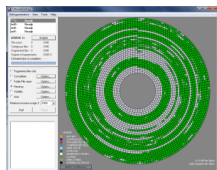


25 October 2006

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



[Defrag Away](#)

Choose your defragmentation method

Hard disk defragmenting is on the menu today. And you are all aware that keeping your files defragmented will make your computer running smooth and fast. What do you use do unclog your machine?

I have tested a few softwares all designed to arrange the files on the hard disk. I must admit that the first defragmenting application was the Windows defragmenting tool. I was impressed by its results, by I soon found out that there are some other softwares that have the same mission and do a better job. Among the best defragmenters I have encountered there is Ashampoo's [Magical Defrag](#) and Power Defragmenter.

Surfing the Internet I bumped into Ultimate Defrag. The name draw my attention immediately and I decided to put it to a test. The software is a DiskTrix product and the price for putting it to work on your computer is \$39.95. Of course, the users get to test it first for a trial period of 30 days.

When I first opened the application I was surprised by the interface. It was something I was not expecting in a hard disk maintenance tool. The application window displays a big pie that represents your hard drive. In the lower part of this section you will find a Legend explaining you what the colors of the little squares mean.

In the left part there is a sort of a panel that shows the user the local drives and the desired defragmenting method. Once you click on one of the drives, you will be provided some information related to it like file count, number of the contiguous files, the number of fragmented files and the degree of fragmentation. Except for the degree of fragmentation, every other information is accompanied by the corresponding size in megabytes.

The application is very easy to work with and the few steps you have to take will bring the desired result. All you need is patience for the software to defragment your drives. The analysis of the drive (before performing the defragmentation) will not take too long and you will be provided with the number of fragmented files and their size.

After the analysis, right-clicking on the drive letter will open a context menu that contains the option Volume Info. Choosing it will show you all the information you need about it (name, file system, serial number, size, free space, number of clusters, number of free clusters, sectors per cluster, etc.).

Before moving to the actual defragmenting I have to tell you that the program has four defragmentation methods, out of which three have customizable options. The first method is Fragmented Files Only and is to be used when you need a quick defragmentation.

The second method is Consolidate and this will allow the user to select High Performance and Archive which will place the High Performance files to the outside tracks (faster access) and the archives to the inner tracks (slower access). The third option in here is Put directories close to MFT and choosing it will significantly improve the hard drive performance because of the dialog between the MFT (Master File Table) and the directories.

Folder/File Name method contains the same options as Consolidate, but the difference is that this method will layout the files on the hard disk, according to folder name order and each files in the folder will be sorted by name. If you want to set a certain order then you should go into the Tools menu and choose Custom option in the High Performance section and drag the files in the order you want.

The last of the defragmenting methods is Recency. The additional options in here are Last Accessed, Last Modified and placing the data (oldest and most recent) on the outer or inner tracks of the hard disk. My humble opinion says that this is the most complete defragmenting method of all. Of course it is also the most difficult to configure.

The Options menu of the software lets you configure the High Performance and Archive options. The flexibility of the software allows the user to include some file types in both High Performance and Archive. There may be some files that you do not want to defragment and in this case you should look at the bottom of the Options window for the Excluded Files section.

I should say that UltimateDefrag is also able to defrag the MFT and page files. This option is also to be encountered in Options menu, in the lower part of the window.

The Good

The software allows the user to customize the defragmentation according to how the computer is used. The scheduling option permits you to program defragmentations with certain frequencies and at user specified hours of the day.

The Bad

There are some baddies in this software and the most frustrating one is interface related. The menubar should have had a different color, or at least the buttons background. It was very difficult to use the options in the menu, because I could not quite see which they were.

The Truth

Nice application, too bad the interface dims the view of the menu bar. But if this is the beginning of the software I am sure this minor detail will be fixed very soon.

Here are some snapshots of the application in action: