

## Willie's Wonkey Computer Factory

One of the more common questions I'm asked is 'why has my computer slowed down?' The answer is usually quite simple.....**you have kids.** Kids get into all sorts of things on a computer which usually ends with them loading a piece of software. This piece of software then tries to be helpful and loads itself up ready to go every time you switch on. I'm talking mobile phones, Messenger, i-Tunes, Quick Time, MP3 players, all manner of stuff that as well as hogging the memory and processor, makes it seem like an age for Windows to load up. I'm of the opinion that if you want to use a piece of software – you tell it when. You wouldn't expect all your friends to come round every day and sit about the house, just in case you wanted to go out? No, you ask them when you are ready to!

For the simplest, least technical solution, lets start with Start. Behind the Start button is a list of Programs, in there is a folder called 'Startup' Open it up and have a look, there may be a whole load of stuff, from MS Office, Adobe this, HP that, to camera, printer, scanner, phone software. The only one you really need is for your wireless network card (if there is one there) so delete the rest from that folder (right click - delete). They are only shortcuts, you are not deleting any programs. Now have a look bottom right taskbar, beside the clock. What do you have there? Apart from your anti-virus, volume control, LAN connection and Sidebar (in Vista) anything else has pretty much muscled in. If these programs didn't appear in the Startup folder then you have to open them up and look for 'Options' or 'Settings' or 'Preferences' Somewhere in there is 'Run when Windows starts up' or similar – uncheck the box next to it and next time you start Windows – it won't! Go through them all, particularly the mobile phone stuff, cameras, scanners etc and stop them from starting automatically. They still exist in the Program Files list behind the Start button, ask them round when **you** want. Your kids will still find them.

Reboot your computer and hopefully you will notice an improvement! You can take this further by using the 'Disc Cleanup' and 'Defrag' programs that come with Windows (see under 'Help'), Routinely deep scan with your antivirus and spyware program and uninstall all unused programs. If you want more real teckie advice – Google 'speed up my computer' – but be warned there's real geek stuff in there – don't tinker with what you don't understand!!

### Web-Watch

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[www.kidrex.org](http://www.kidrex.org)  
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