

How to get rid of Windows temporary files

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*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

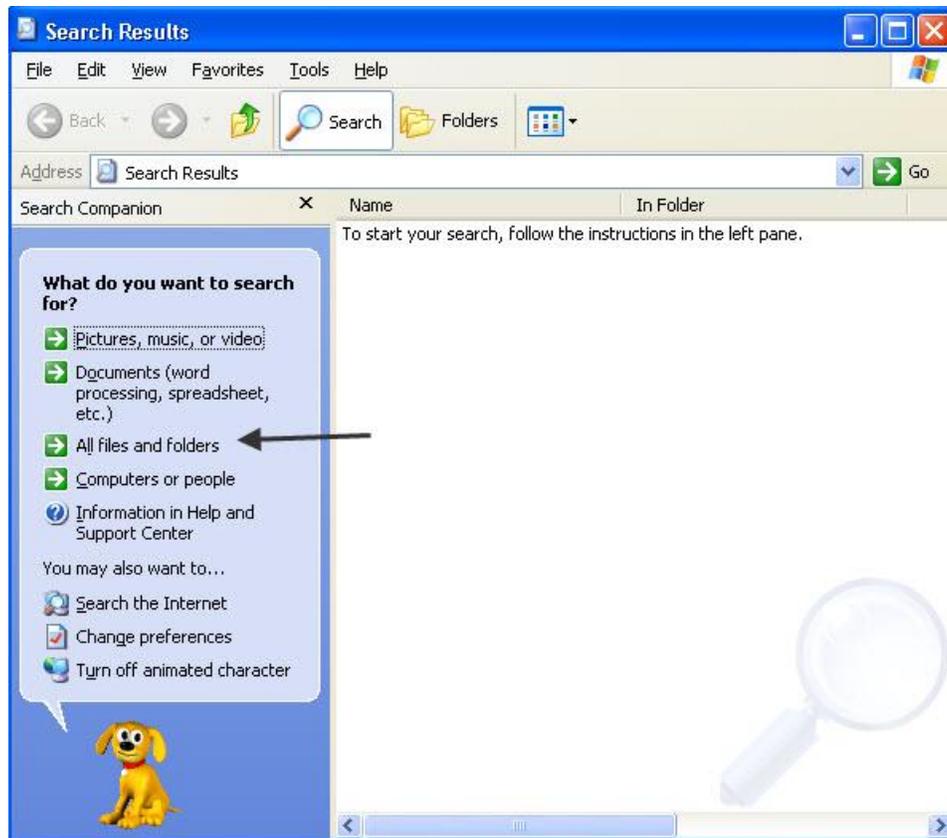
QUESTION: I receive many e-mails with attachments which I download to a folder called Temporary Files. How do I delete the Temporary Files? I know it's slowing down my PC. Thanks.

PC CLUB: I don't believe that Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7 normally has a folder named Temporary Files. If you have a folder with that name, either you or perhaps some program may have created it. However, there are folders named Temp and Temporary Internet files. That doesn't mean that you don't have such a folder, however. To delete the contents of that specific folder it's necessary to first locate it.

In Windows XP, click Start then select Search. In the left column, select "All files and folders," as pictured below. Change the "Look in:" to "Local Hard Drives (C:)" and at the top where it asks for "All or part of file name:" enter the name of the folder that you or searching for. In your case type "temporary files." Next, click Search.

Results of the search will appear on the right where you can select the item and note its location. To open the folder location, right-click the entry and select open. From there you can review the contents and delete any files that you no longer require.

For a detailed tutorial on using the Windows Search function see instructions from a Georgetown University page at "[How to use Windows XP: Using the Search Tool.](#)" (link: <http://bit.ly/1GcWHW>).



In Windows Vista, click Start then select Search. Enter your search in the box at the top right and select the Advanced button. Make sure the Location is set to your C drive and place a check in the box labeled “Include non-indexed, hidden and system files.”

It’s unlikely that files in a folder named temporary files will slow down your PC but it may increase the time it takes for Anti-Virus or Anti Spyware programs to scan your PC.

Temporary Internet Files

There is another location that accumulates files called “Temporary Internet files.” This folder should be cleaned up on a regular basis. I recommend weekly. You don’t have to know where the location of this folder is though. It can be easily cleaned by doing the following:



Open Internet Explorer

- 1.
2. Select Tools
3. Select Internet Options
4. On the General tab, select "Settings" in the Browsing history area
5. Select "View Files" to see all the temporary files stored in your computer. Many will be cookies.

The reason you do not have to know the location is that there are several safe ways to clean this folder. One way is to click the Delete button in the Browsing history section. An even better way is to download and install the free program called CCleaner at www.ccleaner.com.

The safest way to keep your PC clean is to rely on a program such as this rather than to search on your own and possibly delete the wrong files.

Temp folder

Another location that accumulates files is the temp folder. In fact, there may be several of these but the one used mainly by Windows can be located by clicking Start, Run and entering %temp% in the box labeled Open and clicking the OK button. From here you can delete the contents of this folder. If there is no Run command on your Start menu, press the Windows key and tap the R key.

The temporary internet folder, believe it or not, stores a copy of every web page that you view and some nasty stuff can lurk there. It's especially important to clean out this folder prior to using any malware removal tools.

Regarding saving attachments, you should create a folder and call it "downloads" or "attachments," for example, to store your saved attachments. This will keep them isolated from any of the Windows temporary folders. You can also create sub-folders to organize your attachments by type or any other category. This requires a little discipline but it is well worth it. - *Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwards.com.*