

LESSON 14

FASTER WINDOWS BOOT-UP SCANDISK& DEFRAG PROGRAMS

When your computer starts up, it goes through POST, or POWER ON SELF TEST. After POST, you'll see STARTING WINDOWS 95 on your screen. A two second delay is built in at this point, to give you adequate time to press F8 if you want to get to the BOOT-UP menu. You can eliminate this delay. Here's what to do.

Double-click on My Computer, then double-click on the C Drive icon. Find MSDOS.SYS and right-click it. Select Properties. At the bottom of the dialog box find the "Read Only" checkbox and remove the checkmark by clicking on it. Click on OK. Now double-click on MSDOS.SYS. A dialog box will open. Select NotePad or WordPad to open MSDOS.SYS. In the OPTIONS section add "BOOTDELAY=0" (don't use the quotes) Click on File in the upper left corner of your screen, and click on Save. If you are asked to choose a file type to save with, select Text File. You can go back and reset the MSDOS.SYS file as read only. Your computer will now boot up faster.

Housekeeping? Scandisk and Disk Defragmenter are two utility programs that come with Windows 95. SCANDISK checks and repairs problems on hard drives, floppy drives, RAM drives and removable-media drives. SCANDISK finds any problems in the File Allocation Table (FAT), the Directory Tree, the physical surface of the drive (bad sectors) and on the volume header. SCANDISK also fixes problems with lost clusters and cross-linked files. To run SCANDISK, close all open programs, and click on Start. Select Programs, Accessories, and System Tools. Left click on SCANDISK. Select the drive to be scanned, and check the Fix Errors Automatically box. For a full scan click the Thorough Scan box. Now click on Start.

When Windows 95 saves information to your hard drive, it tries to find a place large enough to store the entire file. Often it can't, and stores the file here and there on various portions of the disk. The file is actually written as many fragments. Over time your hard drive becomes so fragmented that it takes longer for your computer to read or pull up files. The drive has to jump around reading all of the little segments of the file. The File Allocation Table (FAT) tracks these pieces. The Disk Defragmenter utility collects all of the various pieces of each file and makes them contiguous, eliminated space between segments of a given file. To run the Disk Defragmenter, close all program and click on Start. Select Programs, then Accessories, then System Tools. Click on Disk Defragmenter and select the drive to defrag. Now click on Start.

How long has it been since you ran SCANDISK or Disk Defragmenter? Here's an easy way to check. Open My Computer, then click on the drive in question, i.e. Drive C. Right-click on the drive. Select Properties and click on the Tools tab. The tools menu shows you how long it's been since you ran last Scandisk and Disk Defragmenter. You can run them from there.

