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In Windows, a memory leak takes place when an application or system process doesn't correctly release a block of RAM to the operating system's memory manager once it's no longer needed. In some cases, a program may return only a portion of the used memory block, in others, nothing is released. Because physical RAM is a finite resource, it's critical to ensure you have enough available to handle your workload. Although there are a few types of memory leaks in Windows, the most common by far is the problem with standby memory. Going back as far as Windows 7, the standby memory issue is still prevalent in Windows 10. Once your standby memory completely eats up your free memory, your system may begin to lag, and might even crash. Because a memory leak is typically the result of a software bug or glitch, it's important to keep all your drivers up to date. Getty Images Resource Monitor is a great built-in tool that will give you a much clearer picture of how Windows is managing your computer's resources (RAM, CPU, hard drives, etc.). If you suspect an application or process isn't releasing your standby memory, Resource Monitor is a great place to start observing. The steps below show how to view your system's memory usage in Windows 10, 8, and 7. Press Windows key+R, enter "resmon," then select OK. Select the Memory tab, then select Commit to reorder the list. Monitor the Standby (blue bar) with the applications with the applications you usually use running. You may have to leave the Resource Monitor running for a while to spot any leaks. Take a screenshot, or make a note when you first open the tool for easy comparison. RaMMap is a free tool from Microsoft that will show real-time data on how Windows manages and allocates your RAM. Similar to the Resource Monitor, RaMMap will display standby memory usage, and it runs on Windows 10, 8, and 7. The steps below illustrate how to download and run RaMMap. Go to RaMMap's Sysinternals page, then select Download RaMMap. Go to your Downloads folder, copy the RaMMap archive to the folder of your choice, then extract it. Right-click the RaMMap application file, then select Run as administrator. Select Yes. Review the SYSINTERNALS SOFTWARE LICENSE TERMS, then select Agree. Select the Use Counts tab, then monitor your standby memory, to see if it increases. If your system is losing free memory more gradually, you may need to leave RaMMap running for a while. Make a note of your standby memory before and after, to see if you have a RAM leak. You can also take a closer look at each process that is using your physical memory on the Processes tab. Running Windows' Memory Diagnostics is an excellent way to check your computer's physical memory thoroughly for any errors. Press Windows key+R, enter "mdsched.exe," then select OK.Select Restart now and check for problems (recommended).The test will begin and may take several hours to complete. Follow any on-screen instructions once the test is complete. In addition to monitoring your memory usage, RaMMap can also be used to manually empty your standby list. Right-click the RaMMap application file, then select Run as administrator.Select Empty, then Empty Standby List.Your standby memory should now be significantly lower. Intelligent Standby List Cleaner (ISLC) is a free tool offered by Wagnardsoft that will automatically empty your computer's standby memory, based on a few editable conditions. Open a web browser, go to the app's official forum page, select Official Download Here, then select Save File. Do to your Downloads folder, right-click the ISLC 7z archive, then select Run as administrator. Select Yes when the User Account Control window appears. Browse to a folder, select OK, then Extract. Once extracted, right-click Intelligent Standby List Cleaner ISLC, then select Run as administrator. Select Yes, when the UAC dialog appears. Select Purge Standby list to manually empty your system's standby memory. Change the values for; List size is at least and Free memory is lower than, to suit your requirements. Select Start minimized to run ISLC in the background every time your system boots up. The freestandbymemory.bat script is another useful tool to help mitigate the Windows' 10 standby memory issues. It runs every 3 minutes automatically in the background and will clear standby memory if your computer's physical memory drops below 1500 MB. The script is free to download and is designed for Windows 10. Go to the script's Pastebin page, select download, then Save File. Go to your Downloads folder, right-click freestandbymemory (batch file), then select Run as administrator. Select More info. Select Run anyway. Select Yes. Once the script is added, select any key to continue.FreeStandbyMemory will now run in the background on your system. To delete the script, navigate to This PC > Windows (C:) > Windows, right-click FreeStandbyMemory, then select Delete. Although there are several tools for checking for outdated drivers, it's best to go through them one at a time, individually, to ensure everything is up-to-date. Enter device manager into Windows' search, then select Open once the results populate.Expand a hardware section.Right-click on a device, then select Update driver. Thanks for letting us know! Get the Latest Tech News Delivered Every Day Subscribe Tell us why! One of the more quaintly mysterious notions in the world of computer software, especially Windows, is the memory leak. It's so commonly encountered that leak is used as both noun and verb: "That application leaks memory like crazy." It's a major cause of system instability over time and can be a nightmare to deal with. If a program runs continually, the smallest leak will eventually and inevitably lead to a program or system crash because more and more resources get locked up until they are exhausted. Memory Leak A memory leak starts when a program requests a chunk of memory from the operating system for itself and its data. As a program operates, it sometimes needs more memory and makes an additional request. Now we come to one of the rules of good programming: Any memory that is requested and allocated should be explicitly released by the application program when it no longer needs it and, in any case, when it closes. A program that does this is called well-behaved. Unfortunately, not all programs are well-behaved. And a program's failure to delete objects properly often doesn't show up right away because the program is either a short utility or doesn't create very many instances of objects, so it takes much longer to exhaust resources. But program objects can have other side effects that don't go away when the program terminates. A programmer should never assume that objects perform only benign operations that are undone when the program ends. Besides, programs sometimes end unexpectedly, or crash, before they can shut down in an orderly fashion and give back their memory. The result is that pieces of memory scattered throughout the system's RAM are marked as in use and untouchable except by its owning application - even though that's not really the case. Over time, as a number of ill-behaved applications run, more and more memory leaks into this unusable state, and the amount of memory available for use gets smaller and smaller. The operating system or system software itself isn't necessarily leakproof. (In late 1998, Apple Computer Inc. posted a fix for an AppleScript memory leak at techinfo.nsf/artnum/n26165.) Eventually, the operating system finds that there's not enough memory to do almost anything it needs or wants. Then it produces an error message saying memory is low and requests that some applications be closed to free up space. But because the applications that locked up much of that memory aren't really running, you can't free up the space by closing them down. The usual fix is to reboot. Garbage Collection Freeing up the operating system for reuse of the space that has been taken over by memory leaks is called garbage collection. In the past, programs have had to explicitly request storage and then return it to the system when it was no longer needed. The term garbage collecting appears to have first been used in the Lisp programming language, developed in the 1960s. Some operating systems provide memory leak detection so that a problem can be detected before an application or the operating system crashes. Some program development tools, like Java, also provide automatic housekeeping for the developer. The real advantage to this is that the process happens whether or not the programmer accounts for it. Copyright © 2000 IDG Communications, Inc. Google's Android chucking out data? Android phones could be offering up usernames and passwords to hackers, allowing sensitive data to be siphoned off.Researchers from the Institute of Media Informatics at Ulm University have discovered that Android devices could offer up user's Google Calendar, Contacts and Picasa information.The research found that devices using Android 2.3.3 and older using ClientLogin (which is used to authenticate apps from a remote destination) could potentially be hacked if using a non-secure connection, such as open Wi-Fi hotspot.This means up to 99.7% of devices could be open to the exploit, which works by sending a request for an authentication token (authToken) from the Google service with a user name and password over a secure connection, and the received item is then valid for 14 days.ExploitThis means anyone with the correct equipment could sniff it out and use it on the same application to find your details, and even head in and modify all items from your Contacts, Calendar or Picasa.Google has patched the problem in Android 2.3.4 for Contacts and Calendar, but not Picasa yet, according to the research. Android 3.0+ devices appear to be unaffected.Bastian Königs, Jens Nickels, andFlorian Schaub from the University of Ulm, write in the research: "The implications of this vulnerability reach from disclosure to loss of personal information for the Calendar data."For Contact information, private information of others is also affected, potentially including phone numbers, home addresses, and email addresses. Beyond the mere stealing of such information, an adversary could perform subtle changes without the user noticing.Adverse action"For example, an adversary could change the stored email address of the victim's boss or business partners hoping to receive sensitive or confidential material pertaining to their business."The research suggests that if you can't upgrade to Android 2.3.4 the best thing to do is avoid open Wi-Fi networks altogether, although this is pretty sage advice for the most part anyway for anyone using wireless data.TechRadar has contacted Google to see if it's aware of the issue and whether legacy devices will be receiving a patch in the future, although the research team has already spoken to the Android Security Team and it has confirmed it is looking into the problemVia The Register

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