

STRIVE FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE—REMOVE SHOVELWARE

If you want to get your computer to run at peak performance, you should think about removing some, if not all, of the software that was preloaded by the computer manufacturer, e.g., HP, Dell, Lenovo, Toshiba. Why? Because the proprietary and/or third-party software that many vendors preload on their PCs is mostly junk. It consumes space on your hard drive, causes your system to boot slower than it should, and just generally gets in the way.

What products might these be? Consider Norton or McAfee 90-day trial versions, or Google Desktop, or any Roxio product. They're not bad products, but you didn't ask for them and you probably don't want them or need them.

There are two ways to go about getting rid of the shovelware. First, you can install one of two of the best uninstaller utilities, either [Revo Uninstaller](#) or [MyUninstaller](#), and then remove unwanted apps one by one.

Second, you can take advantage of the aptly named [PC Decrapifier](#), which was created for the sole purpose of removing shovelware. The latest version can kick nearly 100 crap apps to the curb, everything from AOL to Yahoo Toolbar. Of course, it's not an all-or-nothing proposition: You can choose which programs it proposes that you uninstall.

There is an irony in installing software to remove software. But Revo Uninstaller or MyUninstaller is worth having anyway, and you can dump PC Decrapifier when you're done with it.

As to the question of what programs you should keep and what you should pitch, tread carefully. For example, if your system came with a Blu-ray drive and you remove a bundled program like Arcsoft TotalMedia Theater, you may lose the ability to watch Blu-ray movies. When in doubt, keep the app.

In most cases, however, if there's a program you don't recognize or don't think you want (a Web search can answer most questions), get rid of it.