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Tune Stacker Performance

Stacker compresses and decompresses data as you work with your system. You control the balance between how fast it works and how tightly it compresses data. If Stacker works as fast as it can, the result is a bit less compression. If Stacker compacts data as tightly as possible, the process takes a bit longer. Through the DOS command line or by modifying the Stacker device driver, you can use any of ten levels (from 0 through 9). The Stacker Tuner lets you "tune" your compression to one of four designated levels:

- 1 Fastest speed and standard compression (level 1)
- 2 More compression and a bit less speed (level 5)
- 3 Best compression (level 9)
- 4 Use Stacker coprocessor board (0, tuning turned off)

If you don't have the Stacker hardware device driver active on your system, the last choice is not available. If you do have the Stacker hardware device driver active on your system, the last choice is the default.

If you change to or from using a Stacker coprocessor board, Stacker restarts your system to put the change into effect.

Restart Computer

Stacker Tuner has to restart your system to put the change to the STACKER.INI file into effect. You either went from no tunability (or hardware) to one of the first three settings or from a compression setting to hardware. When the system restarts, the new setting takes effect.

Choose OK to let Stacker Tuner leave Windows and restart the system.

Choose Cancel to continue without restarting. The next time you restart your system, the change you made takes effect.

Close Running Applications

You have one or more applications running in addition to Stacker Tuner. You'll have to close them before Stacker Tuner can leave Windows and restart your computer.

Close the applications, then choose OK on this dialog to continue with Stacker Tuner.

Change Manual Setting

Stacker can use any of ten tuning levels, from 0 through 9. Value 0 turns off compression tuning, saving space in the driver. Both 0 and 1 give very fast compression. Level 9 gives the tightest compression at the cost of speed. Value 0 is the default level after choosing the Express method from Setup.

Stacker Tuner lets you use these levels:

- 1 Fastest speed, standard compression
- 5 More compression, less speed
- 9 Best compression

Stacker Coprocessor Board

If the current tuning setting is not one of these levels, Stacker Tuner warns you before letting you change the tuning. Tuning done through Stacker Tuner changes the current setting.

To find out more about custom settings, see your documentation. To change tuning through the STACKER.INI file, see Stacker's Setup Help, or the README file.

Stacker Not Running

You can't use Stacker Tuner because Stacker isn't running on your system. If you want to use Stacker Tuner, you'll have to set up Stacker on your computer.

To install Stacker for Windows & DOS on your system

- 1 Insert the disk labeled "Disk 1" in drive A or B.
- 2 From the Program Manager's File menu, choose Run.
- 3 In the Command Line field, type A:SETUP or B:SETUP.
- 4 Choose OK

Follow the on-screen instructions to set up Stacker.

Could Not Determine Boot Drive

You started Stacker Tuner, but it cannot determine which drive is the boot drive.

Run a surface scan disk utility such as PC Tools to find out if there is a problem with your boot drive.

Could Not Modify STACKER.INI

Stacker Tuner has to change the STACKER.INI file to put the tuning change into effect. It wasn't able to modify the file.

It could be that:

- The disk is full.

Could Not Open STACKER.INI

Stacker Tuner was not able to open your STACKER.INI file. This problem may be caused by a media defect on the disk itself.

Leave Windows, then run the Stacker tool CHECK /F to do a surface scan and fix any errors it finds.

To do a surface scan

- 1 Change to the Stacker directory.
- 2 Type CHECK /F and press ENTER.
- 3 Follow the instructions on the screen. When asked if CHECK should do a surface scan, type Y and press ENTER.

Then startup Windows and double-click the Stacker Tuner icon again.

If the problem recurs, try running a disk repair utility on the uncompressed drive or call technical support for assistance.

Stacker Tuner Cannot Run With DoubleSpace

You started Stacker Tuner, but DoubleSpace is on your system. You must disable DoubleSpace to run Stacker Tuner.

Stacker Tuner Requires MS-DOS 6

You started Stacker Tuner, but an old version of DOS is running on your system. You must have MS-DOS 6 installed to run Stacker Tuner.

Stacker Tuner Requires Stacker 3.1

You started *Stacker Tuner*, but an earlier version of Stacker is currently on your system. You have parts of two different versions of Stacker active in your system. This version of *Stacker Tuner* requires Stacker 3.1.

To install Stacker for Windows & DOS on your system

- 1 Insert the disk labeled "Disk 1" in drive A or B.
- 2 From the Program Manager's File menu, choose Run.
- 3 In the Command Line field, type *A:SETUP* or *B:SETUP* and press ENTER.
- 4 Choose OK

Follow the on-screen instructions to set up Stacker.

Tuner Cannot Run Because the Stacker Driver is Loaded in CONFIG.SYS

Someone has placed an additional copy of the Stacker 3.1 device driver in your CONFIG.SYS file. With MS-DOS 6, Stacker is loaded before CONFIG.SYS is run. There is no need to have the driver in the CONFIG.SYS file, also. Eliminate the Stacker device driver line and restart your machine.

To remove the Stacker device driver from CONFIG.SYS

- 1 Exit Windows to DOS.
- 2 Edit your CONFIG.SYS file. Find the line which looks similar to:
DEVICE=C:\STACKER\STACKER.COM
- 3 Delete the line.
- 4 Save your file.
- 5 Restart your system.

You should not receive this message after editing and restarting.

Fragmentation

The scattering of "bits and pieces" of the same disk file over different areas of your disk. When you originally save your files, DOS organizes them and writes them to disk. While DOS attempts to write them in sequential order, sometimes it can't. As disks and files get used more often, contiguous space on the hard disk becomes scarce. Fragmentation can slow disk access and overall system performance, although usually not severely.

Optimizing

The process of producing more efficient storage of files on your disk. Optimizing defragments and reorganizes files so they are located in a contiguous area. That way, when you read a file from disk, DOS only has to go to one place to find the file, instead of gathering all the file's "bits and pieces" from many places.

Compression Ratio

The comparison between a file's uncompressed size (without Stacker) and its compressed size (with Stacker). Stacker compresses most files at a ratio of 2:1, indicating you'd need twice as much disk space to store the files without Stacker.

Actual Compression Ratio

The comparison between a file's uncompressed size (without Stacker) and its compressed size (with Stacker). Stacker compresses most files at a ratio of 2:1. Actual compression ratio is the rate at which your data is actually compressing. The actual compression ratio is indicated in the black-and-yellow box of Stackometer's Compression Ratio gauge. Expected compression ratio is the rate at which Stacker assumed your data would compress during Stacker Setup.

Expected Compression Ratio

The rate at which Stacker expected to compress your data during Stacker Setup. The default is 2:1. Stacker assumes a 2:1 expected compression ratio so it knows how large to make your Stacker drive (twice as big). On the Stackometer's Compression Ratio gauge, the expected compression ratio is the number in the upper left. If your actual compression ratio (in black and yellow) is significantly different from the expected compression ratio, you may want to change the expected compression ratio using Set Expected Compression from the Tools menu. Normally, you don't have to worry about any discrepancy between these two ratios unless the disk is getting full or if you are an advanced user.

Stacker

A software compression utility that doubles disk capacity by compressing files when you're not using them and quickly decompressing them when you need the files.

Stacker Territory

The start of Stacker Territory is indicated by a red triangle on the Disk Space gauge. The area to the right is "Stacker Territory." This is the extra disk space Stacker provides to your system. Without Stacker, you would have only the space on the left side of the red triangle. The position of the red triangle is determined by the expected compression ratio. Normally, with a 2:1 expected compression ratio, the red triangle is in the middle of the dial. If the expected compression ratio is larger, such as 2.5, the red triangle is to the left of center. If the expected compression ratio is smaller, such as 1.8, the red triangle is to the right of center.

Stackometer

A set of gauges that let you monitor the performance of your Stacker drive. The Stackometer displays a compression ratio summary, the amount of disk space available, and the fragmentation level of your Stacker drive. You can display a Stackometer for every disk on your system.

KB

Stands for kilobytes, a unit of computer storage. 1 KB = 1024 bytes.

Restack

Recompresses your data, maximizing the space available on your Stacker drive. Used when upgrading from previous versions of Stacker to obtain the improved compression available with Stacker for Windows and DOS.

Compress

The process of reducing the space required to store data. As the data is stored, recurring byte sequences are replaced by "tokens" that take less space to store. Data is compressed when it is written to a Stacker drive. The speed and tightness of compression are controlled by Stacker Tuner.

Decompress

The process of restoring data from its compressed form to its original uncompressed form. Stacker decompresses data when it is read from a Stacker drive.

Entire Drive

When Setup compresses the data on an entire drive, it compresses all the data currently on the disk into the Stacker drive. A few files may also remain on the uncompressed disk. After the data on an entire disk is compressed, it has the same drive letter as the original disk.

Free Space

When Setup compresses only the free space, it creates an empty Stacker drive using space from the original disk. Any files originally on the disk remain in the uncompressed portion. The new empty Stacker drive has a new drive letter.

Hot key

A hot key is a letter in the text label of each button and field that appears highlighted or in a different color. In most cases, pressing the hot key activates the button or field. If a text entry field is active, you have to hold down the ALT key while pressing the hot key.

STACVOL File

The hidden file on an uncompressed drive that actually contains all the compressed data. The STACVOL file is the Stacker drive.

Stacker Drive

The drive containing all the compressed data and compressed by Stacker 3.1 for Windows & DOS.

Removable Disk

A disk that can be removed from its drive and taken to another computer. Some removable disks are floppy disks, Bernoulli™ disks, and Syquest™ cartridges.

Cache

An area in memory where data can be stored for quick access. The Stacker driver has a built-in cache big enough for at least one cluster and 9 KB for work areas. The cache portion of the driver can be stored in expanded or upper memory.

Cluster

A storage unit on a disk that is a fixed size for the disk. A typical Stacker cluster is 8 KB. Stacker can also use 4 KB, 16 KB, and 32 KB clusters.

Disk Space

The amount of space on the disk currently filled with data.

Pathname

The location of a file. A full path include the drive letter, a colon, and each directory. For example, the Stacker files are stored in the path C:\STACKER. If you have Windows on drive D, some files are stored in D:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM.

Path

The list of directories that DOS searches automatically to find an application. A PATH statement in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file generally establishes the path.

Stacker Tuner

Gives you the controls to fine-tune your Stacker drives. You set Stacker for maximum speed, maximum compression, or something in between.

TSR

Terminate and Stay Resident. A memory resident program accessed while other programs are running.

AUTOEXEC.BAT

A special file automatically read at startup. Commands found within this file affect your system's configuration.

Expanded Memory

The portion of memory above the first 1 MB of conventional memory.

Boot Disk

The disk or drive your system starts up from.

DBLSPACE.BIN

The file which provides access to Stacker's data compression in MS-DOS 6.

STACKER.INI

The file which configures the Stacker device driver for your system.

Uncompressed drive

The portion of your drive containing the large STACVOL file which is your Stacker drive.

Preloading

In MS-DOS 6, the method which recognizes Stacker drives before reading CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT.

Hidden File

A file which is not visible by typing DIR. All files used for initially starting up the system are "hidden" so they can't accidentally be erased or edited.

Stacker Device Driver

The software enabling Stacker's data compression. It remains in memory while your system is working.

Windows' Permanent Swap File

A permanent area on your hard disk that Windows can use as a "scratch pad," temporarily housing data during a Windows session.

Automount

The process where Stacker automatically recognizes external or replaceable drives as Stacker drives.

Replaceable Drives

Disk drives where the media can easily be physically replaced. Examples include floppies, Bernoulli's™, or Syquest™ cartridges.

Conventional Memory

The first 640 KB of your system's memory.

Byte Total

The total amount of room it takes to store the highlighted files (measured in bytes).

Stacker Optimizer

The Stacker program which produces more efficient storage of files on your disk. The Optimizer defragments and reorganizes files so they are located in a contiguous area. That way, when you read a file from disk, DOS only has to go to one place to find the file, instead of gathering all the file's "bits and pieces" from many places

File Allocation Table (FAT)

The portion of your disk which contains all the information about the location of your files.

StartUp Group

A specific program group created by Windows. Whenever you start Windows, any applications found in the StartUp Group load immediately.