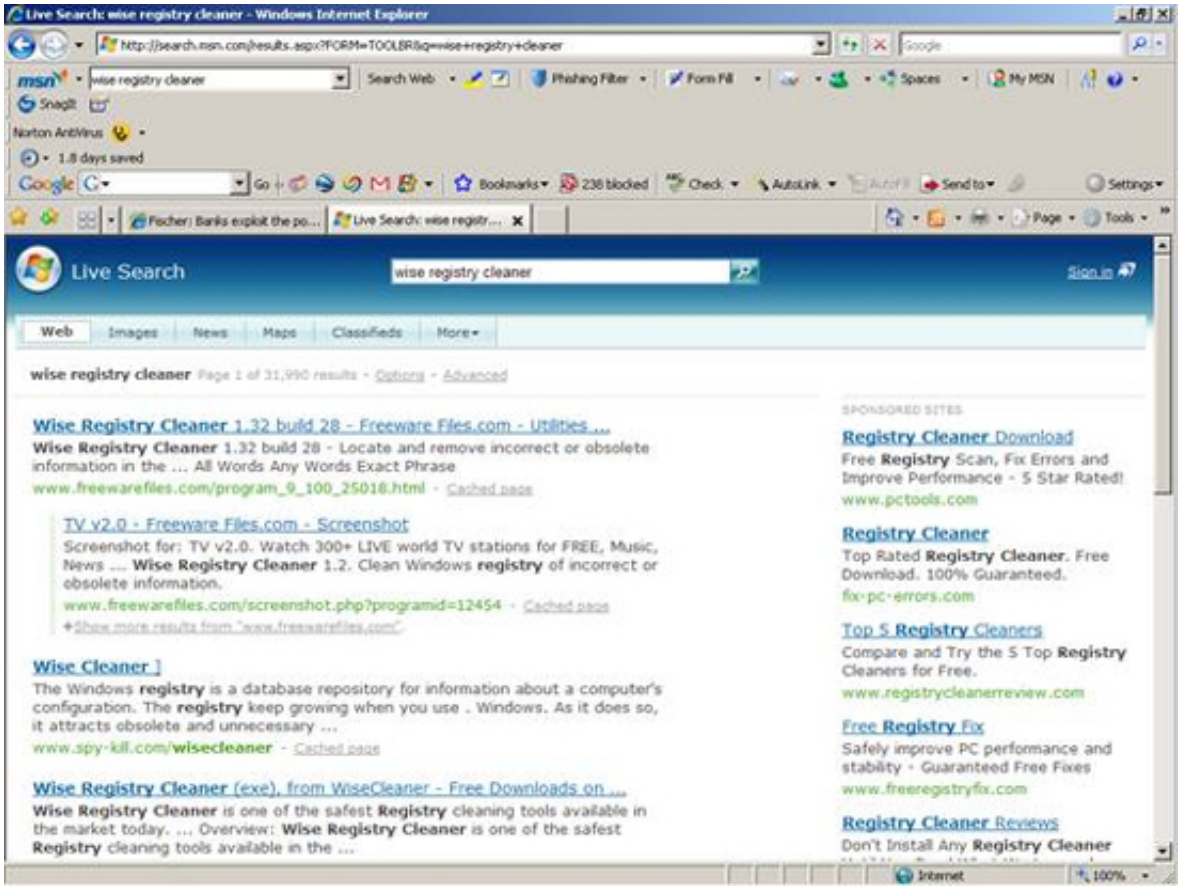
That is unless you create a restore point before ever playing with your registry, which I strongly recommend.

And yet, the Registry needs treatment, once in awhile. A gunked-up Registry can seriously slow down your computer, if not paralyze it altogether. Windows fix-it sites will all give you instructions on what to look for and how to clean things, but you have to be careful - one wrong move, and you know what happens. It takes guts, wisdom and expertise to work the Registry. It's no place to fool around if you don't know what you're doing.

That's why I was so happy to get my hands on a new, easy to use, very safe, very wise and very free Registry cleaner - called, oddly enough, Wise Registry Cleaner.



And here are a list of reviews:



When you install a piece of software, the installation program writes "Registry keys" to make sure Windows knows about the program, and when you remove the software, the Uninstaller is supposed to take those keys out. But you know how programmers can be - all excited on the installation, and a bit less enthusiastic (and maybe even insulted) when users decide their life's work is no longer useful.

I'm happy to say that the registry has caused so many problems - Google "DLL hell" and you'll get 398,000 hits; there's even a Wikipedia entry on it - that Microsoft is moving away from the registry. The newest development tools don't use the registry at all. This has been made possible because of exceedingly inexpensive hard disk space.

Although Wise Registry Cleaner automatically creates a restore point, at the end of this column I'll repeat how to do it, so that you may do so whenever you wish, not just when using this product.

So, uninstallers tend to leave behind a mess, in many cases. You get stuck with loads of Registry keys that have nothing to do but take up space. Enough of this dead weight and your Registry begins to feel - and act - top heavy, sort of like that feeling when you face the afikomen at the

Passover Seder. "You mean I have to eat the whole thing!?"

Not to mention the deliberate junk left behind by spyware, viruses, trojans, etc., whose programmers figure that since they got you once, it's just a matter of time before they catch you again - so why go through the trouble of removing all the Registry stuff that's going to be reinstalled anyway.

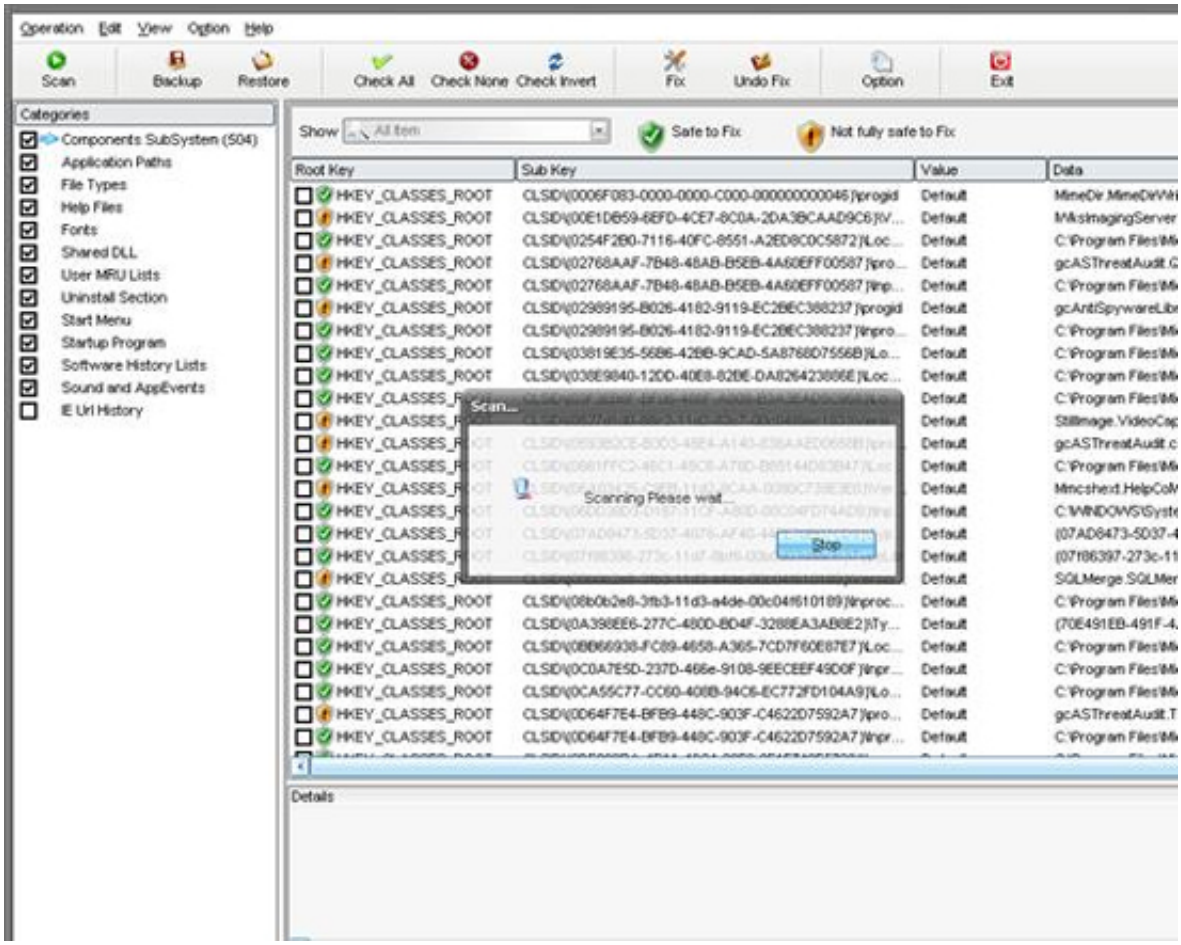
Keep in mind that we're not talking about one or two of these Registry entries; a badly managed Windows system could have hundreds of the rogue things. Looking for a challenge? Try picking out manually from your Registry's tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of entries the ones that aren't doing anything but slowing down your system.

But there's no guesswork with Wise Registry Cleaner. The program efficiently checks the content of your Registry versus your installed program base, and presents you with the entries that are safe to delete, and those that may still be in use.

The author of this program is my kind of guy/gal: very conservative, leaving on the "unsafe to delete" list anything that could still be in some kind of use. Only those entries that really and truly have nothing to do are deleted in an automatic sweep (although you can dump any of the entries on the list if you're sure you don't need them; note that Registry keys that are definitely in use do not appear on the list at all).

What if you've goofed by mistake? No problem. Wise Registry Cleaner automatically creates a backup/restore point for you. All you have to do is click on "undo," and Reg is back to its messy old self. It's easy, it's automated, it's safe - it just makes sense (although English is clearly not the first language of the author of the help file).

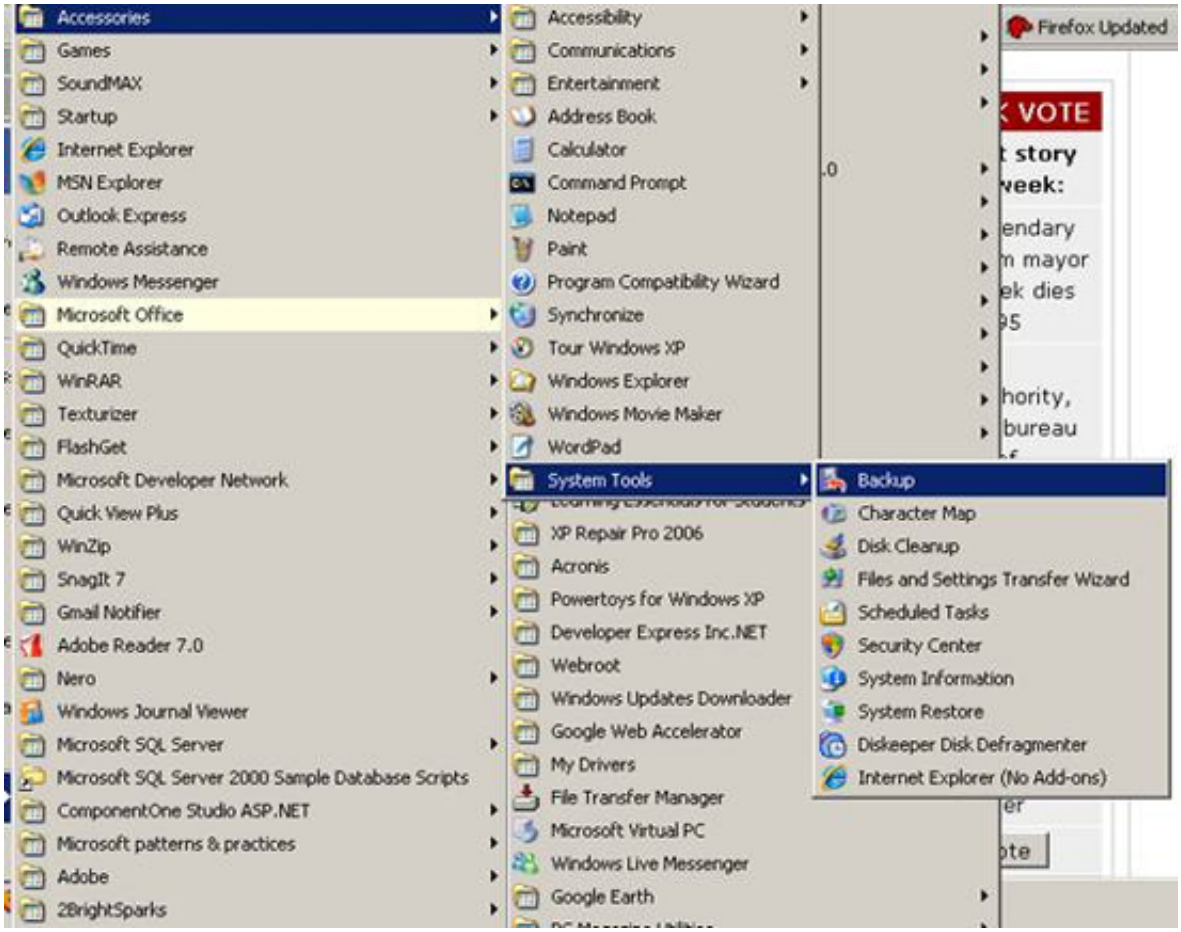
Here's my first run in progress:



And those who surf to the Wise site get a bonus, too - a free download of Wise Disk Cleaner, which will tackle temporary files, extra data files left behind by uninstalled programs, etc. You can either move them into the trash or totally waste them (i.e. "zero" them off your hard drive). I reclaimed 275 megabytes of space that was being taken up by do-nothing files after using Wise Disk Cleaner.

Now for automatically setting a backup restore point before you install or uninstall a backup, or delete questionable files:

Click on Start, then hover on All Programs, then Accessories, then System Tools, and click on Backup.



In a nutshell it is almost impossible to make mistakes. You can always roll them back, the price is right, and you can clean out your hard disk space as well.

Dennis Turner