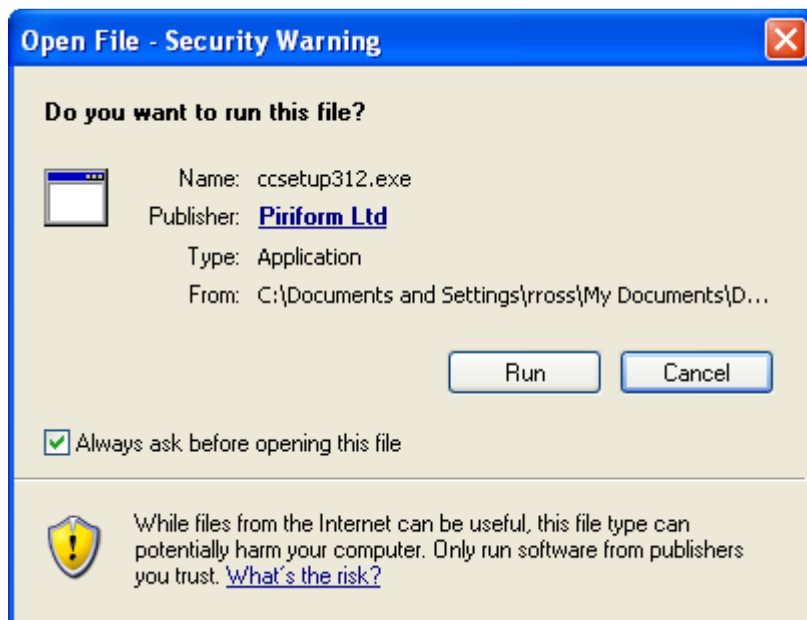


Using CCleaner to Maintain Your Windows System

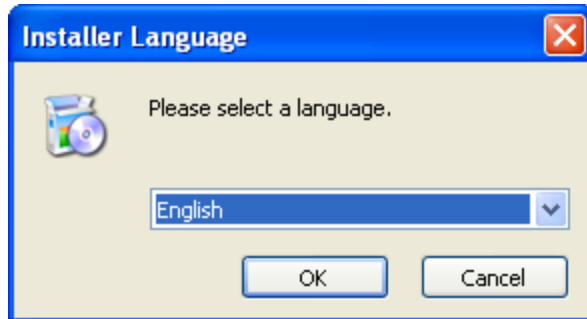
Ronald Ross
ross@spkaa.com

Today we're going to have a look at what I consider to be a very useful Windows maintenance utility. I'm talking about CCleaner, which is put out by Piriform. As is usual for many free software packages, there are also professional versions which you have to pay for, and which pays the bills so that we can enjoy a free version. You can download CCleaner at: <http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner>

We will go through the download and install process, and then point out many of the useful features that CCleaner offers. After downloading the binary, go ahead and run the install. We are going to run this on Windows XP, but CCleaner is fully supported on Windows 7.



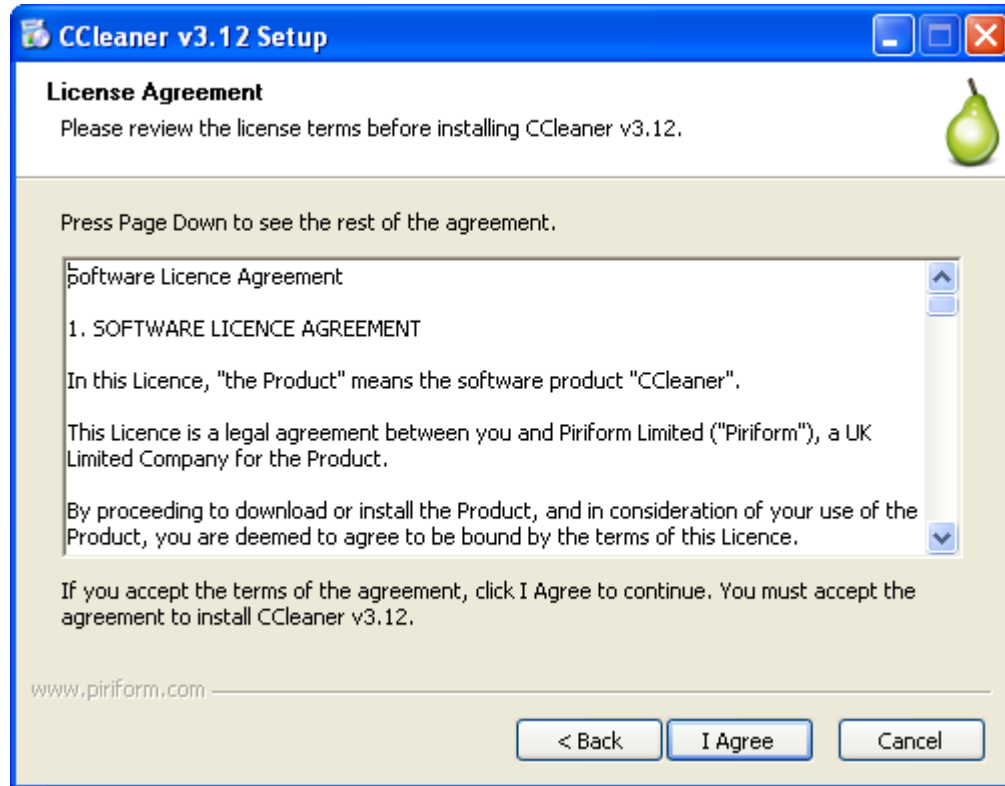
Click Run, and the install begins, followed by the first install choice, which language to use.



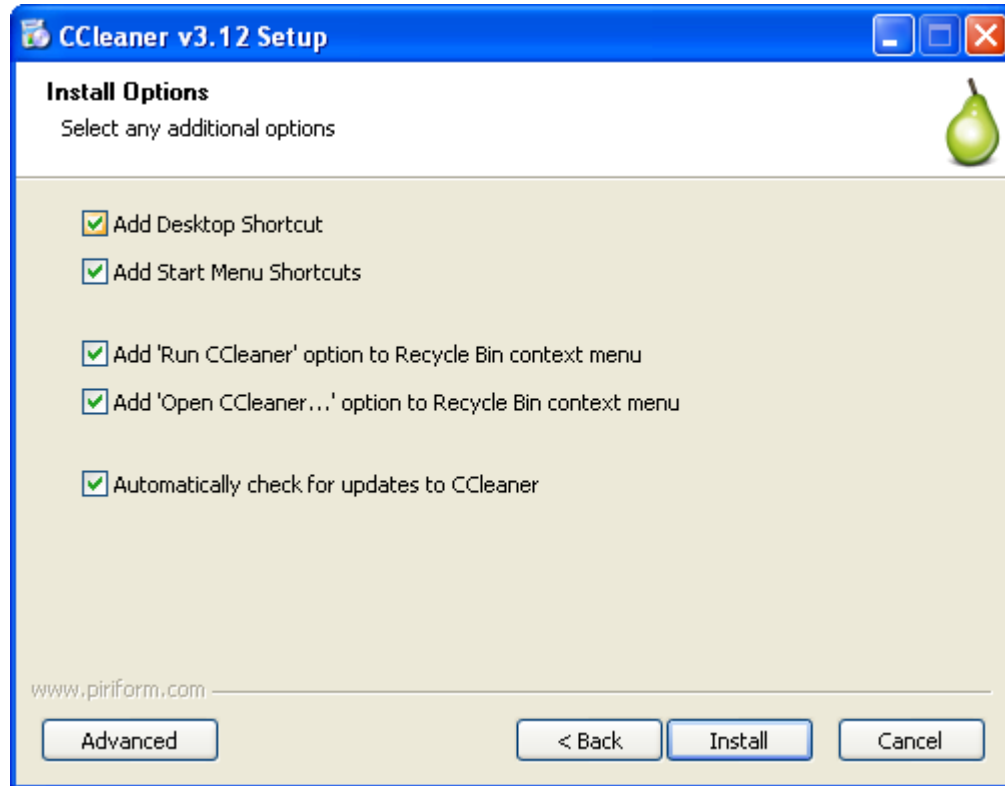
Select the language of choice, and click OK.



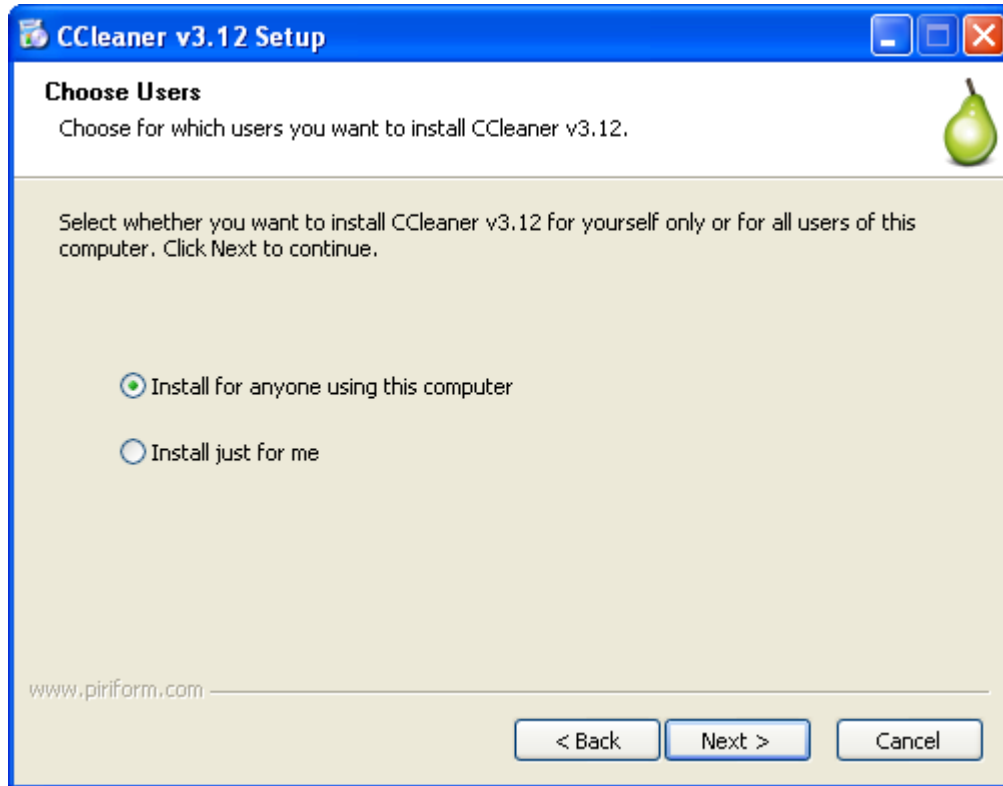
At this point, the install can begin. Click Next to continue.



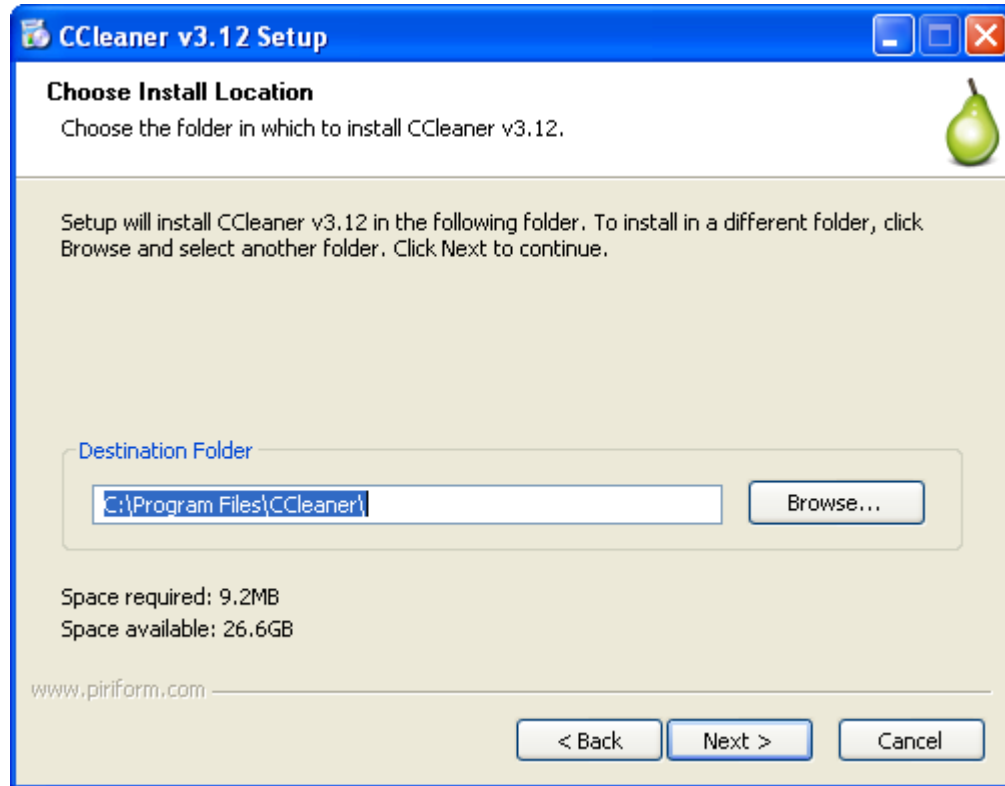
Have a look at the license, and if you decide to continue, click on "I Agree".



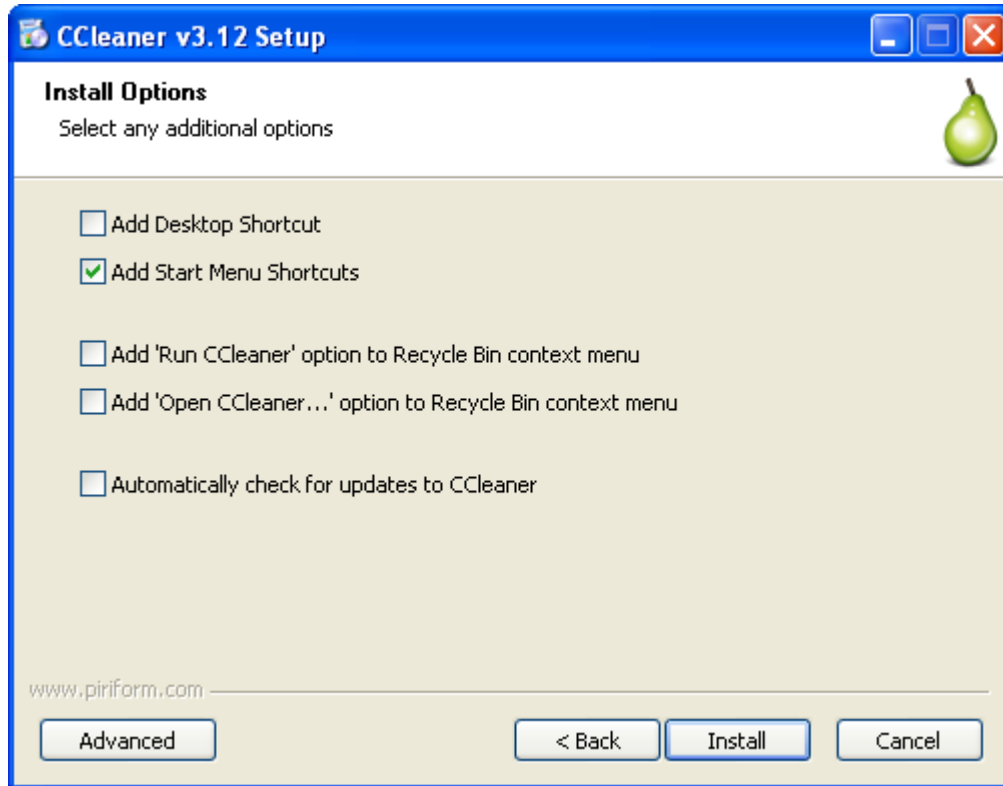
Here is where it gets more interesting. Make the choices in the Install Options that suit your tastes. I don't much care for shortcuts cluttering up my desktop, for example, but you may feel differently. Click Install or Advanced to continue. Here, we are going to click Advanced, which will take us to the next panel.



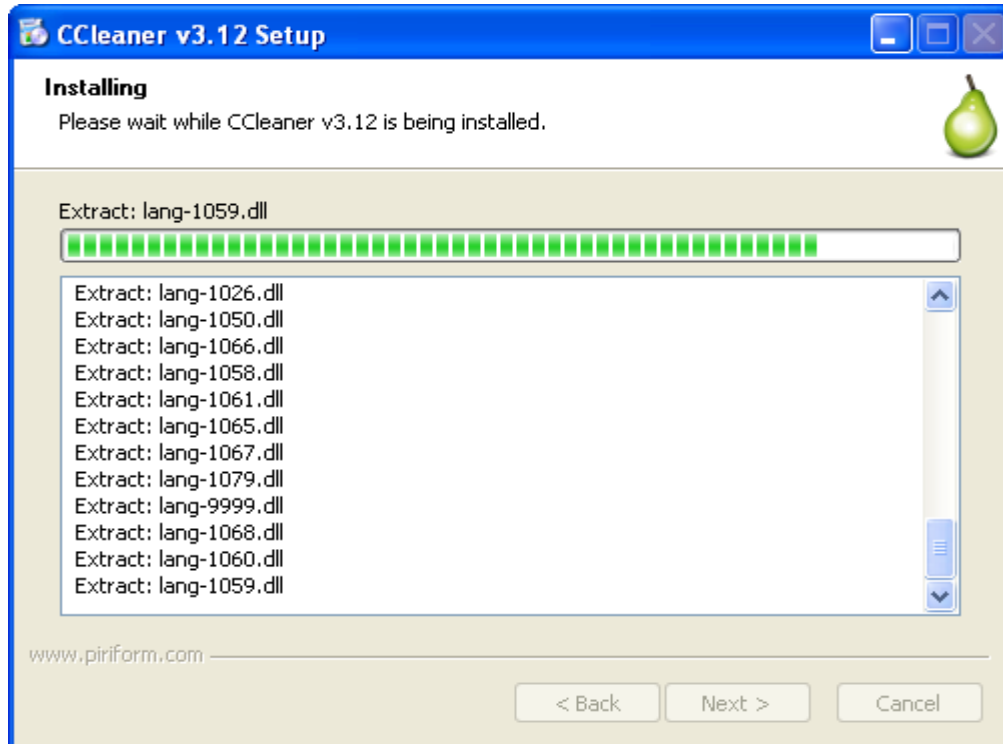
Usually the default for this install option is best, but perhaps you are sharing this computer with a child, or some other person that you don't fully trust to always do the right thing when it comes to computers. Make your choice and click Next.



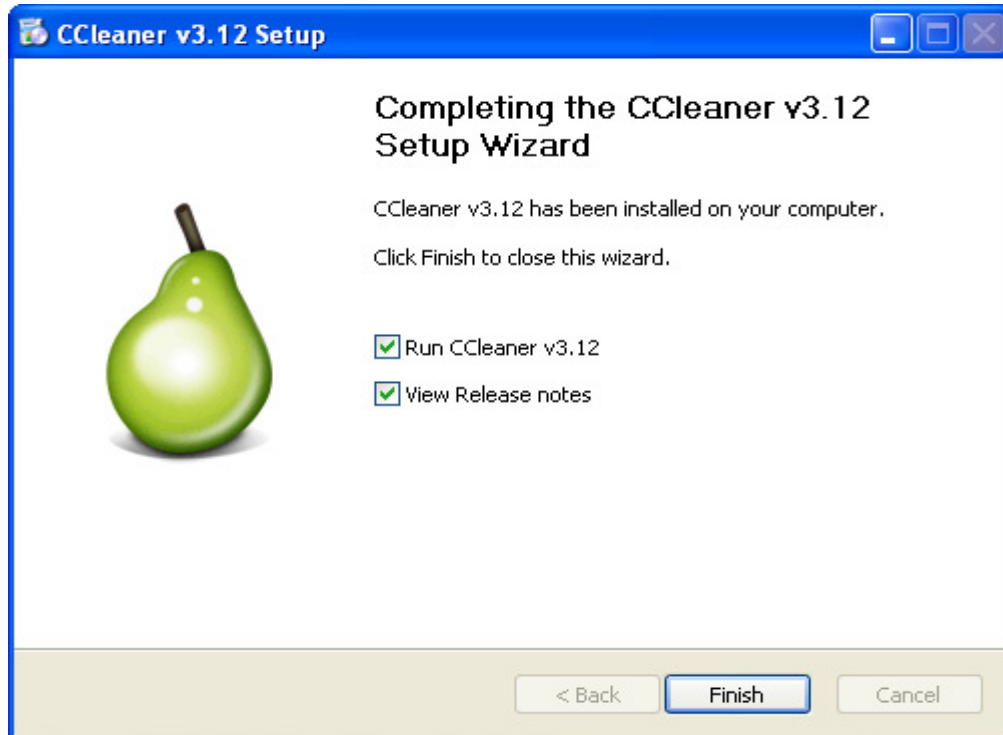
The default is usually good, but maybe you have a policy for putting applications on a drive that is separate from the usual system drive C. Keep or change the location and click Next.



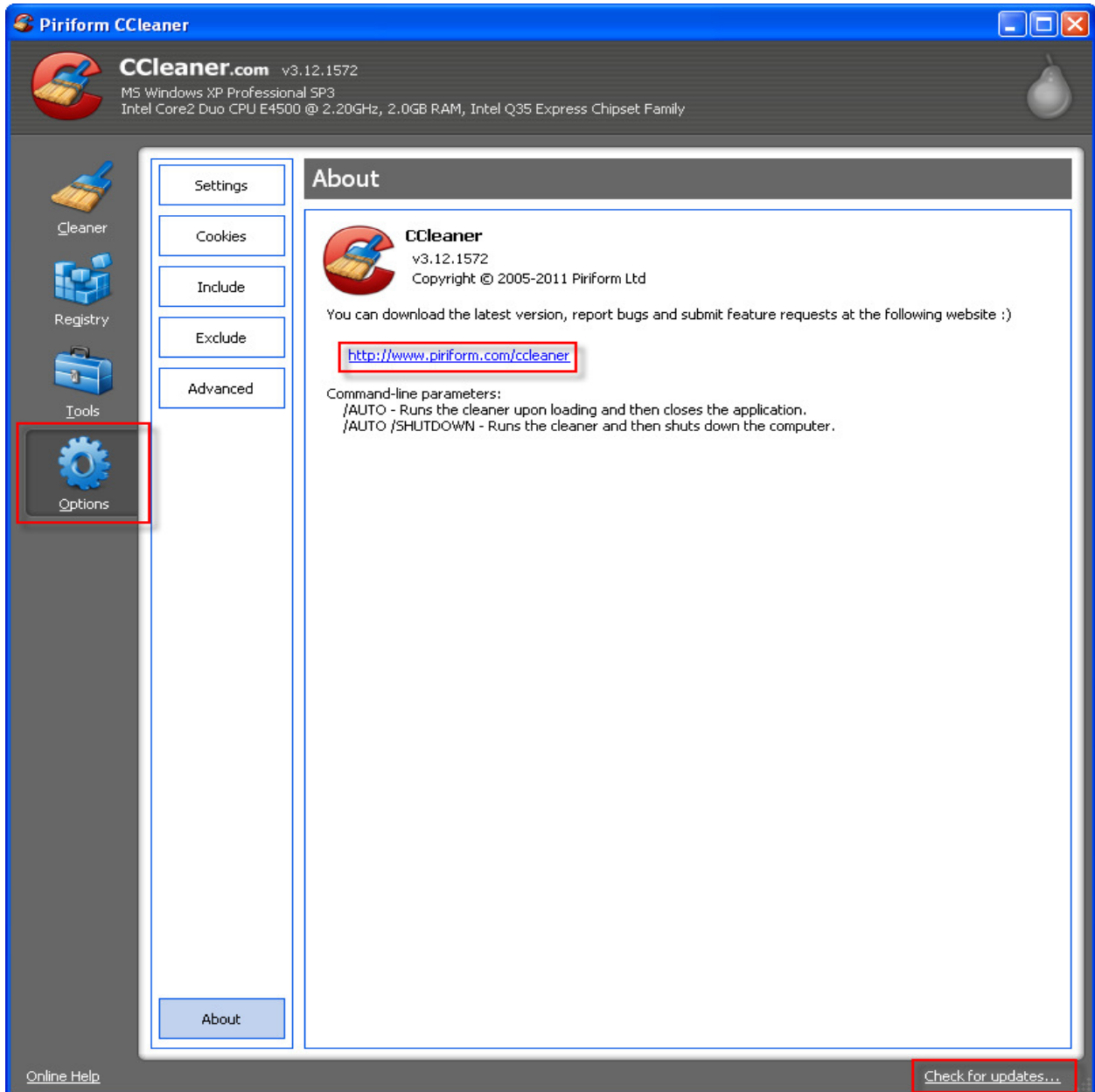
Now we are back to the panel we were at before looking at the Advanced options. You can see what my choices here look like before we click Install.



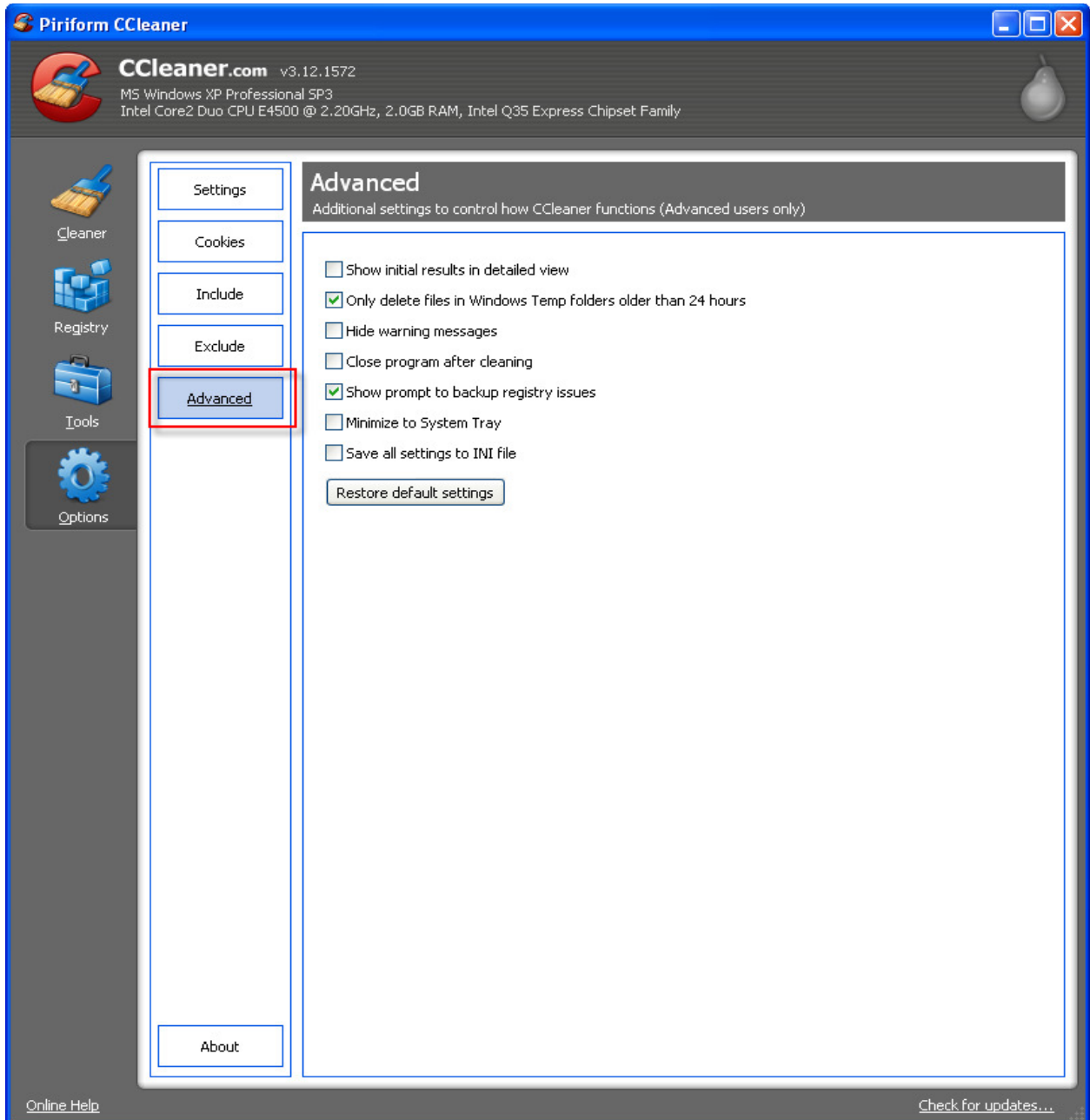
During the install, there is a button to show Details, which I have clicked. Not all that much to see, the install bar pretty much tells us all we want to know.



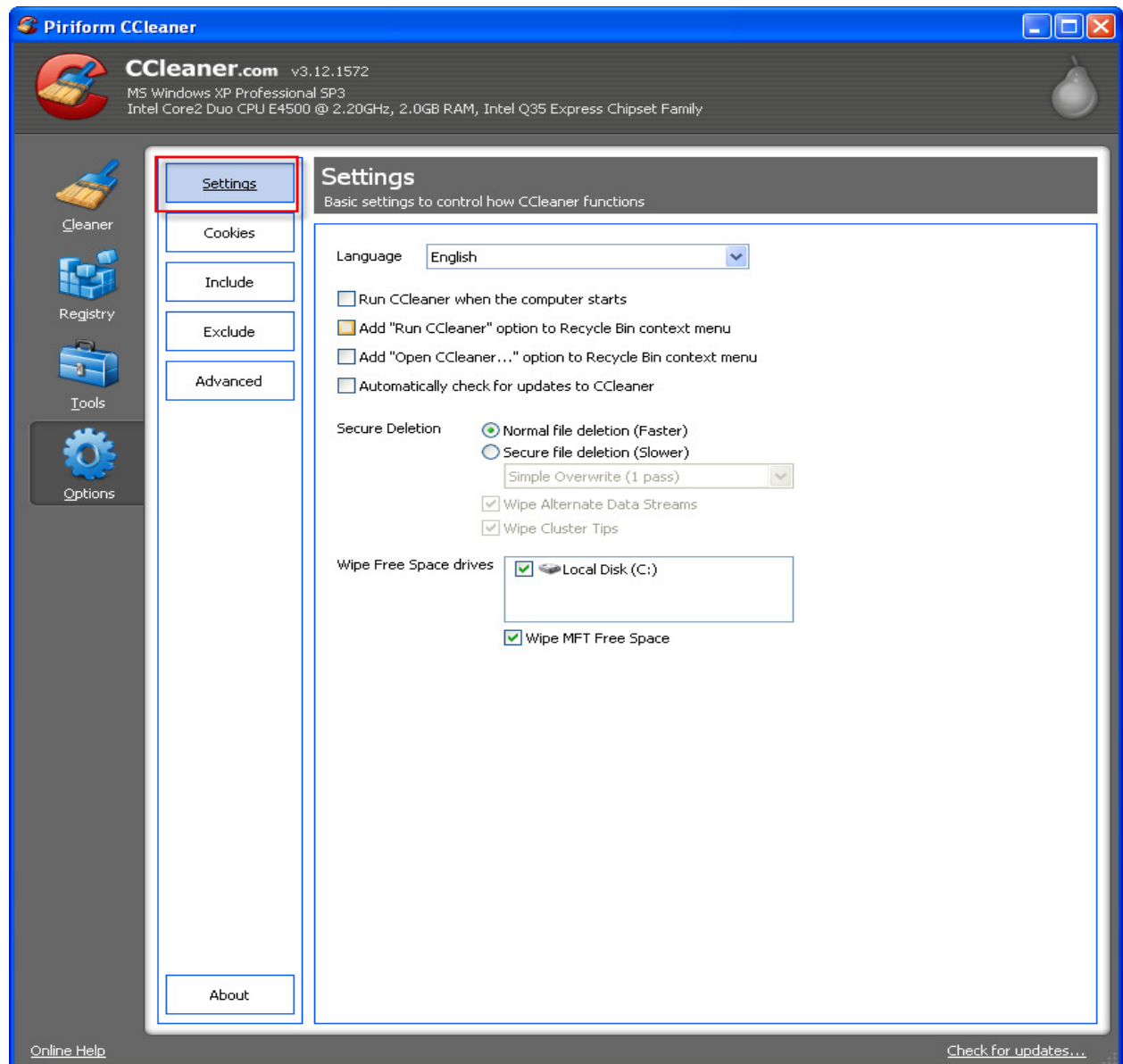
OK, it's done. I'm going to uncheck the View Release notes check box and let the application launch. Let's get right at seeing what CCleaner can do! Oh, you need to click Finish.



Here I've started by showing the options for CCleaner by clicking on the Options icon. We're looking at About, seen in the lower left corner of the panel. Note that you can check for updated versions of the application in the lower right corner. The extreme lower left corner (Online Help) brings up a very helpful set of web documentation for CCleaner.



Here we are looking at the Advanced Options. There are a variety of options that are pretty self-explanatory. These are pretty useful, and you may want to customize the application a bit to meet your particular needs.



We are now looking at the Settings Option for CCleaner. If for some reason you didn't get the settings right for yourself when you installed CCleaner, it's no problem. You can make changes here to alter the application behavior. One interesting point, when files are deleted by CCleaner (it's a file cleaner program, after all) there is an option to first overwrite the deleted files as a security precaution.

See the Secure Deletion option in the middle of the page, which can be set to various levels of security. We will take a look at this in more detail when we look later at the



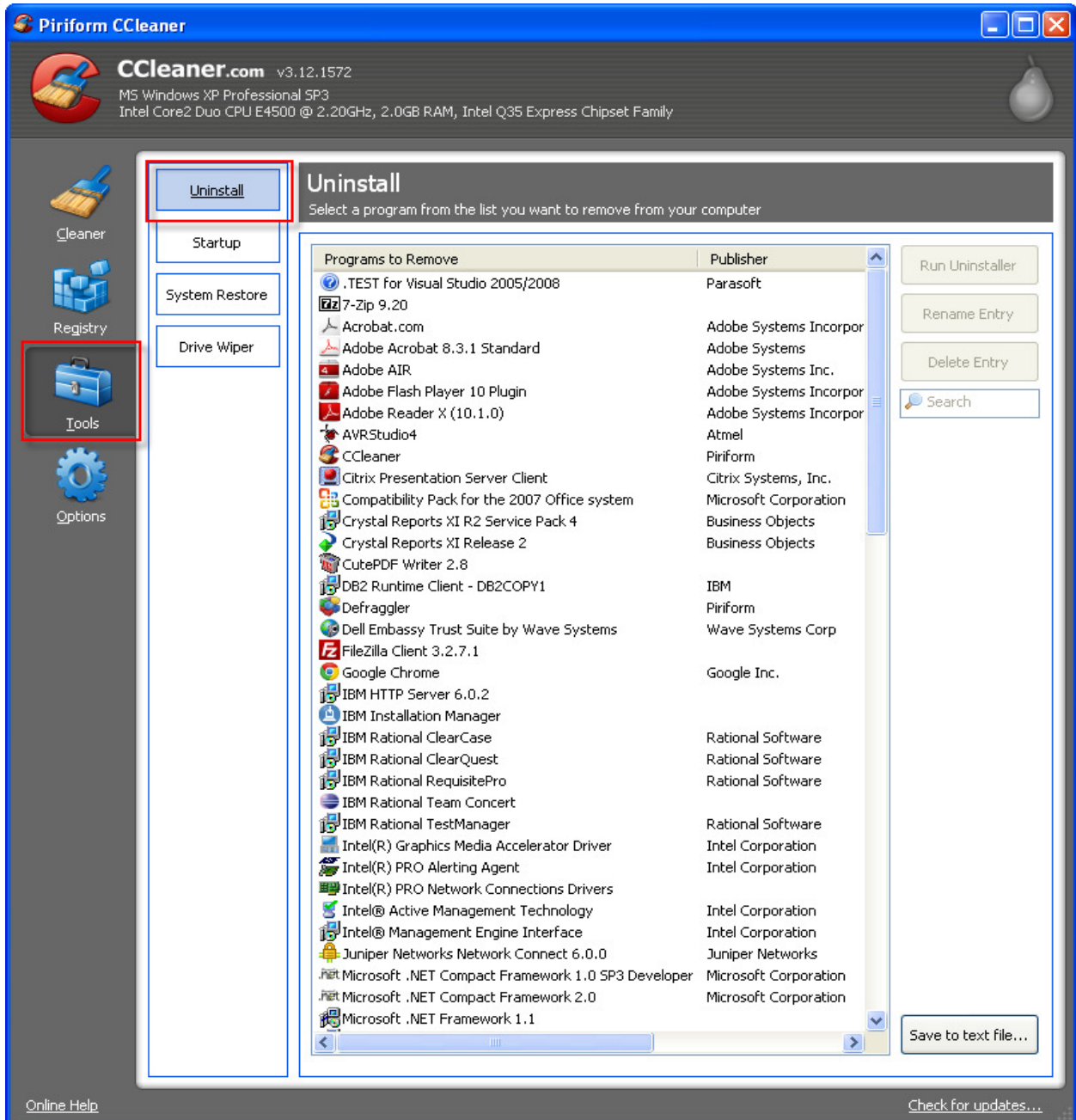
www.spkaa.com
Ph: 888-310-4540

SPK and Associates
900 E Hamilton Ave, Ste. 100
Campbell, CA 95008

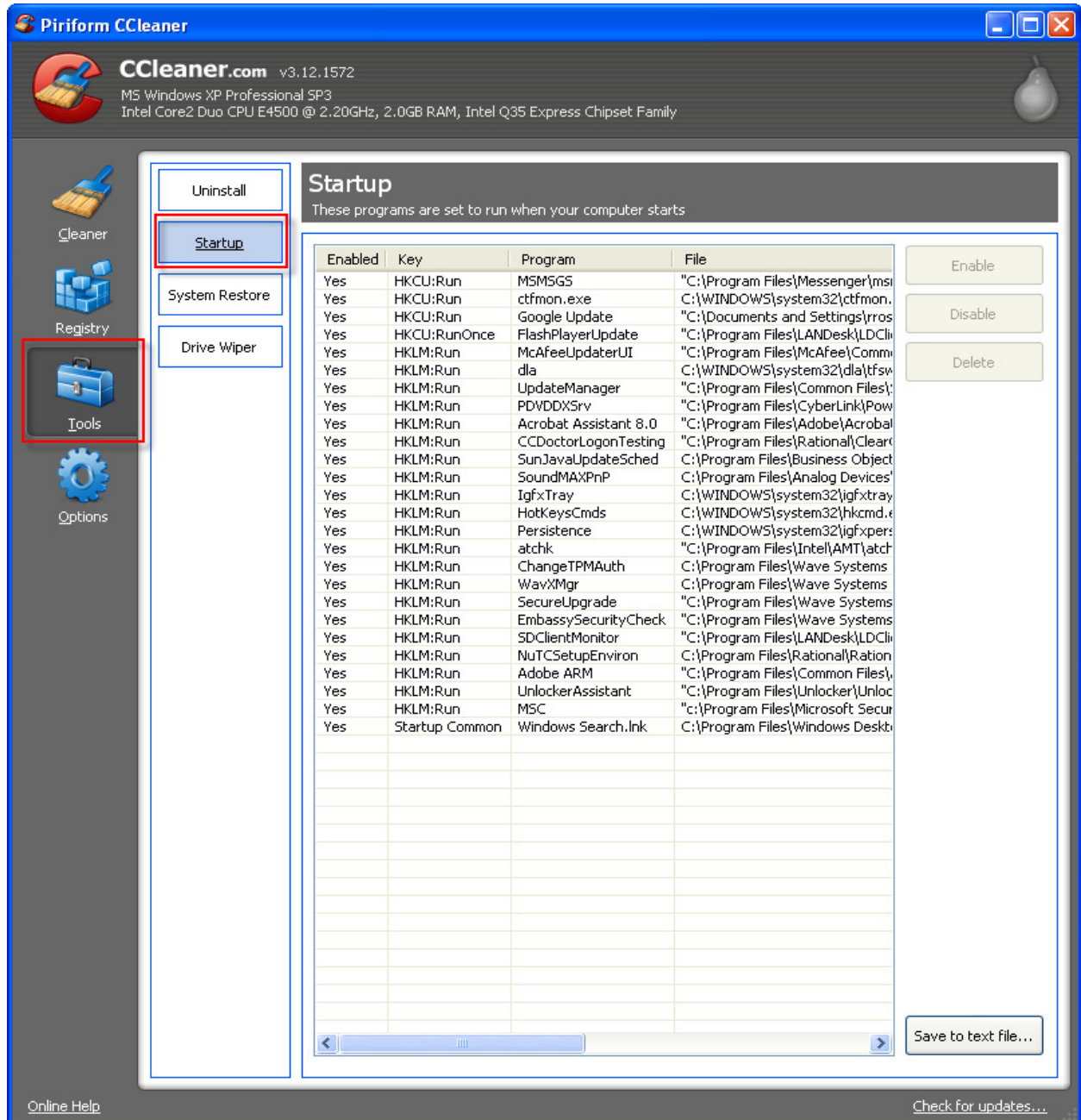
Disk Wiper feature. Some people think that if you've got nothing to hide, this isn't important. But really, if you're deleting things that you don't want anyone else to ever see (think tax records, etc., and issues of identity theft) these things are recoverable by a determined hacker. That's where the option to add CCleaner to the Recycle Bin context menu is really useful.

That way, simply right click on the recycle bin, and select "Run CCleaner", or "Open CCleaner...". Run CCleaner will then securely delete whatever is in the Recycle Bin. Note that files previously deleted without using CCleaner are not securely deleted. Piriform tells us that they have a tool called Recuva which accomplishes this, but that's a topic for another day.

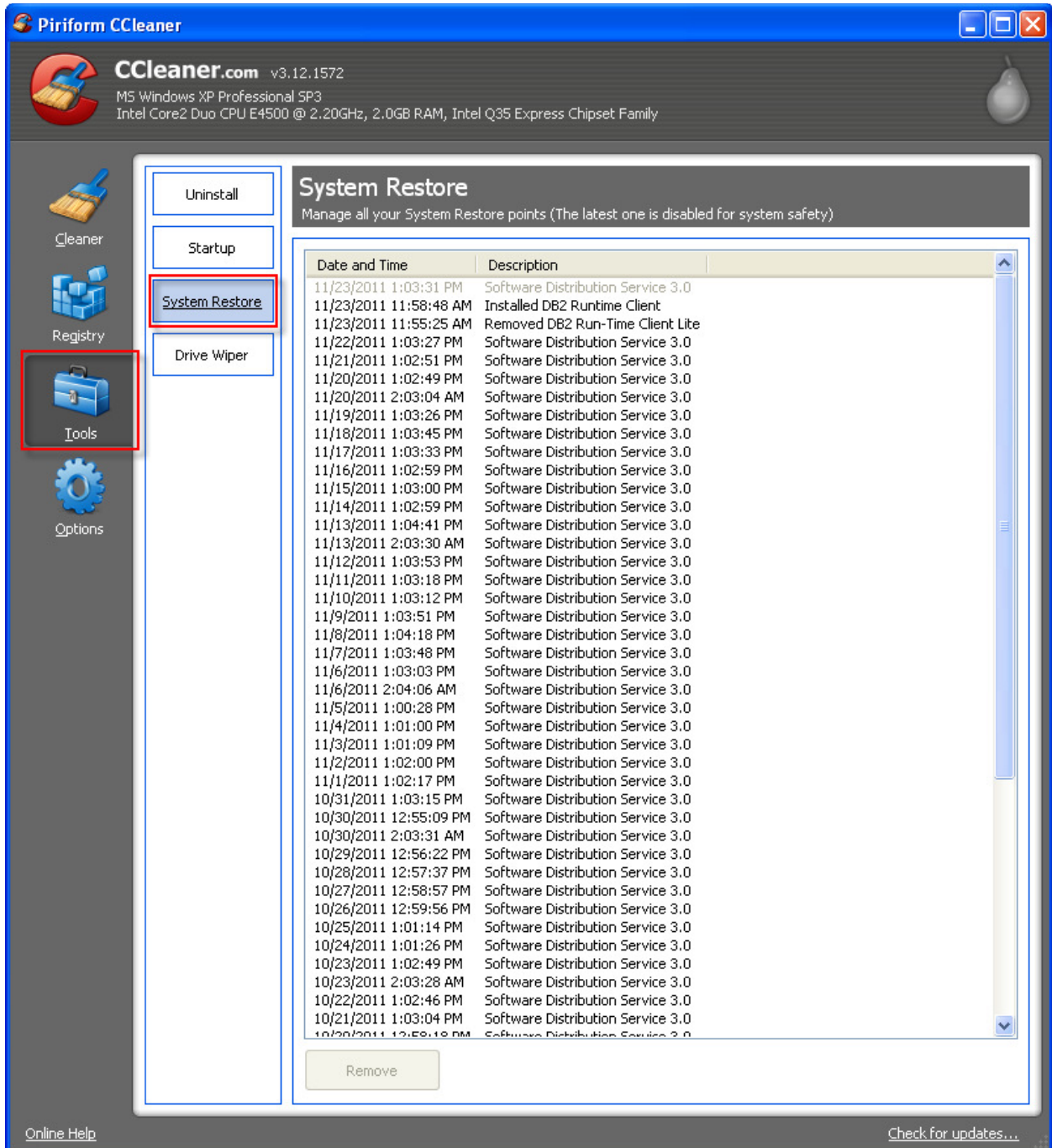
I'll leave the other Options for you to explore and at this point we will move on to the Tools Uninstall feature.



By clicking on Tools, and then Uninstall, we see that CCleaner gives us something similar to our Control Panel, Add/Delete option. But Add/Delete can take awhile to populate, and CCleaner is very quick. CCleaner also allows you to remove the entry from the list if the application had been previously uninstalled, but the entry remains for some reason.



Here is another nice feature of CCleaner. Do you have too many things that start up and slow the machine down when it is booted up? Here you can conveniently shut those things off until you might want them again for some reason. This can be pretty useful. You don't have to fuss with each individual application, just select the ones you want to disable here, and it's taken care of.



The screenshot shows the Piriform CCleaner application window. The title bar reads "Piriform CCleaner". The main window has a blue header with the CCleaner logo and version "v3.12.1572". Below the header, it displays the operating system: "MS Windows XP Professional SP3" and hardware information: "Intel Core2 Duo CPU E4500 @ 2.20GHz, 2.0GB RAM, Intel Q35 Express Chipset Family".

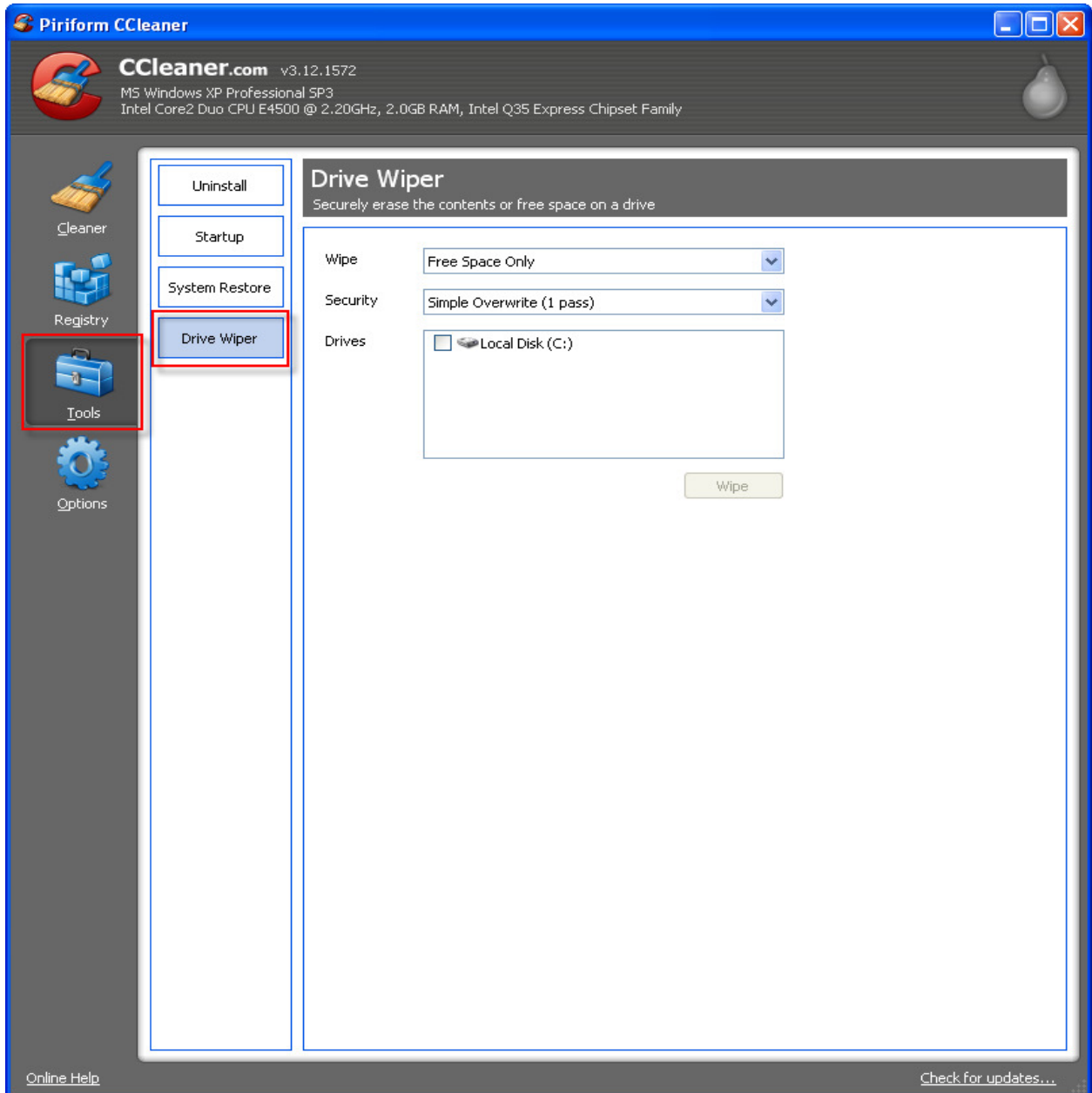
The interface is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains icons for "Cleaner", "Registry", "Tools" (highlighted with a red box), and "Options".
- Top Left Panel:** Contains buttons for "Uninstall", "Startup", "System Restore" (highlighted with a red box), and "Drive Wiper".
- Main Content Area:** Titled "System Restore" with the subtitle "Manage all your System Restore points (The latest one is disabled for system safety)". It features a table with the following columns: "Date and Time" and "Description".

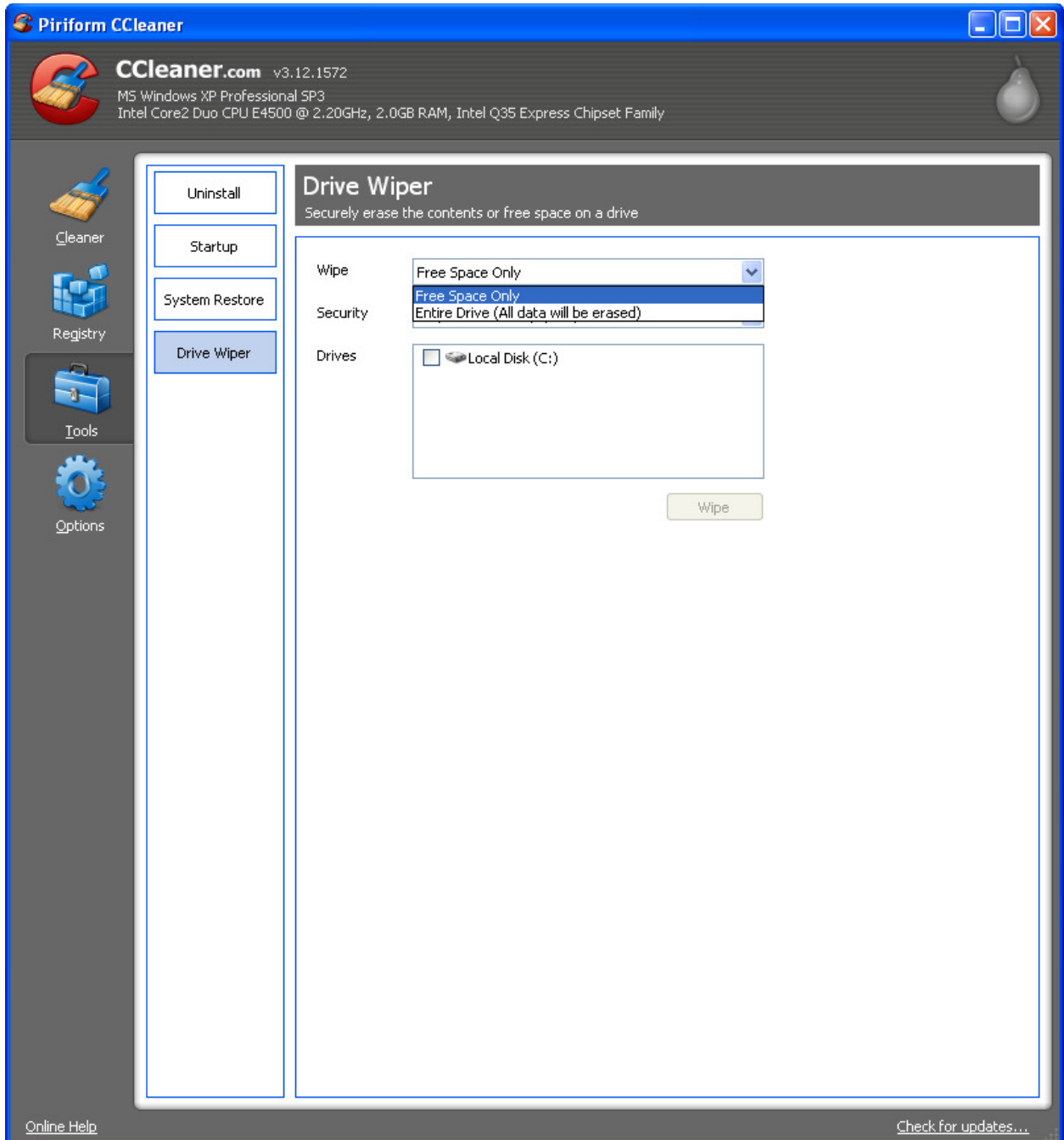
Date and Time	Description
11/23/2011 1:03:31 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/23/2011 11:58:48 AM	Installed DB2 Runtime Client
11/23/2011 11:55:25 AM	Removed DB2 Run-Time Client Lite
11/22/2011 1:03:27 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/21/2011 1:02:51 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/20/2011 1:02:49 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/20/2011 2:03:04 AM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/19/2011 1:03:26 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/18/2011 1:03:45 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/17/2011 1:03:33 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/16/2011 1:02:59 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/15/2011 1:03:00 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/14/2011 1:02:59 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/13/2011 1:04:41 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/13/2011 2:03:30 AM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/12/2011 1:03:53 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/11/2011 1:03:18 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/10/2011 1:03:12 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/9/2011 1:03:51 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/8/2011 1:04:18 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/7/2011 1:03:48 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/6/2011 1:03:03 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/6/2011 2:04:06 AM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/5/2011 1:00:28 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/4/2011 1:01:00 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/3/2011 1:01:09 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/2/2011 1:02:00 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
11/1/2011 1:02:17 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/31/2011 1:03:15 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/30/2011 12:55:09 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/30/2011 2:03:31 AM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/29/2011 12:56:22 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/28/2011 12:57:37 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/27/2011 12:58:57 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/26/2011 12:59:56 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/25/2011 1:01:14 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/24/2011 1:01:26 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/23/2011 1:02:49 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/23/2011 2:03:28 AM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/22/2011 1:02:46 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/21/2011 1:03:04 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0
10/20/2011 12:59:18 PM	Software Distribution Service 3.0

At the bottom of the table, there is a "Remove" button. The bottom of the window includes "Online Help" on the left and "Check for updates..." on the right.

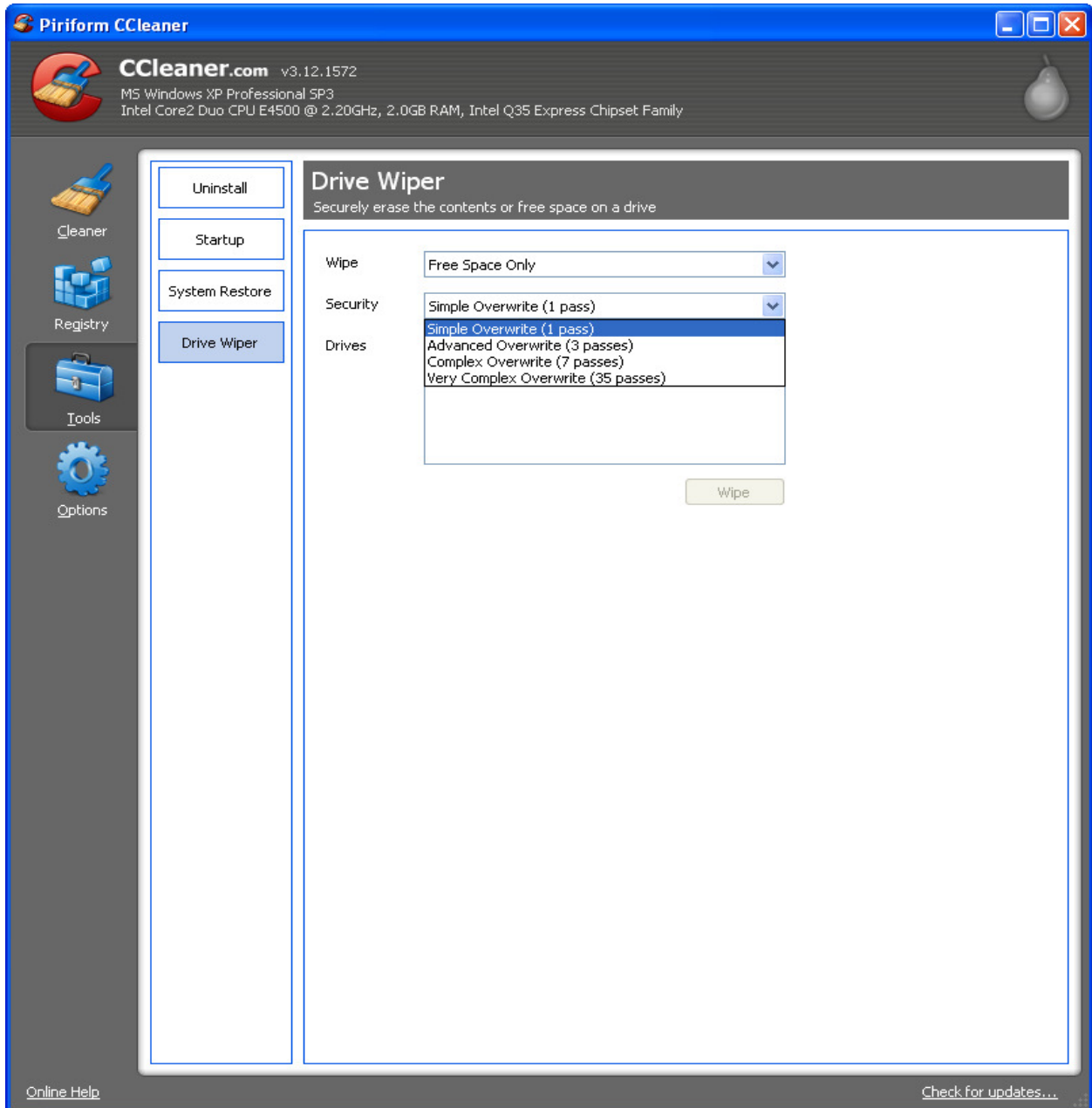
Have too many system restore points? Here's a quick way to manage them. Remove the ones that no longer make any sense to keep. But one thing, the latest system restore point can't be removed, and that's not a bug, it's a safety feature!



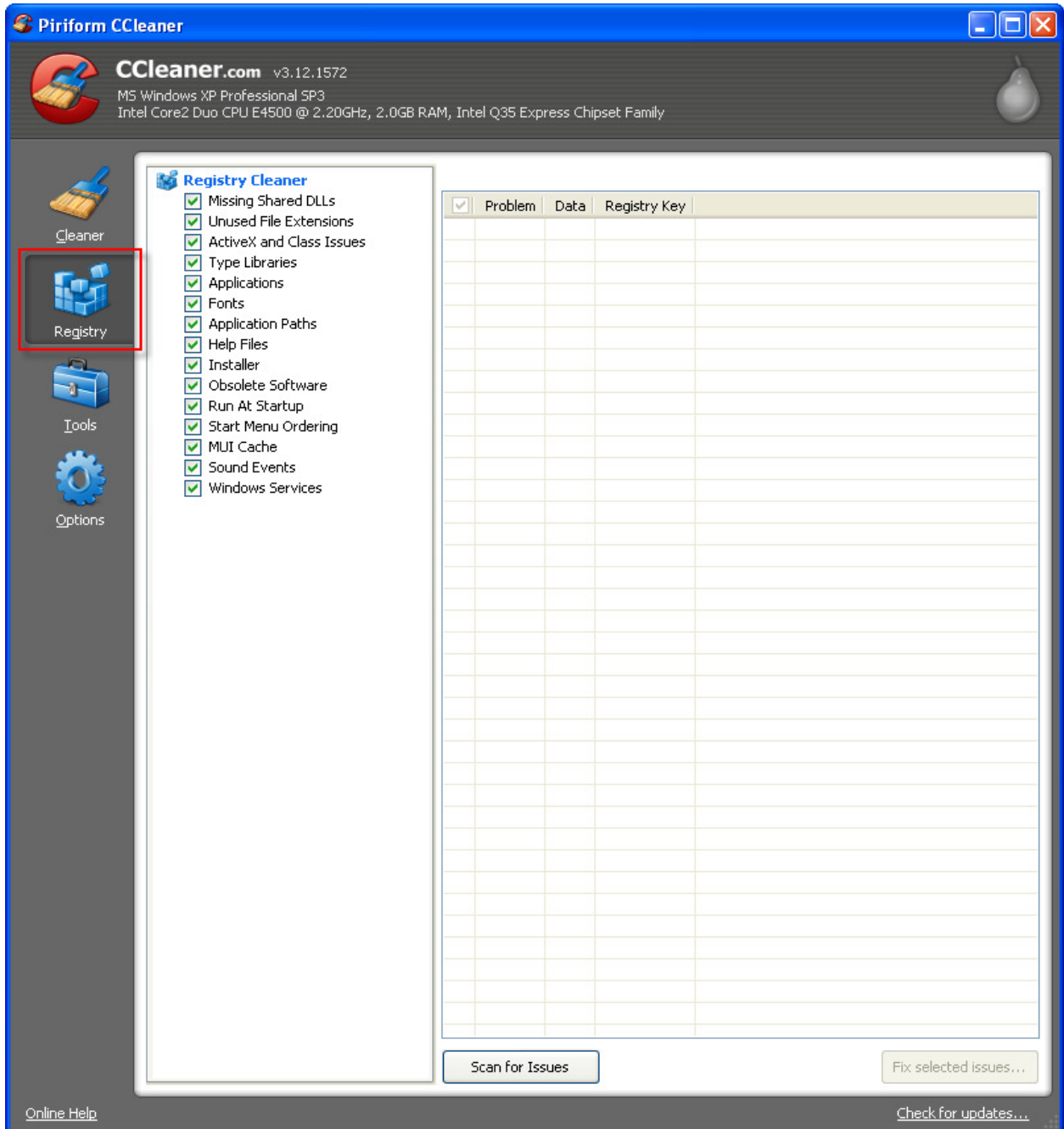
OK, now we return to the topic of destroying previously deleted files. CCleaner has an option to wipe any free space remaining on the disk. This includes previously deleted files. Downside – it can take a good bit of time. If you're going to do this, maybe start it up right before you go out to lunch. But, once it's been done, you can maintain security by wiping files as they are deleted from the Recycle Bin. Some further options are displayed below.



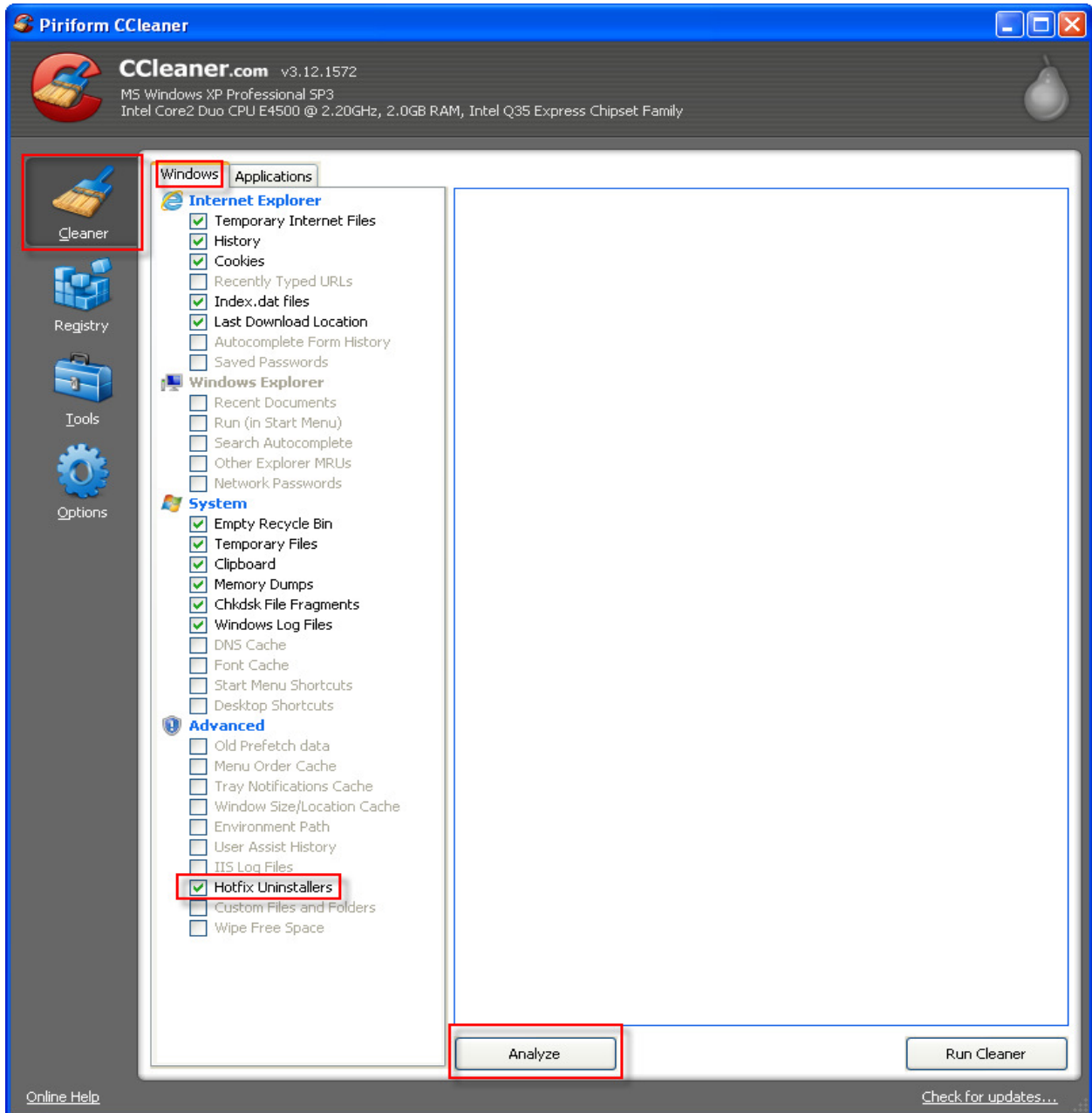
Here we see that there is an option to wipe the entire disk. It's no joke, so be very sure of what you are doing before you choose this. To be clear, if you choose this, all your data is forever destroyed (oops!) The system drive is excluded from this option (again, think safety feature!)



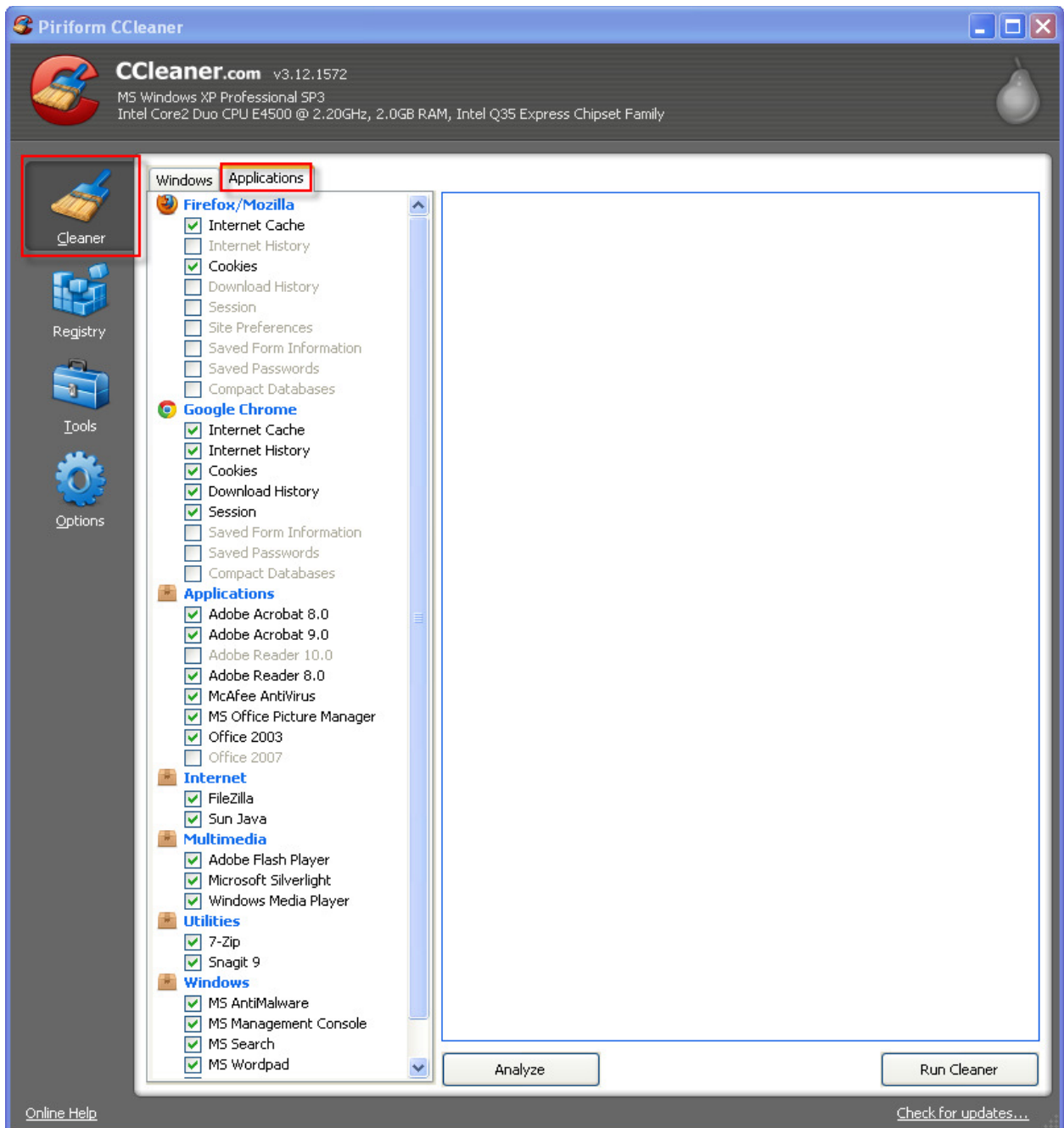
Here we see that you can choose multiple overwrites of a file to make sure that nobody can ever restore or reconstruct this digital data. OK, the feature is here, but in most cases a Simple Overwrite (1 pass) is good enough. Unless you work for the Pentagon or some other employer you can't talk about, a single pass ought to suffice. Remember that if you select more than 1 pass, it's going to take that much more time to finish the job.



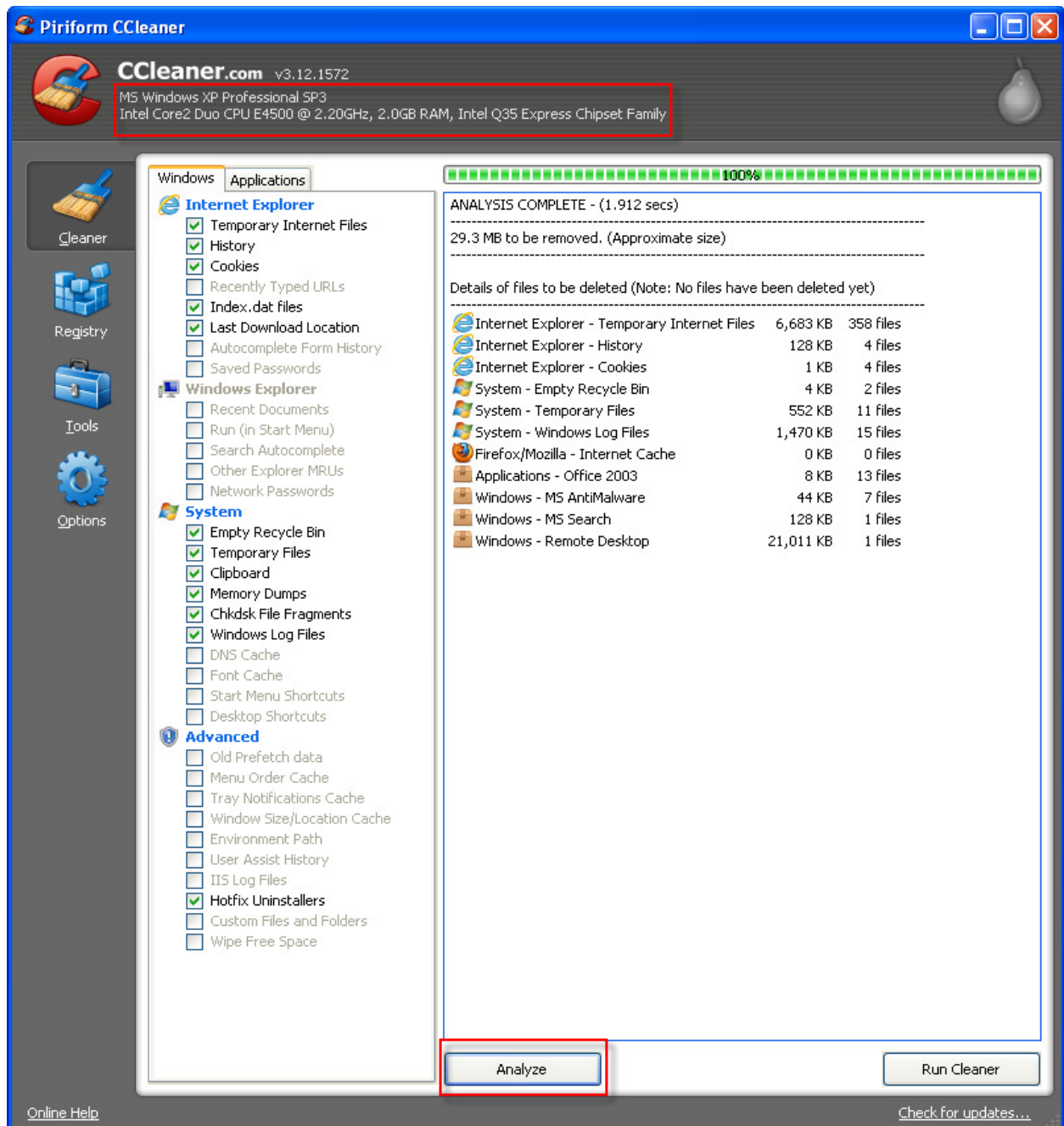
Now we get to the registry cleaner. Having this feature provides a utility that is much more full featured. Click "Scan for Issues" and a list of potential problems will be displayed. See the following screenshot for an example.



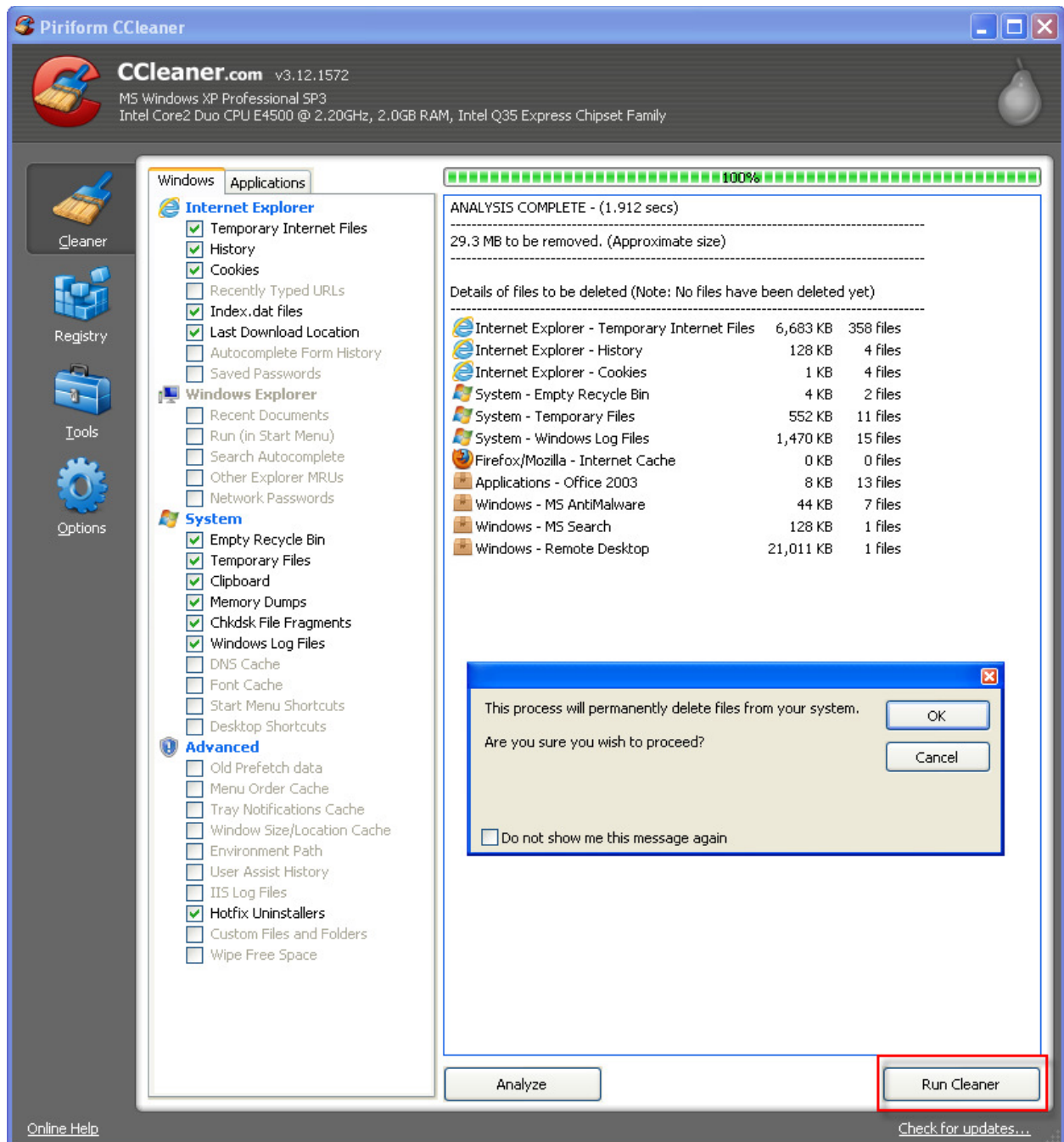
OK, after the previous preliminaries, we finally we get to the main feature of CCleaner. Under the Windows tab, we see the many items that we can direct CCleaner to check for. One notable item is the Hotfix Uninstallers. After Windows installs its many patches, these uninstallers are left behind, are rarely used, and can add up to a good chunk of space. Clicking the Analyze button will give us a list of items that can be removed. But before we do that, let's first take a look at the Applications tab.



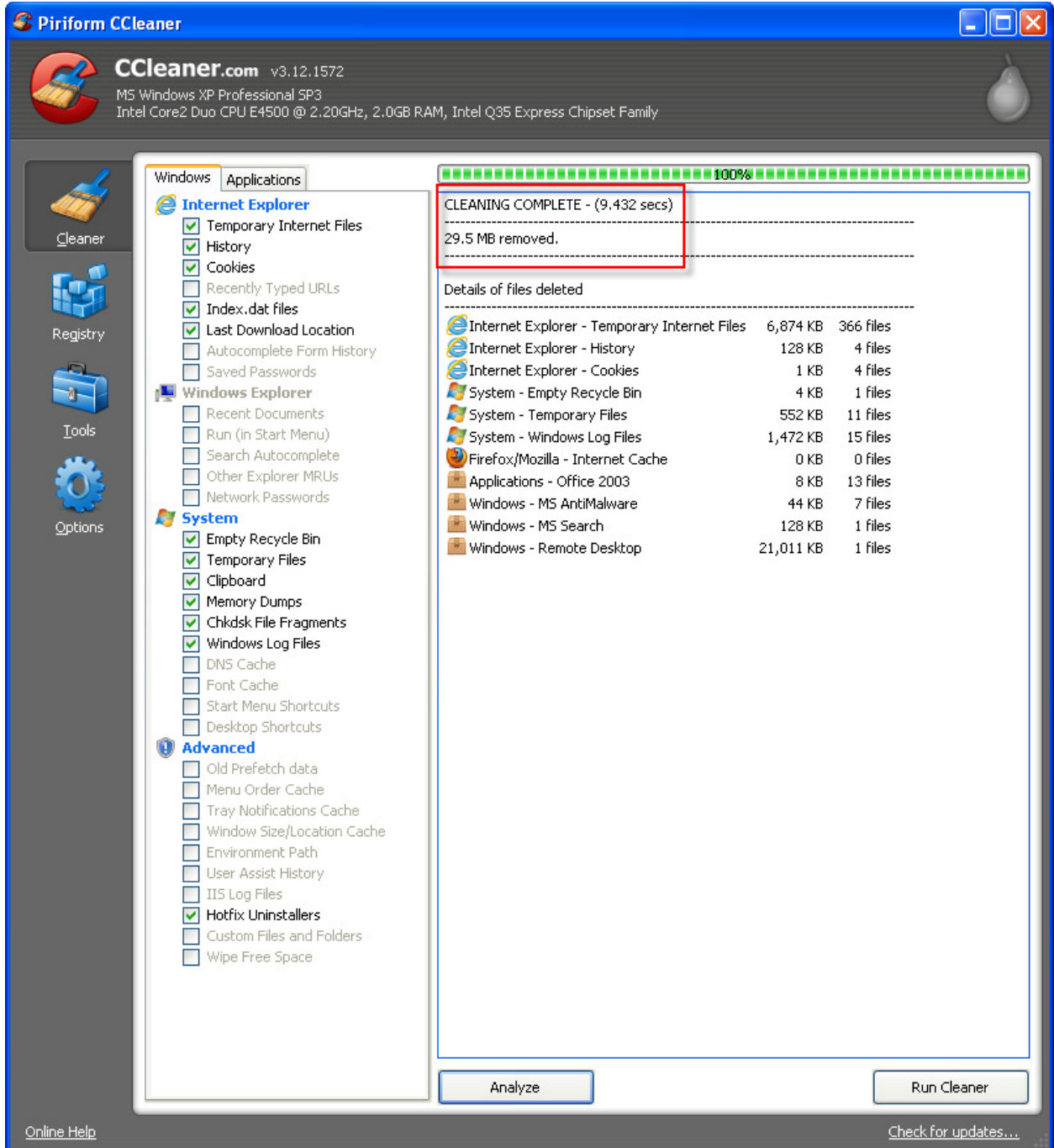
The Applications tab displays a list of applications for which CCleaner will search for unused files. This can be useful if you want to remove anything remaining from a removed or upgraded application. Let's go ahead and click Analyze now.



Here we see the result of the CCleaner analysis. Obviously, this machine has had CCleaner run on it previously, since not a great deal was found. I think you'll be surprised at how much is found the first time CCleaner is run on your machine. Once the list has been presented, you can elect to click on Run Cleaner to remove the files.



After clicking Run Cleaner, we are presented with an option to cancel the cleaning activity. But if you've previously reviewed the list of files to be removed, there's not much to be concerned about. Go ahead and click OK to proceed. The next screenshot shows the results of the action.



Here we see that all the selected files have been removed. Note also the message at the top of the screen which gives the total amount of storage reclaimed and also the amount of time it took to accomplish this.



www.spkaa.com
Ph: 888-310-4540

SPK and Associates
900 E Hamilton Ave, Ste. 100
Campbell, CA 95008

So, to wrap up, CCleaner is a veritable Swiss Army knife of tools. Here is a recap on what is included:

- Reclaim space by deleting unneeded files
- Feature to overwrite files deleted from Recycle Bin
- Program uninstall manager
- System startup program manager
- System restore point deletion manager
- Disk wiper for unused disk space
- Registry cleaner

This is quite a good number of tools to have, all in one package. And if you want support for CCleaner, there are paid versions of the tool which will allow for this. My advice, download, install, and try it out. You may find that you don't want to do without it.