Programs to Avoid Installing on Your PC

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○ There are a few applications you should definitely think twice about installing on your computer

○ If you have old installations still running on your system, it's time to consider uninstalling them.

○ If you do need to use them for some reason, start looking for updates or alternatives.

- Let's start with the most important software on your computer – the operating system.

- If you're a Windows user and <u>not</u> running Windows 11, you're no longer supported or receiving updates or soon will be.

  - Windows 7 support ended on January 14, 2020

  - Windows 8.1 support ended on January 10, 2023

  - Windows 10 support scheduled to end October 14, 2025

○ Our computers help us check email, connect with family & friends, manage finances, order online and stay informed.

○ To efficiently accomplish this our computer's need the right software.

○ Some programs can slow down your computer, cause problems, or even put your information at risk.

Windows Up-to-Date? This is Important!

- Think of your Windows operating system as the foundation of your computer.

- Older versions of Windows (like Windows 7 and 8.1) no longer receive important security updates.

- Without these updates, your computer is more vulnerable to viruses and online threats.

- Recommendation: If you're using Windows 7 or 8.1, consider upgrading to Windows 11.

- <u>Is Your Antivirus Slowing You Down?</u>

Some older antivirus programs can use a lot of your computer's resources and slow down your computer.

1. Shady marketing practices

2. Continuous upsells

3. Auto Renew - pricey

4. Bloated with unwanted features

○ Windows Defender is sufficient protection for most users.

1. Free and built into Windows 10 & 11

2. Solid Basic Protection

3. Actively Monitors

4. Deeply integrated with Windows

5. Firewall, parental controls, phishing (Edge)

6. Minimal performance hit

- Practicing safe online habits (like not clicking on suspicious links) is also crucial.

- Modern browsers – Edge, Chrome, Firefox – offer some safe browsing features and warnings

- Be aware – scams are becoming increasingly sophisicated

○ Use only <u>one</u> AV program - having too many causes unknown interactions.

1. Conflicts — system instability

2. False positives and conflicting actions

3. Self Defense conflicts — see each other as threat

- **"**Magic Fix-It" Programs for Your Registry:

  - Be Careful!

  - Some programs claim to speed up your computer by "cleaning" the registry (a central database in Windows).

  - Microsoft itself advises against using these programs.

  - Messing with the registry can cause serious problems if you don't know what you're doing, potentially making your computer unusable.

Registry cleaners are unnecessary at best and harmful at worst.

Microsoft itself advises against using them. Why?

- Any performance improvement is usually very small and not worth the risk.

- It's best to leave the registry alone.

- If your registry is damaged you may be be unable to start your computer

Avoid Driver Update Utilities

Those "*your drivers are out of date*!" alerts are just scare tactics to get you to pay for upgrades you don't need.

Unless you're having a specific problem with a device, you don't need to obsess over updating drivers. Modern systems manage critical updates automatically

Windows Update will **install critical updates** automatically.

If you do need to update a driver, get it **straight from the manufacturer's website** – not some shady third-party program.

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Performance Boosters

"**PC optimizer**" programs should be avoided

Why?

1. They don't **actually boost performance**.

2. They're buggy, bloated messes that often **slow your PC down**!

3. They **can't do anything** that actually matters for speed, like *overclocking/optimize*

RAM timings / adjusting power settings.

These programs **prey on folks** who don't know any better. Don't be one of them!

Need **real speed boosts**?

Here's what to do instead:

• Install an SSD –

• Free up disk space – Disk Cleanup

• Max out your RAM – Real Minimum 8 GB

• Crucial.com – see upgrades

• Keep Windows lean & up-to-date

• Avoid installing junk that slows you down

• Disable excessive start up programs

• Manage Background Processes

• Task Manager

- The only time you might need a PC maintenance app is for stubborn program uninstalls.

  - Create Restore Point prior to install

- For that, use Revo Uninstaller. It's *free* and can remove every trace of a program.

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<u>Unreliable VPNs</u>

VPNs are necessary for things like **bypassing geo-blocking** or **accessing region-locked** content.

They're also important for security when **using public Wi-Fi**.

But be careful about which VPN you trust with your data!

Many popular options have **had major security breaches** and **data leaks** that they tried to hide, opt for a no logs policy VPN provider

In general you get what you pay for with FREE VPN's

Manufacturer Bloatware

If you've ever bought a prebuilt system from the likes of *MSI*, *Dell*, *HP*, or *Lenovo*, you know the pain of manufacturer bloat.

These systems often come loaded with **unnecessary** "security" software and trials that do nothing but slow down your machine. Pointless utilities and "*security*" software that nag you with constant pop-ups, annoying trials that pester you to upgrade, and all sorts of sponsored stuff you never asked for.

And don't forget all the bloat Microsoft themselves crams into Windows these days.

Apps like *OneDrive* that's constantly indexing your files and **slowing down your drives**.

Teams, *Xbox apps*, *widgets*, and all sorts of other junk that most people never use.

When you get a new PC, treat **removing all that garbage** as step one.

Your system will run so much better without it!

Bundleware

Ever breezed through an installation, mindlessly clicking "*Next*," when suddenly a weird toolbar pops up in your browser?

That's *bundleware* – **unwanted programs sneakily** included in an installer.

To avoid this "bonus" junk:

1. **ALWAYS** choose the "*custom*" installation option

2. **Carefully** read each screen before clicking

3. **Untick** any extra add-ons they try to sneak in

Trust me, taking an extra minute here will save you hours of frustration later.

Wi-Fi "Speed Up" Apps

- "*Wi-Fi Speed Booster*" apps seldom do anything to speed up your Wi-Fi

- The ONLY way to truly speed up your Wi-Fi is to **optimize your network setup.**

  - Upgrading hardware – router etc.

  - Router placement – Wi-Fi Analyzer apps to identify signal strength

  - Minimizing interference – Channel optimization apps

  - Increase internet bandwidth (from ISP)

- Be sure to use the latest most up to date version of your preferred browser

- Avoid unreliable or intrusive extensions – adware, data harvester's

- Browser and Browser Extensions

  - The Good: Why Browser Extensions Can Be Helpful

    - Ad Blockers – Improve browsing speed and reduce distractions.

    - Password Managers – Securely store and autofill login credentials.

    - Grammar & Productivity Tools – Help with writing, organization, and efficiency.

    - Privacy Enhancers – Block trackers and improve online security.

- **The Risks: <u>Why Some Extensions Are Dangerous</u>**

  - **Data Collection – Some extensions track browsing habits or sell user data.**
  - **Malware & Spyware – Malicious extensions can inject ads, steal credentials, or hijack search queries.**
  - **Excessive Permissions – Some ask for more access than necessary, putting privacy at risk.**
  - **Performance Issues – Poorly coded extensions can slow down your browser.**

Complicated Image/Video Editors

If you want to **edit your photos and videos like a pro,** you can download editors with more buttons and sliders than the cockpit of a 747.

Most of us just need to do some basic tweaking – a little cropping here, a little brightness adjustment there. Photos app which is part of Windows 11

Bloated PDF Readers

Adobe Acrobat Reader used to be a must-have back when PDFs were a new thing.

But now It's become loaded with features most people never touch.

These days **your browser's built-in PDF viewer is fine** most things.

It's quick, clean, and doesn't try to install a bunch of extra junk.

<u>Unreliable Password Managers</u>

You *need* a password manager. No ifs, ands, or buts about it.
But which one should you trust?

Do your research on security breaches and data compromises.

- **Bitwarden** – A trusted open-source password manager with a great reputation

- **KeePass** – Another solid option, especially if you're tech-savvy and want to self-host – local, does not store on cloud

Social Media Apps

Social media apps have some real privacy concerns

Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, TikTok… the list goes on.

They gobble up space on your PC, and there are some real privacy concerns.

Podcaster Joe Rogan pointed out, some apps like TikTok monitor **keystroke patterns** and **even record from your mic** without permission.

Between the privacy concerns and lack of unique features, it may be **best to delete those** and **use the web versions** instead.

Keep It Clean and Lean

At the end of the day, we all want our PCs to run as fast and smooth.

But installing a bunch of junky programs is not the answer. Instead, **focus on keeping your system clean and lean**.

Uninstall programs you don't use regularly, keep your OS and drivers up to date and be selective about what you install in the first place.

When installing a new app, be cautious of blindly hitting next – observe check boxes and important information small fonts

Questions?