

PC messed up? How to avoid future frustration

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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 had restored my computer to its original state after I had virus problems. Once restored, I removed programs I knew I did not use that came as trial versions with the original computer. Now, when I boot up my computer, I get the message, "Insert disk for QuickBooks simple." I had removed this program at the beginning, and there is no disk for it.

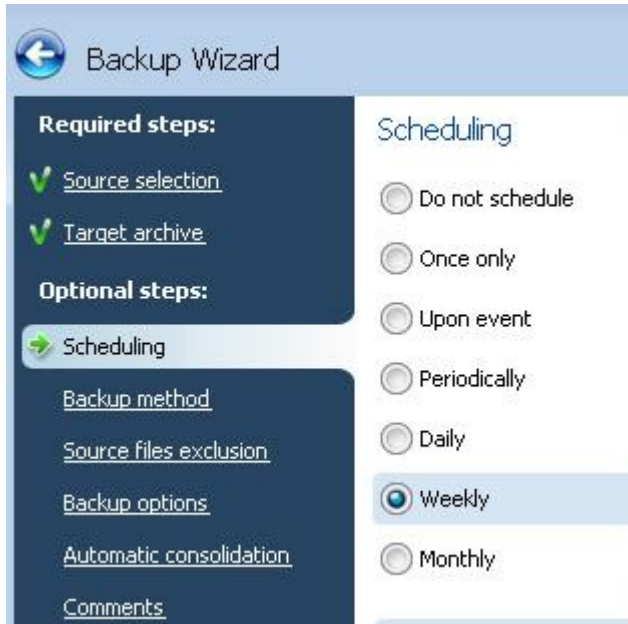
I have looked in the startup menu and there is nothing for this program. How do I delete the computer wanting to run this? Are there other auto startup folders I can get to in order to delete this program request?

PC CLUB: First of all, I run into quite a few people nowadays that need to restore or "refresh" their PCs for one reason or another. Mostly because their PCs have become infected with malware which includes viruses, spyware, trojans, etc. Sometimes it needs to be restored because it's running too slowly and the user does not have the time or patience to deal with it. In fact, one radio talk show host who is a PC guru recommends doing this annually. I do this myself periodically and it is always a chore — but worth it when I'm done. Some of the information that follows has been partially covered in previous articles but this is a popular and important topic.

I assume from your question that you used a CD or DVD supplied by the manufacturer to restore your PC. This leaves you with at least three major tasks: removing unwanted software, installing your favorite anti-virus program and downloading the latest Microsoft patches or updates.

When you remove unwanted software, you can leave some files behind that will continue to run and perhaps annoy you as is the case with the QuickBooks

program. You should also read two past Stump the PC Club articles on controlling startup programs: “[How to control startup programs, Part 1](#)“ tackles the various places to look for these programs, while “[How to control Windows startup programs, Part 2](#)“ will show you how to identify them and how to disable them using a free tool. Follow the steps to disable the QuickBooks message.



There is a way to avoid all of this and that is to use a disk imaging program such as the \$49.99 [Acronis True Image](#) (at www.acronis.com and pictured on right) or the \$79.95 [Shadow Protect](#), (at storagecraft.com) to backup your PC onto an external drive.

In this case, if you get into a state where the only option is to restore your PC, you can restore it within a matter of minutes and be back where you were prior to the problem. This eliminates the need to perform all of the tasks discussed above. You should also backup your data frequently to an external hard drive. External hard drives are becoming very affordable and no one with any photos, e-mail or other data on their PC should be without one.

Be sure when you purchase a new machine that you find out how to restore your PC to its original condition. More and more PCs are sold without any CDs or DVDs. The restoration software is usually stored on a small partition of the hard drive. You will need to know how to use this in case of a computer crash unless you use a disk imaging program. Remember, when you use the manufacturer's restore program, your PC is restored to the state when you purchased it. If you purchased it a year ago, you face a lot of work reinstalling programs and downloading many Microsoft updates.

But keep in mind, there are some PCs that supply no restore media. Instead, they provide an option for creating a set of restore disks, usually DVDs. If you fail

to do this and your PC crashes, you will have to order a set of disks from the manufacturer. That means waiting for the disks to be mailed and they aren't usually free.

On the other hand, if you use disk imaging software, you create a backup image weekly or monthly. When you restore your system, you only go back in time one week or one month leaving you with very little if any updating to perform. And the entire restoration takes less than 30 minutes. *~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member.*
View his blog at www.edwardns.com/blog.