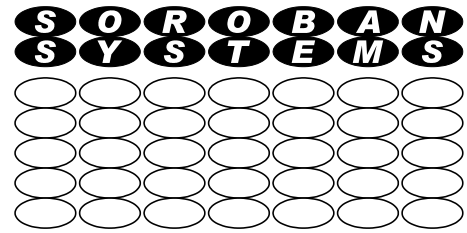


Soroban Support Guide



Display Windows System Information

Summary

This document describes how to obtain detailed information from a Windows Operating system to help an expert to assist you if you are experiencing problems with a Windows system or there is some information required to complete, for example, a security report.

This diagnostic information is collected via a free software tool, Speccy.

As a user you do not need to understand the data collected and reported and this guide does not attempt to provide this information. Your expert however should be able to understand the data reported.

No personal data is collected by this tool other than your computer name which is not usually regarded as a significant security threat.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
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| Revised by: | John Steele |
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Revisions

| Version | Date | Changed by | Summary of change |
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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 What problem are we addressing

When investigating Windows issues, or evaluating the system security, it can sometimes be helpful to have access to detailed information about your Windows installation on your computer. Most of this information can be obtained using native Windows commands but the tool described here makes it easy to extract this information and present it in a clear and consistent format.

This document describes how a non expert can use this free tool to collect all this information and to pass it on to an expert who can assist.

We will be describing how to download and install a free program that can collect a large amount of Windows data, format it and display it in structured manner in a set of pages. If you are not experienced with Windows data much of this may not be easily interpreted but one important feature of this program is that it can export all of this data in a relatively small file that can be passed to an expert (e.g. via email or memory stick) for them to open, and review using the same program, but perhaps even on another computer.

1.2 Program credentials – risk assessment

It is never safe to just use any program, an especially one that can by design, access all your operating system data without considering who created the program. Out of necessity any such program must have access to all the Operating System data and to do this it has to run using Administrator privileges. In other words it must be trusted!

The program recommended here is produced by one of the companies that specialises in system security and produces one of the leading Antivirus programs, Avast! As well as other reputable tools. The risk of this program causing damage is therefore considered to be very small.

1.3 Downloading and installing the program

The program we will be using is called Speccy.

The download link for the program is <https://www.ccleaner.com/speccy>

The download page when this document was created is shown in Figure 1 below.

Note that the Installation and Run instructions are based on Windows 10. They may need to be revised for Windows 11.

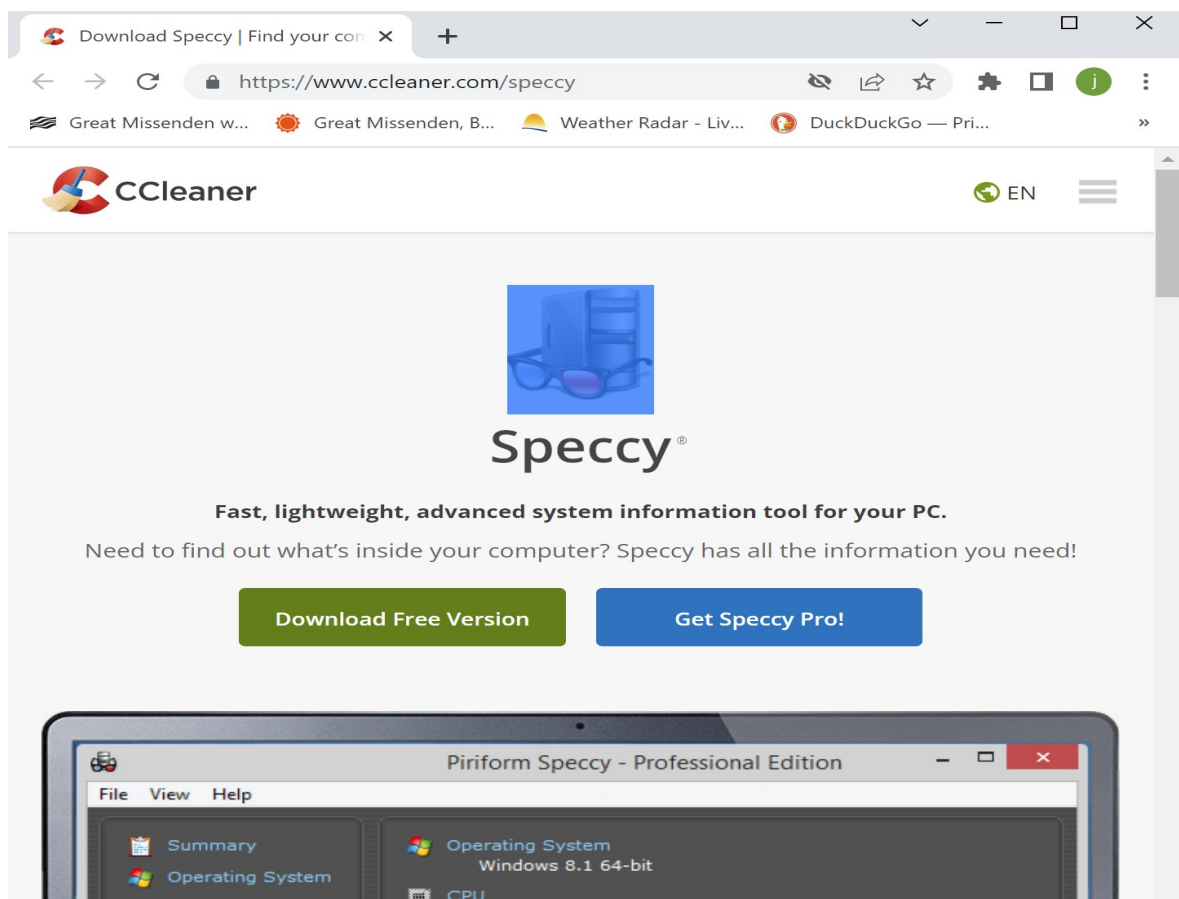


Figure 1: Speccy download page (Jan 2023)

Click on **Download free version**.

At the time of preparing this document this process takes you through three more clicks until it eventually gets to the real download button. You definitely want the free one.

This will typically default to downloading to your Downloads folder.

When the download has completed navigate to the downloads folder, identify the downloaded file which is called spsetup132.exe.

Click on the file to install it.

If you are browsing with a Standard User account then you should receive a prompt to enter the Administration account. It needs Administration privileges to run. Alternatively Right Click on the file and select Run as administrator. You will need the Administrator password to successfully install the program.

If you do not see such a prompt you are already running with Administration privileges and unless you have already **deliberately** chosen to run with Administrator rights you should seriously consider whether to follow the strongly recommended advice in the guide:

<http://www.soroban.co.uk/published-guides/sg-windows-two-accounts.pdf>

1.4 Running Speccy

Once the program has been installed it should appear in your Start menu. It might be in recently used items at the top or in a Speccy folder in the alphabetically sorted Start menu.

If you are running as a Standard User then Right click and select **More** and then **Run as Administrator**. Otherwise just run the program.

Figure 2 below shows a typical initial screen. Depending on the speed of your computer this may take some time to appear.

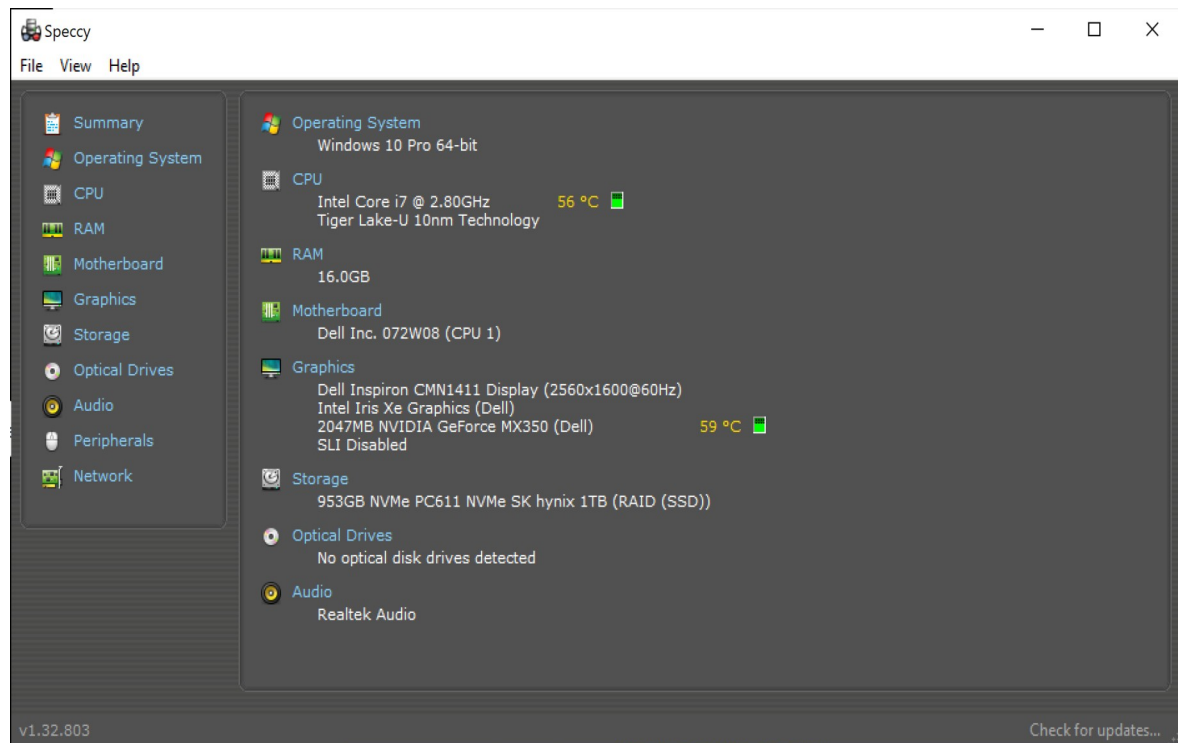


Figure 2: Speccy initial view

Each of the blue headings on the left side (major headings) panel or on the right hand panel (sub headings) replaces the right hand panel with additional detail.

If you are inexperienced then the information may appear daunting although it can be interesting to explore and it cannot do any harm. **This program cannot change any settings.**

The main benefit of this program is to capture this data so it can be forwarded to an expert to assist them to help you.

It is very easy to do this. Open the **File Menu** and click the **Save Snapshot** item.

This will open a Save File dialog box and it will have selected a filename based on the computer name. It will use the .speccy file extension. However there is a gotcha:

- If you are running as a Standard User and have used **Run As** to gain Administration rights this will typically default to saving to the Desktop.
 - ◆ Be warned that this is the **Administrator account desktop** and NOT the user account.
 - ◆ If you intend to email the snapshot you will almost certainly need to save it somewhere that the normal Standard User can access.
 - ◆ The recommended method is to save it to the Public Desktop as follows:
 - With the Save As dialog box open navigate to the Users Folder on (typically) the C: drive. See Figure 3 below.
 - Open the Users folder and select the Public folder and open it.

- Now find and open the Public Desktop folder as shown in Figure 4.

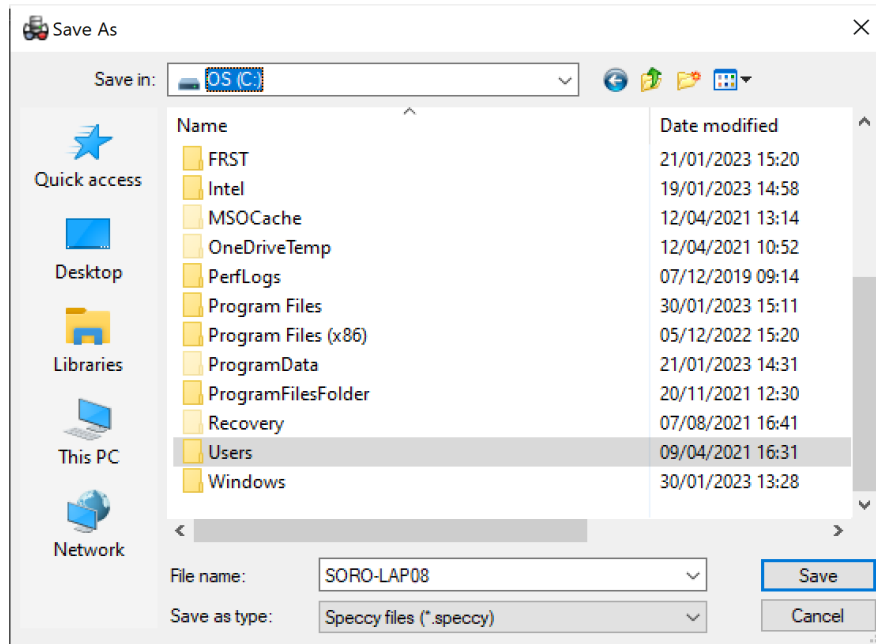


Figure 3: Find the “Users” folder

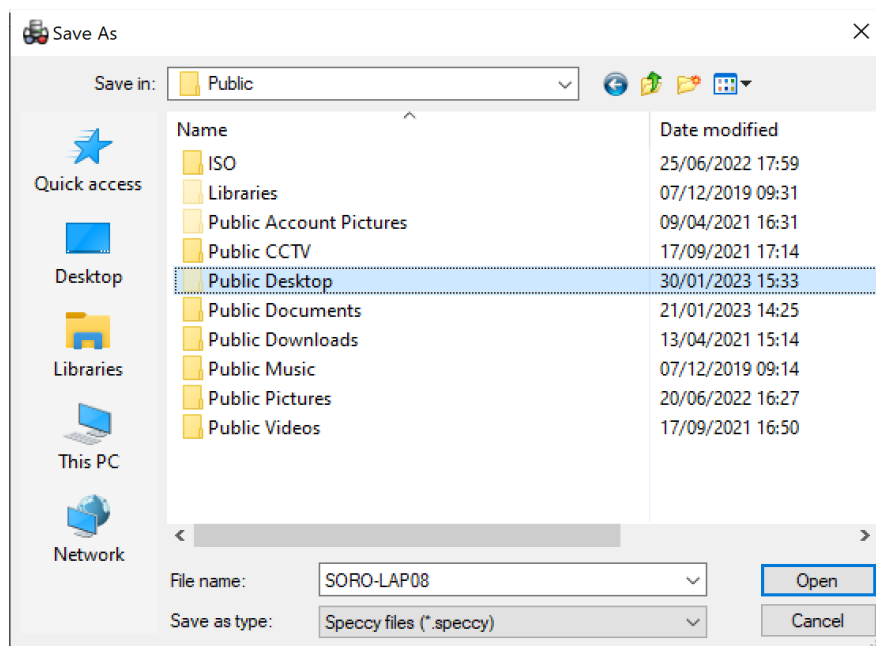


Figure 4: Find the “Public Desktop” folder

When you click on Public Desktop to open the folder there will probably be little, or probably, nothing showing there but if you now **Save** the *.speccky file it should appear on your normal User’s computer’s Desktop with the file name shown. In this case **SORO-LAP08.speccky**.

Alternatively you could save it to a memory stick!

You can then email this file (it is not too large) to your support expert and when your issue has been dealt with the file may be deleted.

1.5 Your Expert's actions

When your expert receives the snapshot, whether by email or via a memory stick, they can simply open it using their installation of Speccy! Note you still need to run as Administrator!

It is beyond the scope of this guide to describe how to interpret the Speccy display. It should be simple (at least some parts) to understand by someone familiar with Windows.