Utility Software

A program that performs a very specific task, usually related to managing system resources. Operating systems contain a number of utilities for managing disk drives, printers, and other devices.

Utilities differ from applications mostly in terms of size, complexity and function. For example, word processors, spreadsheet programs, and database applications are considered applications because they are large programs that perform a variety of functions not directly related to managing computer resources.

Utilities are sometimes installed as memory-resident programs. On DOS systems, such utilities are called TSRs.

Utility software categories

Anti-virus utilities scan for computer viruses.

Archivers output a stream or a single file when provided with a directory or a set of files. Archive utilities, unlike archive suites, usually do not include compression or encryption capabilities. Some archive utilities may even have a separate un-archive utility for the reverse operation.

Backup software can make copies of all information stored on a disk and restore either the entire disk (e.g. in an event of disk failure) or selected files (e.g. in an event of accidental deletion).

Clipboard managers expand the clipboard functionality of an operating system.

Cryptographic utilities encrypt and decrypt streams and files.

Data compression utilities output a shorter stream or a smaller file when provided with a stream or file.

Data synchronization utilities establish consistency among data from a source to target data storage and vice versa. There are several branches of this type of utility:

- **File synchronization utilities** maintain consistency between two sources. They may be used to create redundancy or backup copies but are also used to help users carry their digital music, photos and video in their mobile devices.

- **Revision control utilities** are intended to deal with situations where more than one user attempts to simultaneously modify the same file.

Disk checkers can scan operating hard drive.

Disk cleaners can find files that are unnecessary to computer operation, or take up considerable amounts of space. Disk cleaner helps the user to decide what to delete when their hard disk is full.

Disk compression utilities can transparently compress/uncompress the contents of a disk, increasing the capacity of the disk.

Disk defragmenters can detect computer files whose contents are broken across several locations on the hard disk, and move the fragments to one location to increase efficiency.

Disk partitions can divide an individual drive into multiple logical drives, each with its own file system which can be mounted by the operating system and treated as an individual drive.

Disk space analyzers for the visualization of disk space usage by getting the size for each folder (including sub folders) & files in folder or drive. Show the distribution of the used space.

File managers provide a convenient method of performing routine data management tasks, such as deleting, renaming, cataloging, uncataloging, moving, copying, merging, generating and modifying data sets.

Hex editors directly modify the text or data of a file. These files could be data or an actual program.

Memory testers check for memory failures.

Network utilities analyze the computer's network connectivity, configure network settings, check data transfer or log events.

Registry cleaners clean and optimize the Windows registry by removing old registry keys that are no longer in use.

Screensavers were desired to prevent phosphor burn-in on CRT and plasma computer monitors by blanking

the screen or filling it with moving images or patterns when the computer is not in use. Contemporary screensavers are used primarily for entertainment or security.

System monitors for monitoring resources and performance in a computer system.

System profilers provide detailed information about the software installed and hardware attached to the computer.