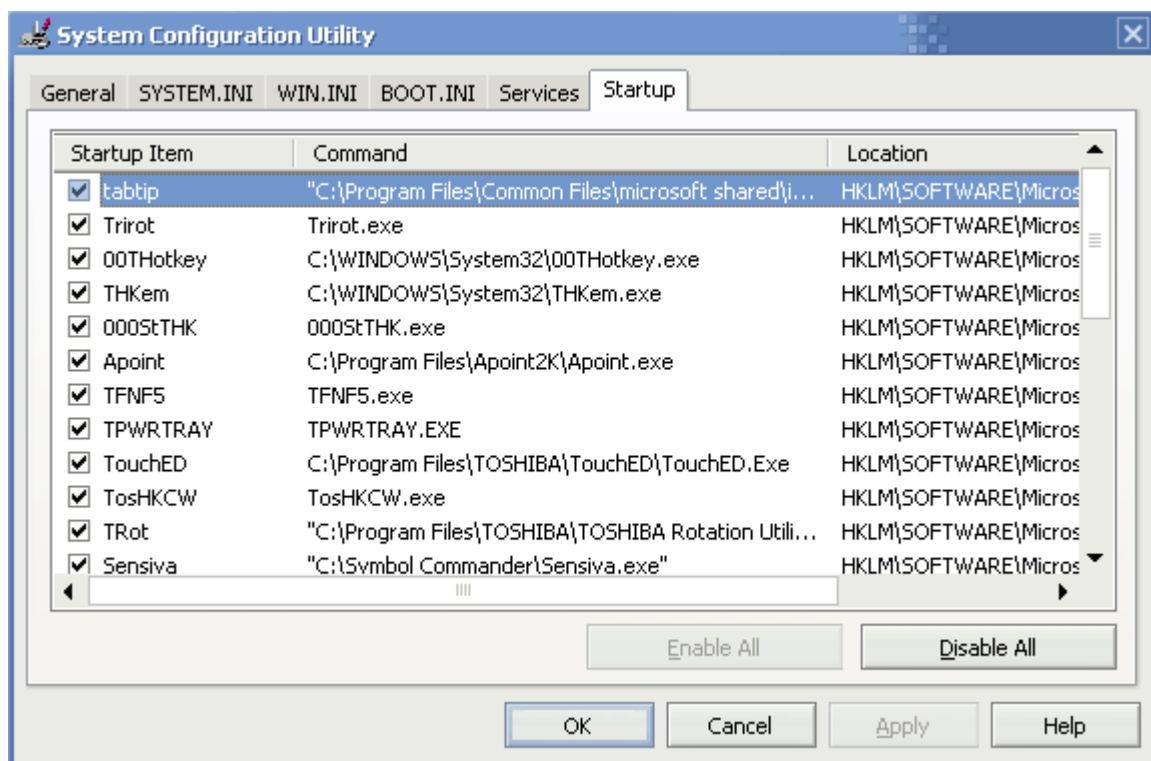


Using MS Config

Built into Windows 98, 98SE, ME, and XP (you can download it by searching the internet if you are running Windows 2000) is a special tool called the "Microsoft System Configuration Utility" or simply "**msconfig**". Designed to help you troubleshoot problems with your computer, **msconfig** can also be used to ensure that your computer boots faster and crashes less.

Most people know that the more programs you have running on your computer at once, the more likely it is that your computer will either run slowly or even crash. What most people don't know is that every time you boot your computer a whole mess of "hidden" programs load in the background. Some of these hidden programs are essential, but most aren't. Turning off some of these hidden programs can significantly increase your computer's performance and reliability.

Here is how to use **msconfig** on Windows 98, 98SE, ME, and XP to disable some of the unnecessary programs that automatically load on start-up.



The Microsoft Configuration Utility

Launching MS Config

There is no icon to click, or menu to navigate that will launch this utility for you. Follow these simple steps to launch **msconfig**:

1. Click on the start button, and click on "Run".
2. Type "**msconfig**" in the path field, and click on "OK".

Startup Tab

This takes you to a page with a list of "startup items." Startup items are programs that are automatically loaded every time you turn on your computer. Some startup programs are absolutely necessary, others are simply a waste of RAM.

The only startup items you absolutely need are:

- ScanRegistry
- TaskMonitor
- SystemTray
- LoadPowerProfile
- Your Antivirus Program

Since you need these startup items to be running all the time in order for your computer to work properly, make sure there is always a check mark next to all of these startup items.

If you don't see one or two these items in your list of startup items, that's cool. For example, some people may not have a LoadPowerProfile while others may have two. The big thing to remember is that you don't want to uncheck any of these files if you have them.

The rest of the startup items, however, are completely optional. Whether you leave these optional startup items on or turn them off is completely up to you. A good rule of thumb is to disable only those programs that you recognize and don't need to have running all the time. When in doubt, leave it on.

Here's a good example. On my computer I have a mess of MP3s and I listen to those MP3s with a program called WinAmp. For some reason or other, WinAmp decided that it should always be running on my computer even when I am not using the program. That's silly. To prevent WinAmp from automatically starting every time I boot my computer, I ran **msconfig** and unchecked "WinampAgent." That's it.

Remember, disable only those programs that you recognize and don't need to have running all the time. When in doubt, leave it on.