



Work smarter, not harder: 5 ways to maximize your storage

There's nothing more frustrating than running low on computer storage. You're constantly fielding annoying notifications or having to restart your machine. The programs you rely on frequently freeze and crash. Worst case, you run the risk of losing your most important files and company data.

When small businesses get to this point, it can severely inhibit growth. You may think the only way out is to purchase a new device or costly storage solution. But there's an alternative.

Simply clearing out the clutter helps your entire system run more smoothly. Walk your employees through these five fixes to make better use of their hard drive space and maximize your digital real estate.

1



Back up
rarely-used data
on an external
hard drive

Some files are just dead weight. Still, that doesn't mean you have to completely part with them. As a rule of thumb, if you haven't accessed a file in the last 6-12 months, it's probably a good candidate for your external hard drive. This not only keeps a computer's data safely backed up in case something happens to the device, it also frees up space for more crucial programs.

Once your rarely used files are fully backed up, simply delete them from your computer.

2



Run the Disk
Cleanup utility

If you're looking for a way to instantly free up a gigabyte or two of memory, try the Disk Cleanup utility. It scans and flags unneeded elements like temporary internet files, items you've placed in the recycle bin and other unnecessary info. Don't worry though. You'll still have the option to compress them or delete them individually, and both options can free up a significant amount of space. After your first purge, set up the Disk Utility system maintenance app to automatically run monthly.

Though most machines have this option built in, there are other free, third-party programs that also have the ability to analyze and optimize your hard drive.

3



Remove
pre-installed
applications

Being bloated is uncomfortable. It's also unnecessary, especially for your machine. According to [Techopedia](#), "Bloatware is software that has unnecessary features that use large amounts of memory and RAM...Bloatware is also a slang term for numerous programs that are pre-installed on new PCs. Many of these programs are 'lite' or limited trial versions designed to entice new users to buy or subscribe to the full-featured versions."

So what should you do? Get rid of them. Look for reputable programs like the aptly-named [PC Decrapifier](#) to seek out and eradicate these memory hogs.

4



Delete any
duplicates

Duplicated content is really wasteful. Photos are particularly guilty of repeatedly maxing out your system's memory. Given that we collectively take more than [a trillion digital photos](#) a year, is it really any wonder they take up such significant space? Most people don't have time to scroll through the thousands of pictures stored on their hard drive, but thankfully they don't have to. If you're sick of seeing double, download an app like [Duplicate Photo Cleaner](#) or [Easy Duplicate Finder](#) to single out and delete duplicate photos.

You can do the same for duplicate files by using a program like [Duplicate Cleaner](#).

5



Turn off
hibernation
mode

You probably don't think much about your computer once it goes to sleep or you close the lid. But what may appear to be a restful state could actually be clogging up your hard drive. If your computer is set to hibernation mode, it places any open programs or documents to your hard drive. However, you can prevent your current work from taking up unnecessary space on your machine by changing the sleep settings in your control panel.

Limited hard drive space doesn't have to feel restrictive. With a little maintenance you can keep your computer clutter-free and help it run at peak performance.