

## System Mechanic 8.0

By Barton Koslow

System Mechanic (SM) is a comprehensive computer utility that repairs problems, speeds up your PC, cleans up unneeded programs and files, provides complete security with an anti-virus program, a firewall, spyware detection and removal, and much more. When I received System Mechanic 2008, it turned out to be version 7.5. After I installed it in August and downloaded the most recent updates, I found I now had version 8.0.

Significant new and updated features:

Active Care 2.0 works in the background when your PC is not in use, and has full customization options added to allow you to control when and how each program runs. The new DriveSense provides real-time information on your hard drive temperature and up to 45 other indicators. There is improved registry optimization and full integration with Windows Vista.

I was anxious to try version 8.0 because in the past SM was so intrusive that I removed it to prevent interference with use of my computer. Opening SM you see four selectable functions on the left side of the screen: Dashboard, ActiveCare, Tools, and Reports; and at the screen top SafetyNet, Options, and Help. SafetyNet saves Undo information which enables you to revert back to before SM changes. Opening Options, I found you now have extensive control over how and when the SM programs run. I made my selections to prevent SM from interfering when I am working on my computer unless I actively select a procedure. I was anxious to see if this cures my former problems with version 7.

Clicking on Dashboard-Overview, I found that SM performed a quick problem analysis of my computer. A memory optimization was suggested. It took about a minute to run the optimization which recovered 223MB of memory. There were no other problems so I proceeded to ActiveCare which has two selections – Automated Tasks and Internet Security. There are 13 separate automated tasks, which you may enable or not as you see fit. Noteworthy are tasks to Repair Spyware Infections, Repair Registry Problems, Optimize Internet connections and Repair Drive Defragmentation Problems. Running Internet Optimization, I sped up my connection about 10%.

One of the five tools under “Tools – Power Tools” is PC Total Care, which performs a total diagnosis, repair and optimization of your computer. Selection of “Tools – Individual Tools” brings you to a selection of 30 programs to increase performance, enhance protection, free up drive space, repair problems, ensure privacy, manage system configuration and perform diagnostics. Some of the more notable programs enable you to backup and restore the registry, create a bootable CD to repair an unbootable computer (you may also use the SM program CD to boot and repair an unbootable computer), de-fragment and compact the registry, and configure boot-time de-fragmentation. I ran the boot-time de-fragmentation. This took place at startup and used one to two minutes to complete.

Like most programs today, SM does not come with a printed manual, but you will find one under Help. Every procedure available in SM has a short paragraph explaining its function, so you will rarely have to resort to the manual.

I have been running SM 8 without any of the intrusive problems I had in the past. SM has more functions than any similar utility program with which I am familiar, a number of which are not available elsewhere. That is the reason I will install SM 8 on my main computer again. Most couch potatoes rarely, if ever, do a registry backup, de-fragment their hard drive or perform other necessary housekeeping tasks. I specially recommend SM for them using the automated tasks (now that you may control them). Iolo has put together the most comprehensive, easy to use program of its type. I highly commend it to both beginners and advanced users as an essential tool, even if you run other utilities of this type.

Price: A low online price for System Mechanic Professional 7 (which updates to version 8 when installed) is \$53 delivered. If you buy version 8 you will pay \$70 delivered.

Support:

The Customer Care page on iolo's Web site offers a wide range of support and service options, including: A Knowledge Base with technical articles, tutorials, frequently asked questions, and troubleshooting tips. Contact forms to e-mail specific questions to the Technical support department. (All support is free and unlimited.) Access to other services such as product downloads, product registration, and the online license retrieval system. [www.iolo.com/customercare](http://www.iolo.com/customercare)

#### System Requirements:

- Windows Vista
- Windows XP (Home Edition or Professional)
- Windows 2000

Note: iolo's products are not compatible with 64-bit operating systems such as Windows XP x64.

#### Hardware

- System Mechanic: at least 30 MB available hard drive space  
System Mechanic Professional: at least 60 MB available hard drive space
- 256 MB RAM
- 400 MHz processor

#### Software

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, with Service Pack 1 or later