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Niels describes the world

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The Windows computer as a restaurant

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People often attend me in computer affairs and in many cases I hear: My computer gets slower and slower. I think it is broken, I need to get a new one. I suppose every computer salesman would do this gladly and maybe even give the advice to do so (?!). When I take a closer look at the computer, often the only thing I can say is, everything works fine. The problems have another reason.

But if I start to describe the situation, I look into clueless faces after two or three sentences.

Maybe my description wasn't very clearly, though I always try to paint a picture without computers. On the other hand the computer is one of the most multifunctional devices you could imagine.

Almost everyone can operate such a thing nowadays, but what happens in the background, the least know and spend (I fear) more money on it as necessary.

### **The Windows computer as a restaurant:**

To show the principles of operation of a computer to a layman without the use of in-house jargon, I want to compare the computer with a restaurant.

It's a rather unusual restaurant. You might guess it, when you enter, because the name of the guest is asked. This is a special service, cause every guest gets his meal served on a plate with his name on it (Windows database of registry. Short: registry).

The waiter is the processor and serves the guests, which are the installed programs on the computer. He mainly has to serve two types of guests. The first group is sitting patiently at their tables, waiting for the clerk to take their orders. These are programs that won't work until you want to use them, and only occupy a place at the table (hard disk).

The second kind of guests is far more stressing for the waiter, since they call for him all of the time, ordering a

new meal, or a refill. These are programs, that start themselves up with Windows and ask for the processors (waiter) attention all of the time. In some cases, as e.g. a virus-scanner, this absolutely makes sense.

But there is a third group, that permanently occupies a few tables of the restaurant and this is the kitchen staff (Windows). The employees also want to eat something and got no break room, so they sit at the tables of the guests too. They are noisy as well, since they believe they got the highest rights as staff.

But it doesn't makes sense now, to fire the cook to get another guest into the restaurant, because nobody would cook the meals.

That's the starting situation, the new computer. Everything is fresh and clean, ready to serve the first guests.

Another characteristic of the guests is, that they only leave the tavern if they are ordered to (deinstallation):

But there aren't many occupied tables in the restaurant by now, so new guests easily find a seat. The waiter gets orders in no time, and the food is on the table soon after.

The more guests sit at the tables, the more the waiter has to walk and in that case, the noisy guests get especially annoying.

But the Windowsrestaurant got some special issues, that may occur after some time. The waiter brings the food, but he never cleans the tables. This the guests should do on their own and put their plates on a conveyor belt to be transported to the dishwasher in the kitchen.

Most guests do so, but not all. But even the guests who do, maybe fiddle some sauce about the tablecloth.

The more disorderly guests just push their dishes to the side of the table and leave.

*Translation to in-house jargon: With the installation programs sign up into the registry and with deinstallation these entries should be deleted. But often there are remains left behind.*

The waiter doesn't clean the tables, but when he gets along (windows start-up), he looks who owns the dishes. By the time he gets a lot to read.

Some guests, that have been invited, bring a good friend with them. A naughtiness that escalates more and more. That way an anti-virus program installs a web browser too, a video codec comes along with an video shop and so on. On most computers I see, there are multiple Browsers and instant messengers installed of which the users mostly not even know, least using them.

Let's assume the tables in our restaurant all got 4 chairs around them. Now a group of five friends appears, that wants to have a cosy meal together. It's five friends, but only four chairs. No problem, we all know that. You fetch one chair from the neighbouring table and everyone got a seat.

Next comes a family of four and wants to sit down at the table with the three chairs. They could get a chair from another table, but the fifth friend sits very closely to the table of the family that it would be a serious crowd. With a heavy heart, the mother takes a seat at some other table. The family now is separated, but they still can wave at each other and will leave the restaurant together later on.

A couple asks for vacant places at the mothers table and joins her. The bowling-club, that enters soon after, takes the last chair away, pushes two tables together and gets some more free chairs. The waiter has to go slalom through the chairs and now needs a bit more time, but nobody puts the chairs back to their original places.

Thus the manager has to set up by himself (defragmentation), although the newest restaurants could do it on their own. Usually after closing time, e.g. every Wednesday at 1.00 a.m. But the manager should know this and leave the door to the restaurant open at this time.

Soon the restaurant looks like a furnished bomb crater. The dishes pile up metres high and the chairs at the tables don't stand in groups of four.

This often is the moment, you hear the following line: My computer is broken, I need a new one.

In our example that would mean: close the shop and reopen a new restaurant next door. As a general rule the purchasing price would be in half, there are more tables and the waiter is wearing skates.

But it is no solution to the original problem, hence the new restaurant will look like the first sooner or later.

The manager could drive a bulldozer through the tavern as well and rebuild it after that.

A good first step would be to build an adjacent gym with lots of rows of chairs, where new guests can wait for a free table in the restaurant (second hard drive/partition).

In the best case, this should be done by the one who sells the computer.

Next you should take into serious consideration, what programs should be installed. Frequent "testing" of programs with following deinstallation lead to the high piles of dishes. Or you look for a program that cleans the registry.

If you read carefully, what happens next in the installation process, you could avoid unwanted programs finding their way to your hard drive. Most programs come along with a check box, that is usually activated.

Last but not least you should invest some time to the "care" of your data. Almost every modern PC got an CD- or even DVD-Burner, which should frequently be used to save your personal data.

A timely check and defragmentation of the hard drive(s) also could extend the joy on your computer.

If you decide to spend your money on a new computer later on, you should be aware **at all costs**, that you don't sell your old PC with all your data on it's hard drive.

It could be annoying, if the pictures of your last holiday are saved somewhere. Really troublesome it might get, if the Amazon-cookie for the web browser greets the new user with your name and address (the password is ideally saved on the disk as well). Or your online-banking software shines with your transactions of the past few months.