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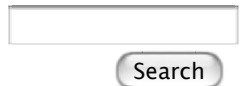
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Today's Featured Article

☰ Late-Breakers

Wednesday, September 21 2005 @ 06:18 AM PDT

Special Report: Fixes for system-wide freezes when Web browsing

Over the past several days we have been covering an issue where users experience a stall in Safari or other Web browsers when accessing certain Web sites that usually leads to a complete system freeze accompanied by the unending "spinning beach ball" progress indicator.

The typical chain of events is as follows:

1. Web pages suddenly stop loading - sometimes halfway through a page
2. Applications (apparently all of them) then refuse to launch, first bouncing in the dock for up to a minute and then simply having a stationary, inactive icon in the dock
3. After that, the system becomes completely unresponsive; switching between open applications works, but finder functions are unavailable (the dock doesn't work, menus are inaccessible, force quit key command does not respond).
4. Eventually, I am left with a spinning cursor and must shut down the machine using the power button.

We've attributed this issue to Apple's recently released Java Update 1.3.1 and 1.4.2 release 2, and it certainly seems that this release has caused an increase in prevalence of this issue. However, the root cause appears to be a long-standing bug in the Mac OS X `lookupd` process. As such, the problem is also appearing on systems that have not yet received this update.

It seems that the reason why this issue has increased in frequency since the Java update is an increase in, or

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change to the networking routines that are routed through `lookupd`. In other words, though there is a potential for this bug to manifest on systems without the update, the changes made by the update seem to make some systems more susceptible.

That being said, we've identified several fixes for this issue -- many published yesterday under the Java 1.3.1 and 1.4.2 release 2 heading. Since the cause of the problem may be varied, it's best to take a "shotgun"-type approach, trying one workaround after another then checking for persistence of the issue -- which unfortunately, in most cases, requires several minutes or hours of routine Web browsing until the crash re-occurs.

Fixes/Workarounds

Interrupt your network (disconnect cables, turn off AirPort) The quick and dirty workaround for this issue involves power cycling your network adapter (router, Cable/DSL modem, etc.) or disconnecting an active Ethernet cable.

Doing so will temporarily free up `lookupd` from active network processes and allow normal system operation to resume. After doing this the first time this issue develops, move onto the following workarounds.

Restart lookupd The following Terminal command will cause `lookupd` to automatically restart, usually ceasing the unresponsive system state. However, this requires that the freeze has not progressed to the point where you can no longer access the Terminal. The command is as follows (note that the `lookupd` process has to be active for this command to work):

- o `sudo kill -HUP `cat /var/run/lookupd.pid``

As noted by MacFixIt reader Brent Gulanowski:

"(After entering this command) `lookupd` will be restarted immediately (by `launchd` on Tiger), at which point it will re-read its configuration files etc. Also anything stalling on waiting for `lookupd` to return *should* then return immediately."

Killing the "crashdump" process Failing the above workaround, you may have success using the following process if you can still open the Terminal:

1. Use `ps -ax` to get a list of currently running processes
2. Look for the "crashdump" process and note its PID (process ID, the first number in its listing)
3. Enter the command `kill PID` where PID is replaced by the process ID for crashdump.

Another Terminal workaround Another Terminal-based workaround, previously published on MacFixIt for a similar issue, has proven successful in this case. It involves setting a higher timeout for the `lookupd` process. Open the Terminal, and enter the following commands, pressing return after each one.

1. `sudo mkdir /etc/lookupd`
2. `sudo sh -c "echo TimeToLive 300 > /etc/lookupd/hosts"`
3. `sudo sh -c "echo ValidateCache NO >> /etc/lookupd/hosts"`

After entering these commands, restart your Mac and power cycle any network adapters

(Cable/DSL modems), AirPort base stations, other routers, etc.

Delete the lookupd cache Apparently, the lookupd process and associated files can become corrupt when applying incremental Mac OS X updates, or other modifications. The Terminal command:

- `lookupd -flushcache`

flushes the lookupd installation and can resolve these issues in some cases.

Use unlockupd You may also want to try using the utility [Unlockupd](#), which periodically checks lookupd's status and forces it to restart should it fail.

Turn off Java Some users have reported that simply turning off Java in Safari or your chosen browser resolves this issue, though this obviously does not represent a long-term fix.

In Safari this can be accomplished by opening the application's preferences, clicking the "Security" tab, then unchecking the "Enable Java" option.

Feedback? Late-breakers@macfixit.com.

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Special Report: Fixes for system-wide freezes when Web browsing

Authored by: [RadioFlyer](#) on Wednesday, September 21 2005 @ 07:54 AM PDT

The solution to my problems with the symptoms you describe was to plug my G5 directly into the cable modem and by pass the router. For weeks I considered the router to be the cause of my problems until I tried a replacement router and the internet access problems continued. About the time you began reporting on this I reinstalled Tiger and all the updates except the Java one and my internet access speed is excellent again.

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Special Report: Fixes for system-wide freezes when Web browsing

Authored by: [msisson](#) on Wednesday, September 21 2005 @ 08:38 AM PDT

Running Tiger Cache Cleaner on my system solved this problem for me.

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Special Report: Fixes for system-wide freezes when Web browsing

Authored by: [altoidboy](#) on Wednesday, September 21 2005 @ 09:06 AM PDT

i'm having bad problems with the exact same thing, unplugging ethernet cable

fixes the issue for me. hopefully apple will fix this PRONTO!

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Special Report: Fixes for system-wide freezes when Web browsing

Authored by: [iGreg](#) on Wednesday, September 21 2005 @ 09:27 AM PDT

I run Cocktail or Tiger Cache cleaner regularly to clean caches once every week or two. Also, I use Safari Enhancer to disable Safari cache. Does any of this help, I do not know, but I have never had the total freeze described.

I have never experienced this total freeze using Safari. However, sometimes a site won't load and I get a Safari message that the site won't load. I then back out & go elsewhere.

iMac G5, 17", 1.8 GHz, 1GB RAM
PowerBook G4, 12", 1.5 GHz, 768 MB RAM
Both OS 10.4.2

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