



DIGITAL CLEANING

While physical cleaning is a must, we must stop ignoring its digital counterpart

OVERVIEW



Most of us had a blast last month, celebrating **Belize's 41st Independence Day**, setting up decorations in an effort to declare heritage to our beloved country. Now that we are left with taking down our garlands, there's a desire to do some cleaning.



While it might be easy to see the need to purge and tidy up, realizing the need to also digitally declutter isn't so apparent. The difference is, digital clutter isn't easily seen. You can't see, touch, or feel it. But it's there, in the corner of your gadgets. Most people will consider it a small problem, but this small problem can grow into a big one if you do nothing about it.

Take this scenario for example:

One day, your boss urgently asks you to find an important file on your PC. Because your PC is such a mess, you have a hard time finding the file. It gets worse when your PC lags and runs slow. The tension builds up, stress level rise, and there goes a good day at work.



Digital clutter has a real impact on your work performance and productivity, and what better time to start doing some digital cleaning than **NOW**. Here are some quick tips to get your digital life in order and establish new digital habits:

BACKUPS



We listed this step first because, in the long run, it's one of the most important and a step you want to take before moving on to the others. No matter how safe or secure you are, at some point, you will most likely need backups to recover your important information.

While our work PCs at Big Creek Group are being backed up regularly by the IT Department, can we say the same for our personal and home devices.

Creating and scheduling automatic backups ensures you can recover your most important information. Most mobile devices have backup features, ensure that you have these features setup which will allow you to restore if needs be.

EMAIL CLEANUP

**Clean your
inbox of emails
you don't need.**

Then Keep It Clean



Perform an email file purge. Delete what you don't need, and organize what you do. Pay particular attention to any sensitive documents.

- Unsubscribe from irrelevant newsletters

Taking the time to unsubscribe from newsletters that are no longer relevant to you and that you never open anymore will do wonders for your inbox.

- Clean out your inbox

After you go on an unsubscribing spree, the next step is to rearrange your inbox. Remove all the spam, junk, as well as outdated newsletters and messages. A cleaner inbox will make it easier for you to find important emails.

APPS
















Delete any unused programs or apps from your mobile devices and computers. Some apps require large amounts of storage, can introduce new vulnerabilities, and may even slow things down. The fewer apps you have, the more secure your system and your information.

Many devices show you how long it has been since you've used an app – if it has more than a few months, chances are you don't need it.

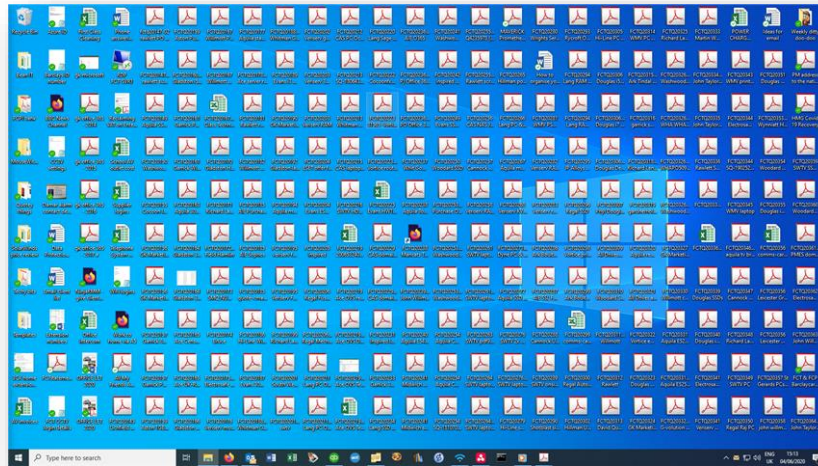
ORGANIZE YOUR FOLDERS

- After uninstalling unused apps, you also need to delete files you no longer need.
- Ensure that all files and folders are named according to their content, so you can find them easier and more efficiently when needed.
- Keep your eyes on your **Downloads** folder. Every time you download something from the Internet it is stored in this folder. Remember to always move the downloaded file to its designated folder right away, before the **Downloads** folder becomes a file graveyard.

** Try to clean your folders every other month.*

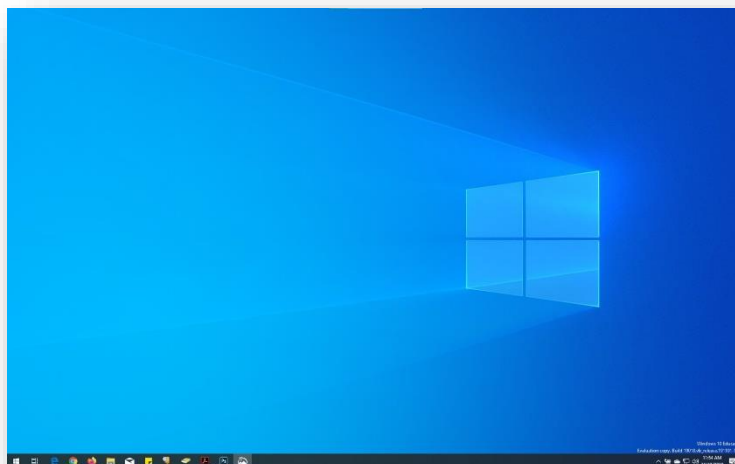
Name	Name
▼  Business	▼  Personal
▼  Clients	▶  Family
▶  Archive	▶  Finance
▼  Finance	▶  Health
▶  Accounting	▶  Home
▶  Banking	▼  Media
▶  Insurance	▶  Music
▶  Taxes	▶  Photos
▼  Operations	▶  Video
▶  HR	▶  Projects
▶  Legal	
▶  Management	
▶  Team	

KEEP YOUR SCREEN SIMPLE AND CLEAN



Imagine going to a library, where all the books that you need are already on the table. Yes, it'll be much easier for you to find the book that you need, but can you fully focus on reading one book, where all the other books that interest you are there to grab?

The same applies to your desktop screen. While keeping the shortcuts of apps on the screen helps you to find them instantly, it can get messy real fast. Instead, keep your screen clean from any documents and software. If you want to find an app, just use the Search Box on the Start menu.



UPDATE



Update your software regularly, when a new software is available, install it right away. Enable automatic updating whenever possible.

Updates usually:

- Come with bug fixes, which prevents your device from lagging.
- Adds security patches, which helps avert hackers and malware from infiltrating your device.
- Adds new features and improvements to make your device run smoother.

SOCIAL MEDIA

WHILE NOT AT WORK

Check out your online presence and own it. Review your privacy settings and delete any photos and videos that are no longer accessed or needed. You can also search for yourself on a search engine and see what information is out there about you. Remember, it's fine to limit how much information you share, and even with whom you choose to share it with.

WHILE AT WORK

We cannot stress this enough, turn off your notifications while working, otherwise they become an additional distraction that make it impossible to focus on the task at hand.

Getting social media notifications while working can ruin your focus and work rhythm. Science has found that after checking your phone while working, your brain will work slower for the next 15 to 30 minutes. If you check your phone 5 times, just do the math. It's around 2.5 hours of productive time wasted!

If you want to thrive in your workspace, stop watching YouTube and taking a peek on your social media accounts while working. Focus on tasks at hand, then you can have your rewards later when the goals are achieved.

PHYSICAL CLEANING



Although the focus is on digital cleaning, we cannot forget about physical cleaning, as they go hand in hand.

Clean out your desk drawer, wipe any old hard drives and USBs, and perhaps even destroy any sticky notes with too much information. Consider investing in a document shredder if you don't have one.

CONCLUSION



While this may appear to be a daunting task, rest assured your devices and information will be far more protected. If this seems like a lot to do, consider choosing just a few items, or try to check off one item per day or week. Every little step goes a long way in protecting you.

The whole point of digital cleaning is to make your device work smoother and to get rid of distractions that can interrupt your focus. When you focus solely on the tasks at hand, you'll be able to finish it faster and better.