



PRECISION BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

## *Why is my computer slow? by Brian Shift*

For most people, if it's broke, you fix it or replace it. But...what if it's just slow? Should you upgrade it? Will the upgrade work? Is the upgrade cost effective? Those are most likely some of the questions running through your mind.

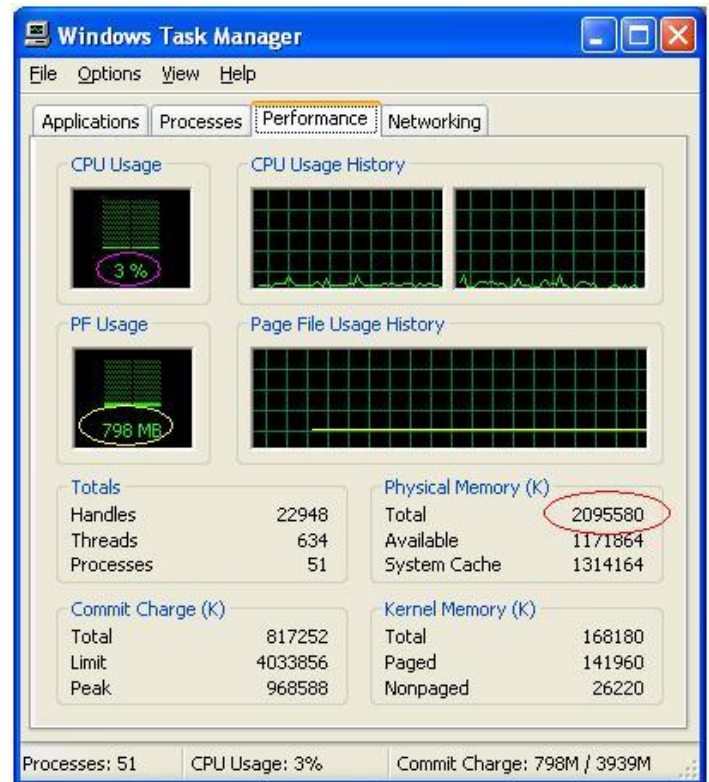
We'll start at the beginning with the two main items that determine your computer's speed; the processor and memory (or RAM). The more you have of each, the faster your computer will be.

First, we're going to open up a tool that will tell us some performance information about the computer, including the CPU Utilization and Memory used. To open the Task Manager, go to **Start > Run** and type in **taskmgr** and click OK. On business computers, you can press **CTRL + ALT + DEL** and select **Task Manager**.

Once it is open, you'll want to click on the Performance tab.

Three key indicators to look at:

- Red = Amount of memory you have (if you drop the last three numbers, it will tell you how many MB of RAM = 2,095MB).
- Yellow = The amount of memory your system is currently using. Currently 798MB.
- Pink = The current CPU utilization (how hard your processor is working). Currently 3%.



We'll take a look at the memory first. If you are using more memory than you have, then your computer uses "fake" memory, which is very, very slow. Using the reading from the image, this system has 2,095MB of RAM, and is using 798MB of ram, which means it has an additional 1,297 available (which is very good). But, if your computer only had 512MB ram and is using 798MB, then you have -286, which means your computer is running very slow. In this instance, a \$60 memory upgrade will make a dramatic improvement. You need to have as much RAM as you use, or your computer will be very slow.

If memory is fine, then the next thing to look at is the processor, to see if it is slowing you down. The easiest way to determine this is to minimize the Task Manager, and it will appear in your task bar at the bottom right of your computer. The green will go up and down, measuring your processor utilization. If it is all green, then your processor is maxed out, which is why your computer is slow. Granted, when programs are loading, the processor will be maxed out for a short period of time. But, if the processor is maxed out for a significant amount of time (eg. 6+ seconds), then a processor upgrade will speed things up. But, many times, replacing a processor means replacing a computer, so it may not be cost effective to do.

If neither of those two appears to be the cause of your computer's slowness, your computer most likely needs cleaned up. Please contact a computer company to have them clean up your system.