

## How To Control What Programs Run When Windows XP Starts

Using a computer can be either a blessing or a curse. It's a blessing to be able to do so many things so easily. When Windows XP boots up, especially if you've owned your computer a while (but even on new machines sometimes) tons of programs start popping up. This can be a major annoyance, especially if they are programs you don't even use! Things like this are examples of why computers can be a curse. The beauty of it is that you can take control. Here's how! You'd be surprised how many programs are running at start up. To find out and control them simply click START and go to Run. Type msconfig in the space provided and then click OK. A larger box will appear in the center of your screen and at the top of this box it says 'System Configuration Utility.' The General tab is already open and is offering you three choices under 'Startup Selection.' Choose 'Selective Startup' by clicking the little circle next to it (a small green dot will appear inside the circle). Ignore the other options under Selective Startup (and do not change their default settings). Do not press OK yet! Look near the top where all of the tabs are (General, SYSTEM.INI, etc.) and click on the tab that says 'Startup.' This is a list of all the programs that will run when Windows XP loads. You can use the scroll bar located on the right to look through this list. Simply left-click the scroll bar with your mouse and pull the mouse up or down to scroll through the list. When you see a program you don't use (such as a messaging program) click the box on the left of its name so that the checkmark disappears. Boxes with checkmarks tell a program to run when Windows starts; boxes without checkmarks tell the program not to run. If you are unsure what a certain program is, type its name into your favorite search engine such as Google to find out what it is. If you've had your computer for a while, some of these programs may even be spyware or viruses. You can effectively stop some malicious process from running by doing this. However, just because you don't recognize something doesn't mean it's bad. It may be something you need. Look it up online before you disable it! Once you have chosen which ones to run or not run, click OK. A dialog will prompt you to Restart. (Make sure you have saved any work you have open, such as emails or Word docs, first before restarting.) If you are unsure, choose 'Exit Without Restart,' then restart manually when you are ready. Manual restart is done by going to START and choosing Turn Off Computer, then choose Restart. After restarting, your computer will remind you that you have chosen Selective Startup when Windows starts up. Do this regularly and your computer will run faster and more smoothly!

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