

TIDY

(A program to reduce clutter.)

No, It's not the latest in artificial intelligence and it won't compress your files down to a zillionth of their original size but TIDY is a useful tool that will help get rid of the clutter that usually builds up on a hard disk.

TIDY is a variant of the DOS delete command. The intent here is not to try to replace the delete command, but to add functionality that the delete does not provide. First, with TIDY you specify the relative age of the files to delete. TIDY will only remove files of that age (or older). Second, TIDY won't ask you if it's OK to delete all the files in a directory if that is what you specified. This way you can embed the command in a batch file without having to give confirmation each time it's run. I run TIDY from inside my AUTOEXEC.BAT file so that each time I boot, all of the specified files will be tested to see if they should be deleted.

The general syntax of the TIDY command is shown below:

```
C:\> tidy -NP file [file [...]]
```

where N = The number of units old (P) the file must be in order to consider it for deletion.
P = The time unit: 'm' or 'M' for minutes; 'h' or 'H' for hours; or 'd' or 'D' for days.
file = One or more path names (wild cards allowed) of files to consider for deletion.

(You can also get a synopsis of the command syntax by typing the word "tidy" by itself at the DOS prompt).

For example, assume that you have one directory you use only for transitory files that you don't care much about called '\trash' and another for backups of document and program source called '\backups'. You might consider putting something like the following in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

```
tidy -1h c:\trash\*.*
tidy -2d c:\backups\*.c
tidy -10d c:\backups\*.doc
```

This will (each time you boot) delete all files older than one hour in the \trash directory as well as the C source code older than two days and documents older than 10 days in the \backups directory.

OK, but you say: "The power failed while I was updating my 1992 tax forms! The updated copy is no good and if I reboot (When the power comes back) TIDY may delete my only backup!". Well, I guess you could reboot from a floppy and save off an extra copy before booting from the hard disk again but there is a better way. Reboot as usual and after the computer beeps signaling the end of the ROM diagnostics, depress and hold one of the Alt., Shift, or Ctrl keys until the AUTOEXEC.BAT file completes. TIDY will sense your state of panic and leave your backup unscathed.

I've added a second tool called TOUCH that you might find of use. TOUCH will update the time stamp of the specified file(s) to the current time. By using TOUCHING a file, you can forestall the effects of TIDY when it runs because it doesn't look as old as it really is. (TOUCH is useful for programmers that use a 'make' utility to force a rebuild of a target file without having to change one of its depend files).

The legal stuff:

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If you have questions or comments regarding TIDY or TOUCH contact me on CompuServe (71571,14) or on the Shareware South BBS Atlanta GA (404)370-0736
Enjoy, Ken Harrington