

MANAGING "WINDOWS" COMPUTERS IN A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HAS A TECHNOLOGY BUDGET OF "NEAR ZERO"

Objective and Desired Result:

If your non-profit organization (food bank, school, social club, religious organization, charity, political action committee, etc.) has very little money for maintaining technology, you can still keep their computers running with free and low-cost software and computer hardware. Here are some suggestions for maintaining computers in financially-austere situations.

PURCHASE RE-CONDITIONED COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND DONATED SOFTWARE FROM "TECHSOUP.ORG"

Microsoft, Adobe, Corel, and just about every big software maker donates hundreds of copies of their commercial software each year to a non-profit foundation called "TechSoup". Many commercial businesses donate computer and computer-related equipment to "TechSoup". When you buy "pre-owned" computers and donated software from them, you only pay a "processing fee". The prices are awesomely low!

Go to <http://techsoup.org> and get yourself a free account. Then register your non-profit organization with them. Then use them to stretch the limited funds that your non-profit has for making technology purchases.

As an example of their software prices, look at their current price for "Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007":



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the TechSoup website. The page title is "Office Professional Plus 2007 (Includes Software Assurance) - Windows Internet Explorer". The URL in the address bar is <http://home.techsoup.org/stock/pages/proc>. The website features a navigation menu with links for "Login", "Join TechSoup", "About TechSoup", "Register Organization", and "How To Use TechSoup". The TechSoup logo is prominently displayed, along with a search bar and a "Search Our Site" button. A "Register for Product" button is also visible. The main content area is titled "Office Professional Plus 2007 (Includes Software Assurance)" and lists the following details:

- Admin Fee:** \$31.00
- Donor partner:** Microsoft
- Platform:** Windows
- Product ID:** LS-40897
- Format:** CD-ROM by request
- Availability:** Available

A "Feedback" button is located on the right side of the page. The browser's status bar at the bottom indicates a zoom level of 100%.

and their pricing for "Microsoft Office Standard 2010":

Office Standard 2010 (Includes Software Assurance) - Windows Internet Explorer

http://home.techsoup.org/stock/pages/

Find: 2010 Previous Next Options

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Office Standard 2010 (Includes Software Assurance)

Microsoft Office

Admin Fee: \$24.00
Donor partner: Microsoft
Platform: Windows
Product ID: LS-45114
Format: DVD-ROM by request
Availability: Available

http://home.techsoup.org/stock/pages/organization.aspx 100%

*

See

http://home.techsoup.org/stock/pages/product.aspx?cat=techsoup_global_catalog&category=&id=hw-45672

for a Dell "Pentium 4" desktop that runs "Windows XP Professional".

Dell P4 Windows XP Desktop, 2.8 GHz - 3.0 GHz, and Dell or NEC 17-Inch Flat-Panel LCD Monitor



Admin Fee:

\$236.00

Donor partner:

RCI

Platform:

Windows

Product ID:

HW-45672

Format:

Hardware

Availability:

Available

[Log in to add to cart](#)[Description](#)[Related Products and Info](#)[Rules, Eligibility and Restrictions](#)**Description****Computer**

This refurbished desktop computer has a Pentium 4 processor, the 32-bit version of the Windows XP Professional operating system, and the Microsoft Office 2007 Basic office suite. The keyboard and mouse are new, not refurbished.

The computer will meet or exceed these specifications:

Processor speed:

2.8 GHz to 3.0 GHz

RAM:

minimum of 1024 MB

Hard disk:

minimum of 40 GB

Optical disk drive:

CD-ROM

Input devices:

keyboard with numeric keypad and mouse

Power cord:

standard

Interface ports:

Ethernet, USB (multiple), parallel

Office 2007 Basic includes Excel, Outlook, and Word. Organizations that need other Office applications should consult [Microsoft's restrictions](#) to see if they are eligible to request other [Microsoft office tools](#).

This computer has a 32-bit operating system. It will not run 64-bit software applications.

The operating system and Office 2007 Basic are preinstalled by the refurbisher. Microsoft does not allow installation or restoration discs to be distributed with this product.

Monitor

The monitor will meet or exceed the following specifications:

Maximum resolution:

1280x1024 pixels (actual image quality will depend on the computer's video card)

Image brightness:

200 candelas per square meter

Contrast ratio:

400:1

Dot pitch:

0.265 millimeter

Response time:

16 milliseconds

Video input connections:

VGA

Display screen coating:

antiglare

Power cord:

standard

The computer and monitor are covered by a 90-day warranty from the refurbisher.

B

The downside of ordering software, network equipment, and computers from "TechSoup" is the following:

Computer equipment is usually refurbished so the longevity and reliability might vary depending.

"TechSoup" often limits how often a customer can order: For many of their customers they only accept one order every 12 or 24 months.

For their more popular products, customers often have to place a order while the products are "out of stock" and then the order is not filled until the products are donated to "TechSoup".

But you cannot beat their prices, so you should always give "TechSoup" a try when procuring technology items for a non-profit organization!

DO NOT VIOLATE THE "INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS" OF SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

Do not subject yourself and the management of your non-profit organization to the risk of fines and litigation. In addition to legal exposure, using software illegally sets the wrong atmosphere for your non-profit's employees, volunteers,

and donors. It encourages them to do unethical and illegal activities in other areas of endeavor.

The "Business Software Alliance" (<http://bsa.org>) has roving investigators and if they discover each one item of illegally-used software in your non-profit organization, the litigation and resulting fines could easily put your non-profit out of business. Anyone that discovers illegal software in your non-profit organization can trigger an investigation by filling in the online form at <https://reporting.bsa.org/usa/report/add.aspx?>

However, illegal software is totally unnecessary: There is plenty of freeware and open-source software for you to use in any non-profit organization, so that you do not have to do anything illegal.

The following is the best of the best in the way of freeware and open-source software:

USE "FORTICLIENT..FREE EDITION" OR "FORTICLIENT LITE" INSTEAD OF PAYING FOR NON-FREE ANTI-VIRUS/ANTI-MALWARE SOFTWARE

"FortiClient Modular Endpoint Security Free Edition" ("FortiClient") and "FortiClient Lite" are the only free antivirus/antimalware software applications that permit unlimited use by organizations and businesses.

Our detailed instructions for downloading, installing, updating, and using "FortiClient" are located at http://aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/forticlient/forticlient.htm.

FORTICLIENT

General

Status

Connection

Update

Backup/Restore

Log View

Help & Support

AntiVirus

AntiSpam

App Detection

General: Status ?

FortiClient Version: 4.1.3.143 Free Edition FCT8000983300030

Antivirus

Enable real-time protection Enable startup list monitoring

Virus Signatures Version: 12.353 AntiVirus Engine: 4.1.143

Spyware Signatures Version: 1.347 AntiSpyware Engine: 1.0.21

Last scan: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 11:57:01 PM

Update

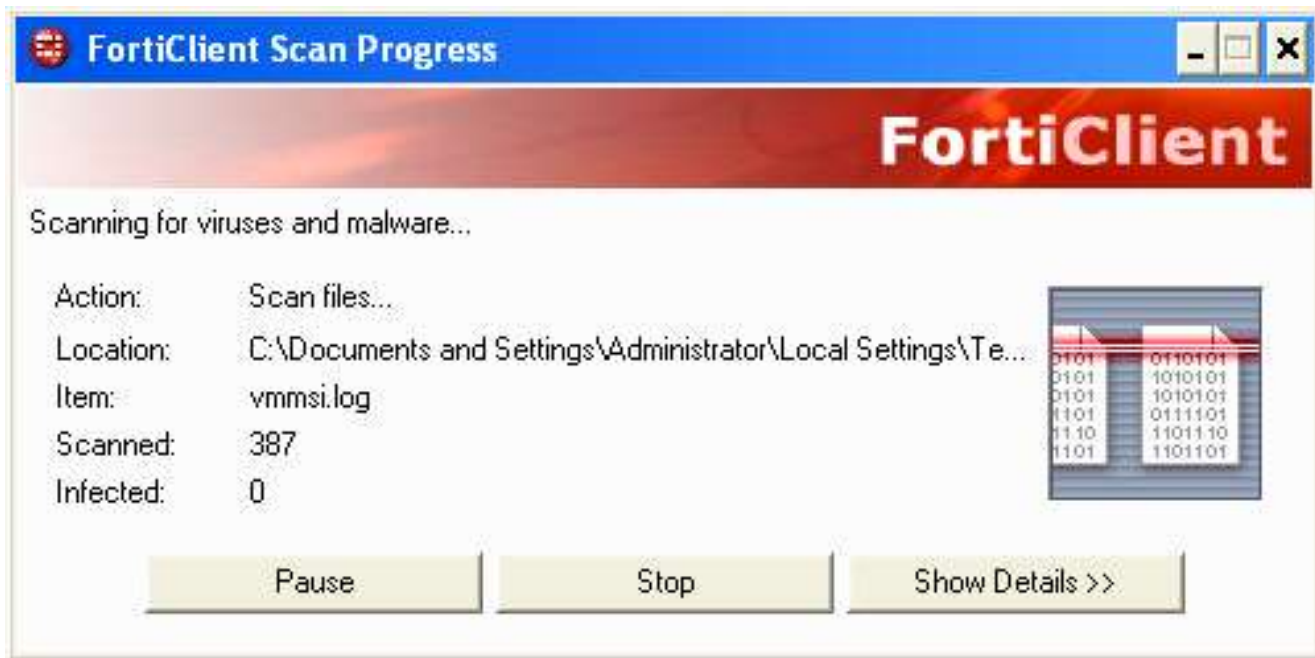
Automatic update: not active

Last successful update: Wednesday, September 15, 2010 12:15:20 AM

Show FortiClient console when I logon into Windows

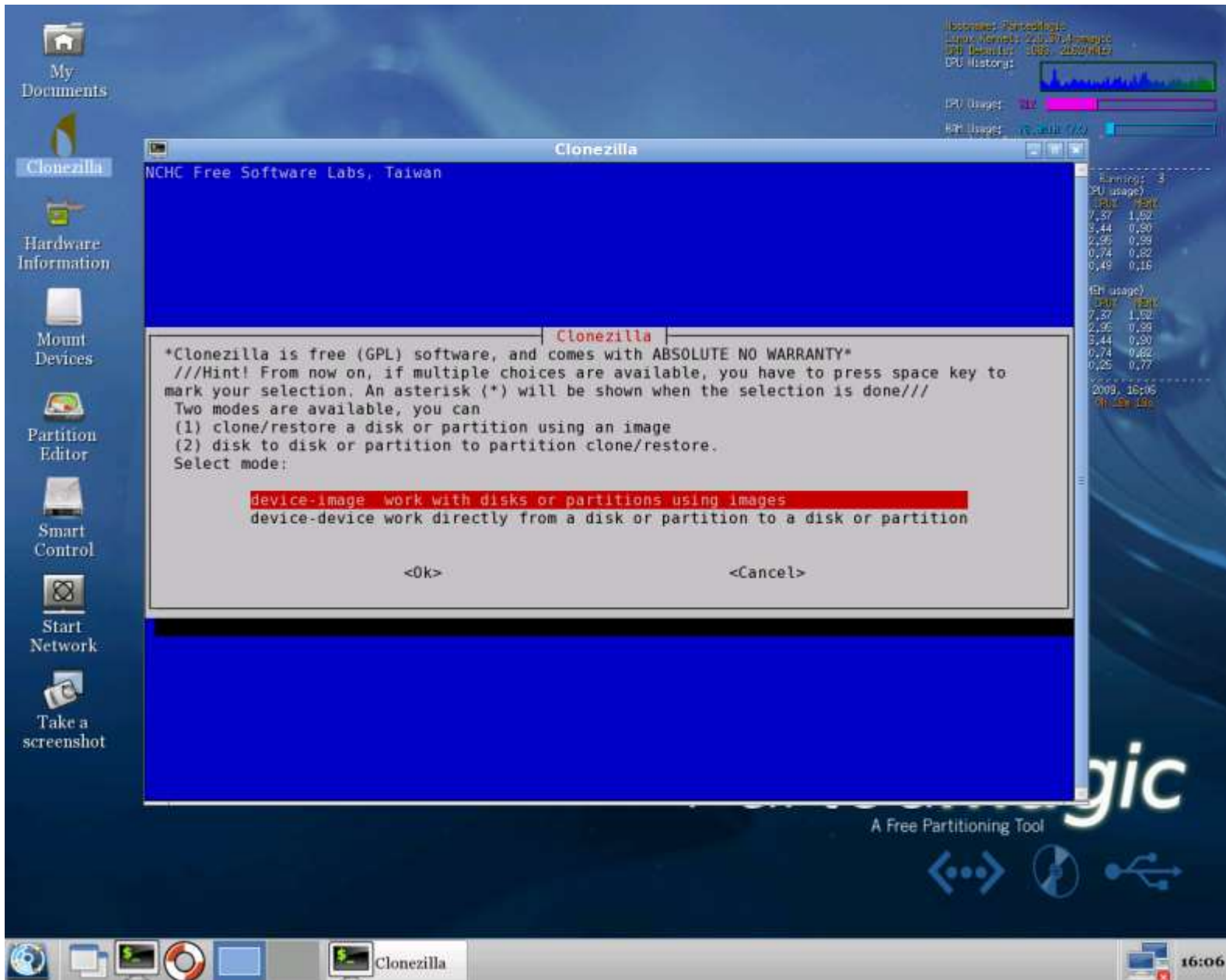
Enter License Key

Lock Settings...



USE "CLONEZILLA" INSTEAD OF PAYING FOR COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE FOR DOING "IMAGE BACKUPS" FOR THE COMPUTERS OF YOUR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

"Clonezilla" is free, open-source software that is used by many companies including "IBM" and many non-profit organizations. It runs from inside a bootable "Parted Magic" LiveCD and it looks like this:



Our step-by-step instructions for using "Clonezilla" to back up ("image") computers are located at http://aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/CZ-backup.pdf

Our step-by-step instructions for using "Clonezilla" to re-store a failed computer are located at http://aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/CZ-restore.pdf

"HEROIC MEASURES" TO UPGRADE SOFTWARE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

With a typically small or non-existent budget for technology, your nonprofit organization's Internet connection might not have enough bandwidth for the unrelenting series of "mandatory updates" that Microsoft, Linux repositories, Apple, antivirus vendors, and third-party software vendors attempt to push into end-user computers. If you rely on "automatic" update processes, your updates might fall hopelessly behind. This leaves the computers at your non-profit organization more vulnerable to malware and viruses.

If the above scenario is descriptive of the situation at your non-profit organization, the only solution is a lot of hard work for the volunteers that are responsible for maintaining the computers:

Use a computer at your home network or at a public library or local college--or anywhere that has a faster Internet connection--and download the operating system, antivirus, and other software updates manually. Then bring these update files on a USB flash drive to your non-profit organization and use these files to update the operating system and antivirus software at the various computers at the non-profit organization.

"HEROIC MEASURES" FOR OLDER AND/OR RAM-CHALLENGED COMPUTERS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

With a typically small or non-existent budget for technology, the slowness your nonprofit organization's computers can severely limit the productivity of the paid and unpaid staff of your non-profit organization. For example, the data entry activity for posting cash and credit card transactions might be severely impacted by constant, annoying display of the Windows hourglass by a slow computer.

To mitigate the negative effects of computer slowness, you can massively increase the speed of your "Windows.." by supersizing their "virtual memory" swap files:

64-BIT VERSIONS OF WINDOWS

If you have 64-bit versions of "Windows..", you can go to "Control Panel"-->"System" --> "Advanced System Settings" --> "Settings" in "Performance"-->"Advanced" tab -->"Change" in order to supersize a "Custom" swap file.

Experiment with different sizes to see how they affect the speed of a specific computer. We have utilized swap files as small as 10000 Megabytes (=10 Gigabytes) and as large as 300000 Megabytes (=300 Gigabytes)!

32-BIT VERSIONS OF "WINDOWS XP"

If you have 32-bit versions of "Windows XP", you usually have to edit the "boot.ini" file by adding

/PAE

to the "Operating System" entry, prior to setting a swap file that is greater than 4095 Megabytes (=4 Gigabytes).

"PAE" stands for "Physical Address Extension" is a Windows kernel extension. In rare instances, you might encounter a processor chip that does not support "PAE" and your computer will only boot in "Safe Mode" with a press of the F8 key during bootup. Once you get into "Safe Mode", you would then have to edit the "boot.ini" file to remove the

/PAE

that you entered in earlier.

32-BIT VERSIONS OF "WINDOWS VISTA" OR "WINDOWS 7"

If you have 32-bit versions of "Windows Vista" or "Windows 7", you can use the free "EasyBCD" software utility to "Force On" PAE:

Start the "EasyBCD" program.

Click on "Advanced Settings".

Click on the "Advanced Tab".

Used the drop-down list button at the right end of the "PAE Support" field to select "Force Enable".

Click on "Save Settings".

Reboot your computer.

Now you can go to

"Control Panel"-->"System" --> "Advanced System Settings" --> "Settings" in "Performance"-->"Advanced" tab -->"Change"

in order to supersize a "Custom" swap file.

ADDITIONAL TWEAKS TO SPEED UP SLUGGISH "WINDOWS.." COMPUTERS

"Speeding Up Windows Vista":

[PowerPoint .PPT format](#) [Adobe .PDF format](#)

"Speeding Up Windows 7":

[PowerPoint .PPT format](#) [Adobe .PDF format](#)

"Speeding Up Windows XP":

[PowerPoint .PPT format](#) [Adobe .PDF format](#)

"Turn Off Startup Programs to Speed Up Your Windows Computer":

[PowerPoint .PPT format](#) [Adobe .PDF format](#)

[Supersize The Swap File To Get More Speed and Reliability from "Windows.."](#)

[Benchmarking "Windows.." Computers for Free](#)

[Remove Blue Highlight from Desktop Icon Text in Windows XP](#)