General PC Maintenance

Try these steps to fix many of those oddball/intermittent problems and make Windows system work better.

It is amazing how many glitches this takes care of, so this should be done before any other extensive troubleshooting except for data recovery.

The minimal basics any end user can and should run on a regular basis
Regular Basis = Between Monthly and Annually depending on how much you use your system.

- Shut down all programs you are running, or reboot to be fresh, and then follow the next two steps in order.
    1. Windows Search for '*cleanup*' to find *Disk Cleanup* (or old school; Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup): It will go think a minute or so (dependent on how full your drive is). Make sure you select all EXCLUDING 'Compress old files' and 'Office Setup Files', then click on OK
    2. Windows Search for '*defrag*' to find *Defragment and Optimize Drives* or *Disk Defragmenter* (or old school; Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter): Select C: and click on Defragment. This will take awhile, especially the first time, so it is best to leave this for the end of day or lunchtime. Other drives can be defragmented occasionally. Note: if you have SSD (Solid-state Drives) you usually don't need to do this step.

These steps will give you most of what the cleanup programs do without the expense or learning curve.

Moving forward to keep things running well:

- Avoid having Folders on your desktop. While they don't look like they take up space, their presence does slow down your computer as every refresh of several key parts of Windows causes the entire folder to be reread which takes a bit of time. It is better to have those folders available in your Start Menu.
- The fewer programs/apps you install, the better. There are many 'cute' and tempting apps that will slow your system down even if you uninstall them later (unless you actually like re-installing Windows from scratch every year).
- It would be worth occasionally getting a technically savvy person who isn't scared away from the more detailed steps to run through them on your system. The detailed steps are available on the link below.

While Mac users don't need this maintenance as much, they could also benefit from similar treatment as written up on Lifehacker, as per link below.

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