

Introduction

Our company, Systems and Education Limited, provides technical support and guidance to over 50 primary schools. We've been working with primary schools since 1998.

Over the years school teachers have found vast amounts of free resources which have helped them to do their job. Teachers have been very good at sharing good news and great resources. In a similar way, I've been adding ideas and resources to my blog www.mikemcsharry.com and our website www.systemed.co.uk

Sadly, and fortunately – rarely, some of these resources are not all they appear to be. This has been the case with the Sparklebox toolbar. Hopefully this document will help you to remove it.

If you need any more details on removing this product – please could I ask you to pop a comment on the website – I will reply. In addition, by being on the website any additional responses are available to more people.

Myself and my colleagues are available for technical support, training and workshops. In addition, we have provided and installed WordPress based blogs and websites for schools, voluntary organisations and business groups.

If you feel we could help you or your school, please do get in touch by dropping me an email mike@systemed.co.uk

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How to Remove Sparklebox Toolbar

Since January 5th 2010, our school customers have experienced problems with the Sparklebox Toolbar.

They have uninstalled it (if they could), and the ‘internet doesn’t work anymore in school’

To find out what was going on, I had the opportunity to get my hands on a teacher’s personal laptop – a laptop running Windows XP Media Centre – at Service pack 2.

I took this laptop home and plugged straight into my router / internet and verified that the Sparklebox Toolbar was installed and running.

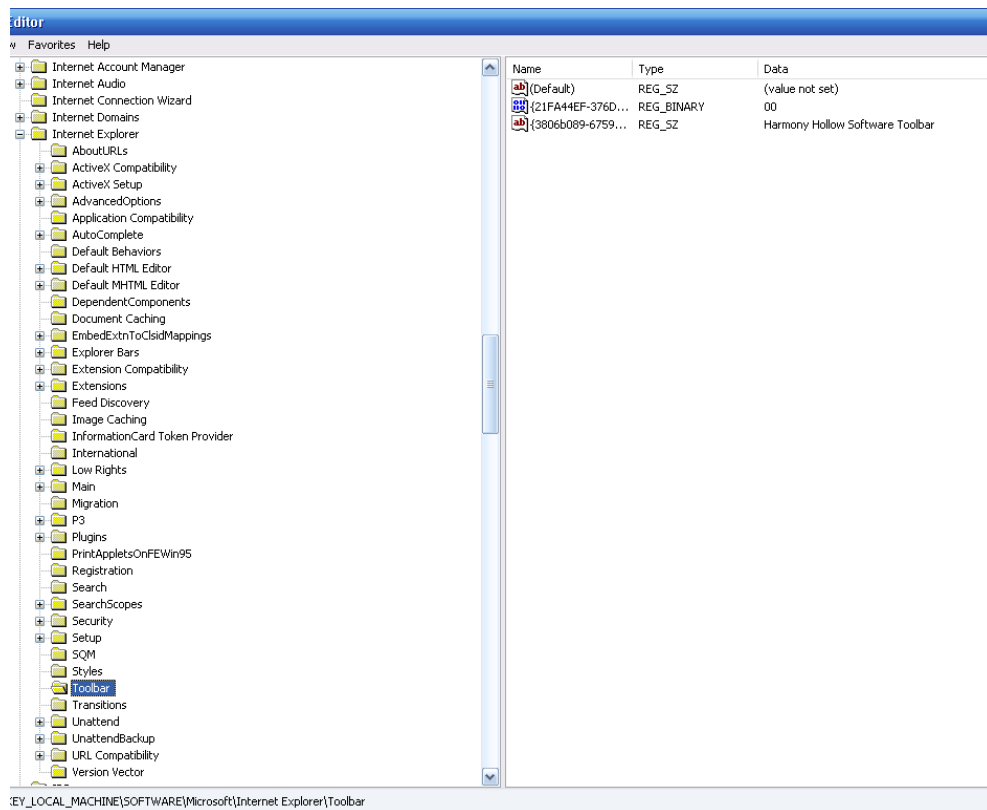
On msconfig, internet toolbar lists and output from hijackthis there was no reference to sparklebox.

Strange – I could see it, but on the Internet Explorer Toolbars there was a reference to Harmony Hollow Toolbar – turning this off in menu bar control dropdown stopped Sparklebox.

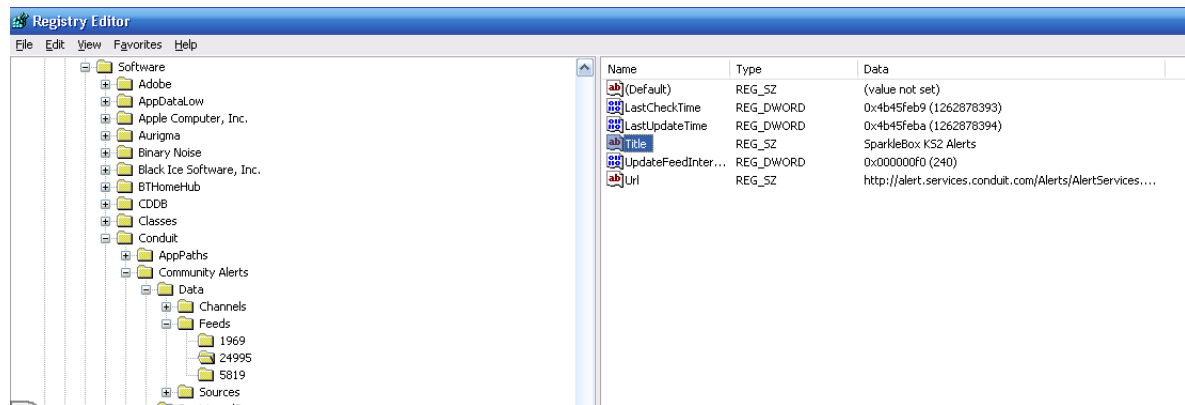
‘What’s occurring?’

Removing Sparklebox Toolbar – January 2010

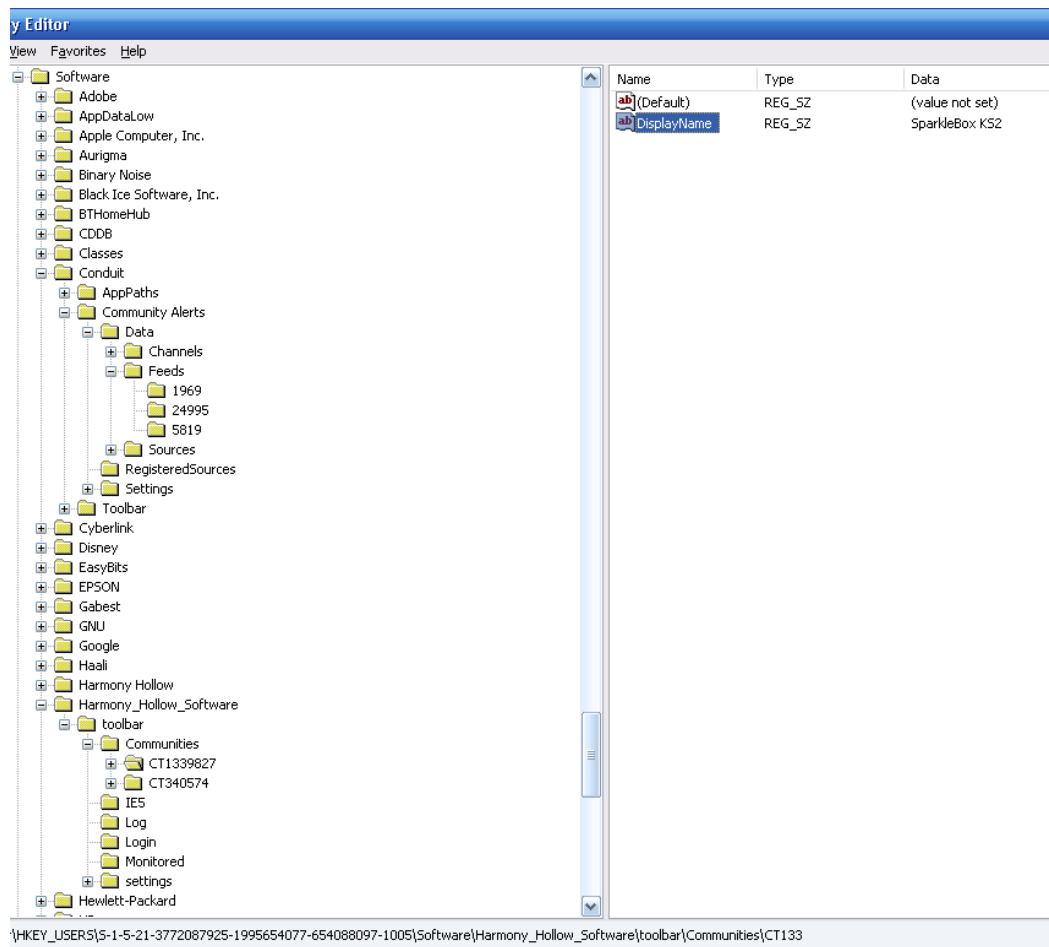
A quick wander through regedit revealed ..



Now we can see that the Sparklebox Toolbar is part of the Conduit extension ..



This entry also shows Sparklebox is something to do with Harmony ..



Now – here’s an interesting one – another lead in to the website via sparkleplus.co.uk – have the RBCs blocked that one?



Note that on this PC, Sparklebox did not appear in add/remove programs (as the Sparklebox website says you can).

So in control panel → add/remove Harmony Toolbar and reboot.
On reboot nearly all references harmony gone from registry.

Start Again

Rebooted and decided to install sparklebox toolbar just in case the version on this PC was an old / odd one.

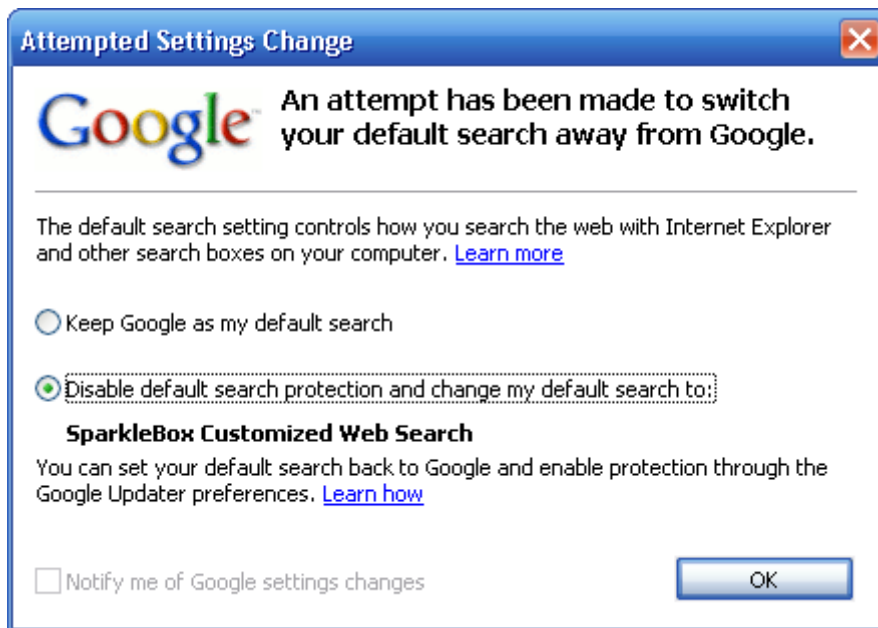
Installing the Sparklebox Toolbar – what happens?



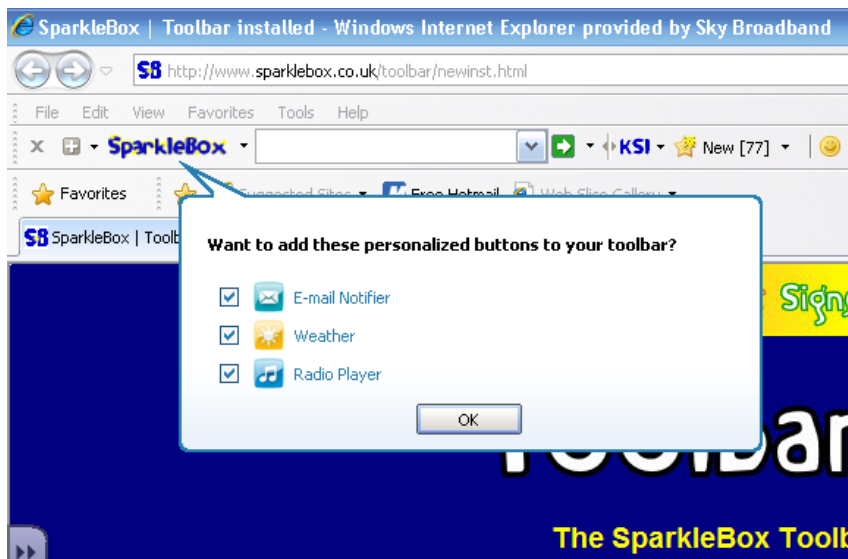
Look – there's conduit again. Let's do the install as a 'typical' user and say yes to everything – as they do..



This generated this warning .. We'll see the nuisance of this later



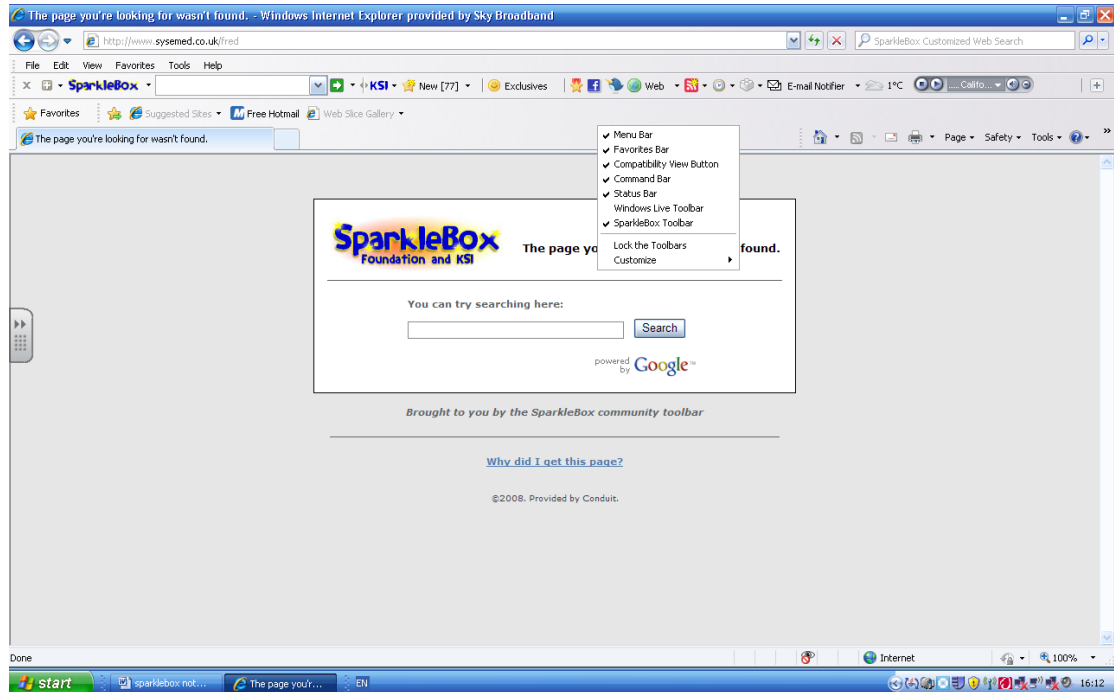
And – just for good measure – let's have these (all ticked by default)



Removing Sparklebox Toolbar – January 2010

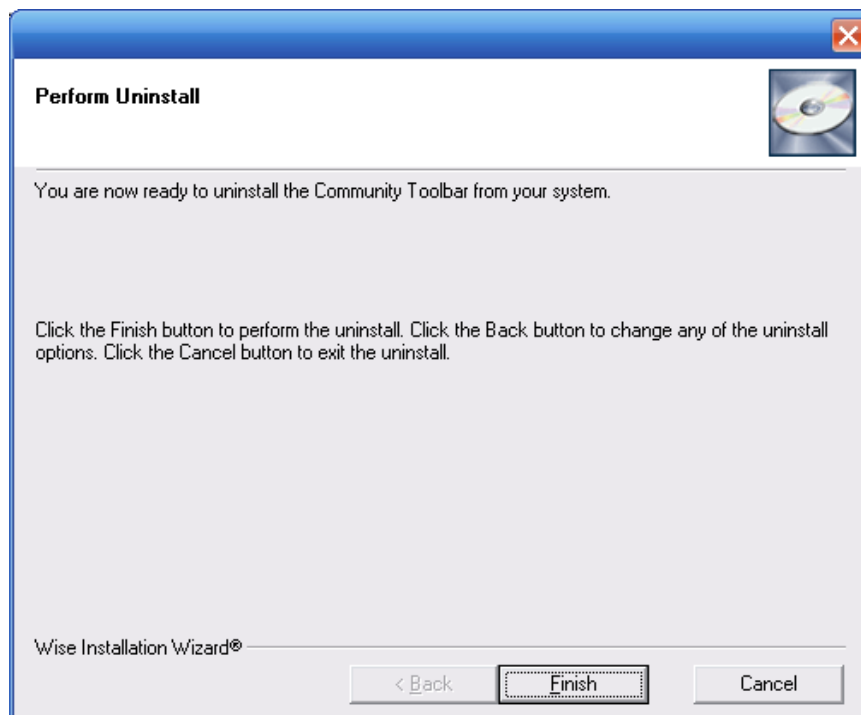
Let's see what that has done to Internet Explorer ..

The sparklebox toolbar has appeared and our home page has gone off to searchconduit. And – 'harmony' has appeared fairly heavily in the registry.

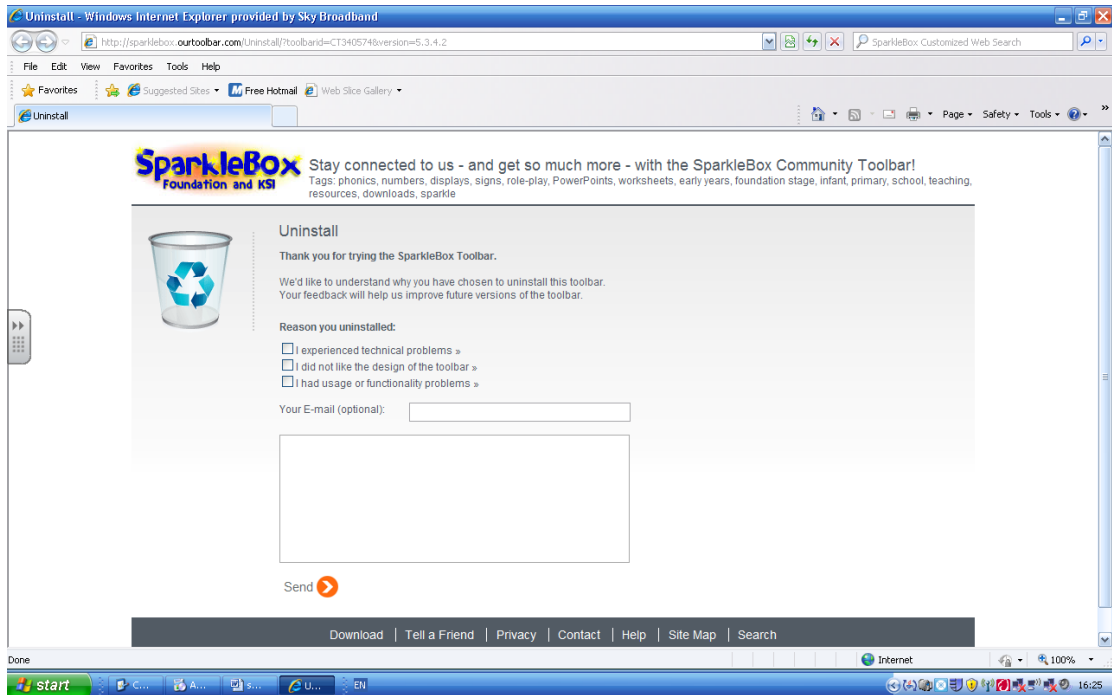


So, let's uninstall and see what happens ..

Sparklebox appeared in the add/remove list – look what I actually uninstall ..



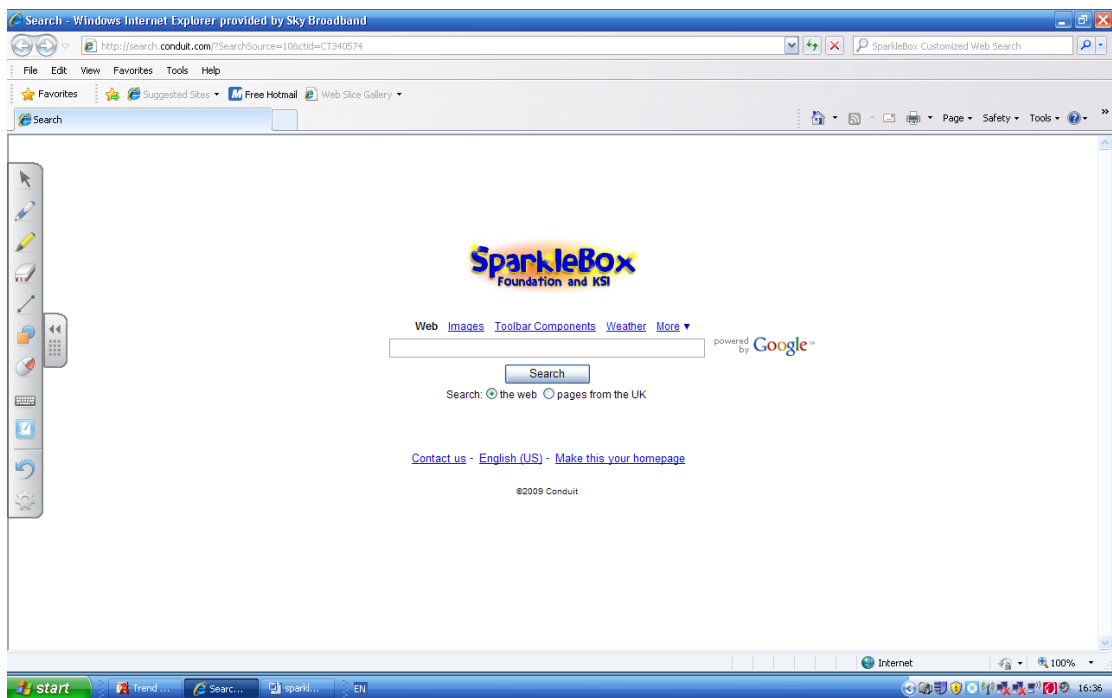
Removing Sparklebox Toolbar – January 2010



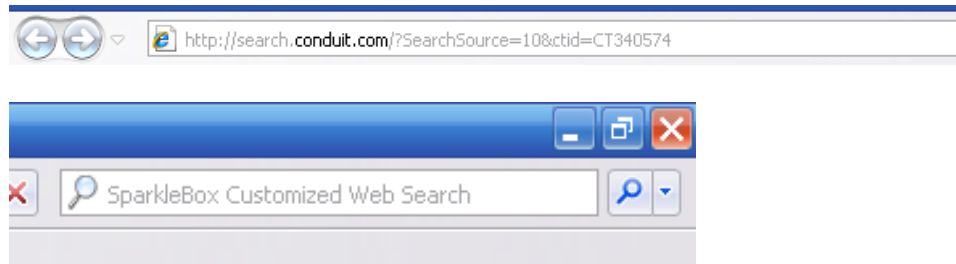
When confronted by that page, the best option is to simply close the screen – follow on screens ask you for lots of reasons and for your email address.

So – I let the uninstall complete and I re-booted the PC.

IE shows this ..



The top part of the screen is worth looking at ..



Search conduit is home page (and I think the referrer code at the end is the Sparklebox account number with Conduit / Community Toolbar).

Add the 'customised search'

Add Sparklebox being blocked inside RBCs – this explains user observations that 'the internet has stopped working'

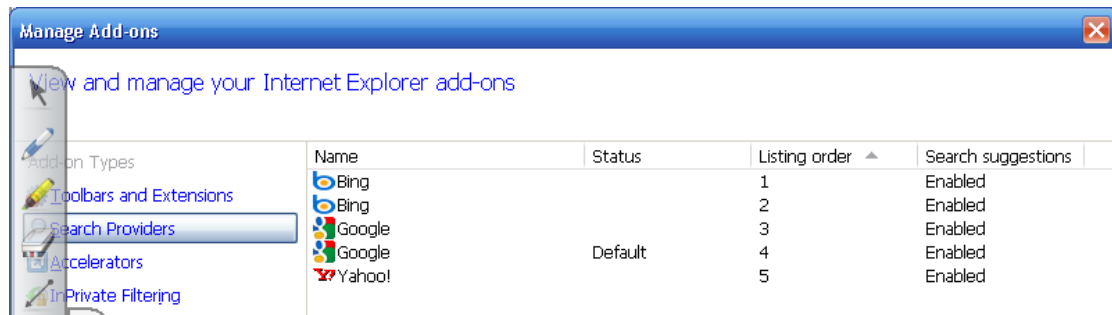
In tools → internet options I reset the home page and rebooted.

Sorting out Search and tidying up

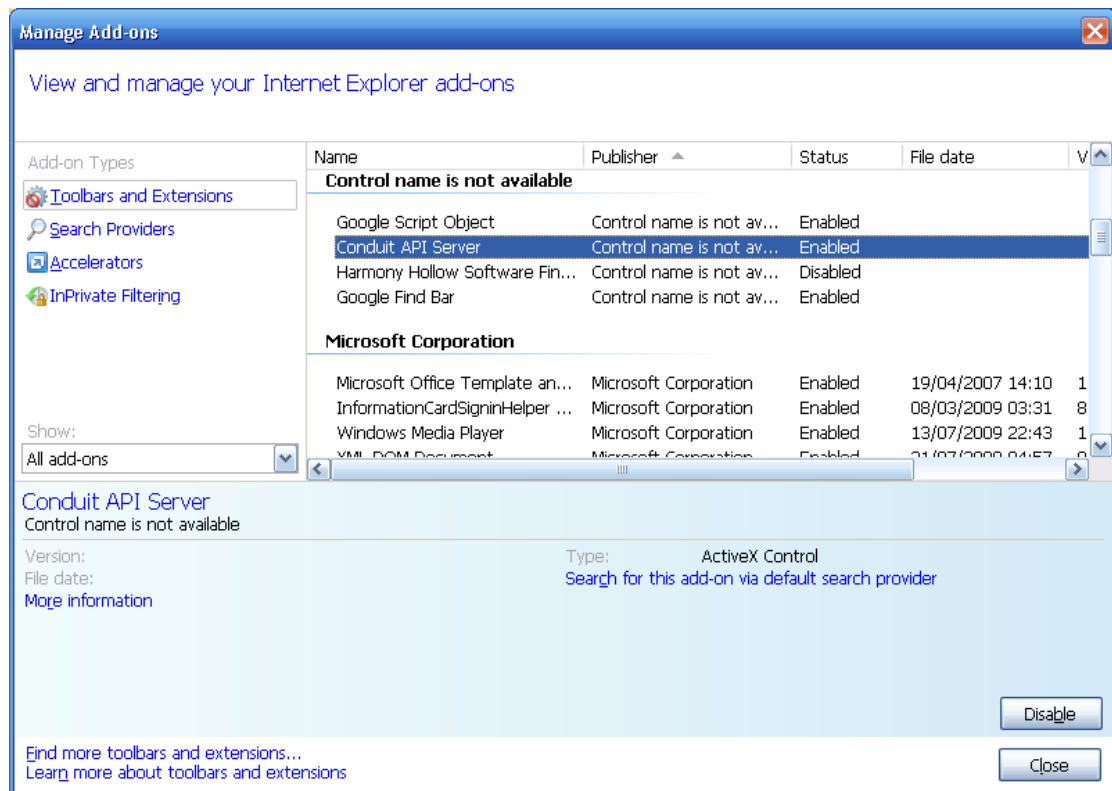
Need to do this in internet properties- search –

Select (say) Google – right click and make as default

Then click on sparklebox and remove.



Then go into toolbars and extensions ..



And disable anything to do with conduit, harmony hollow and sparklebox

Malwarebytes and Hijack his found no problems.

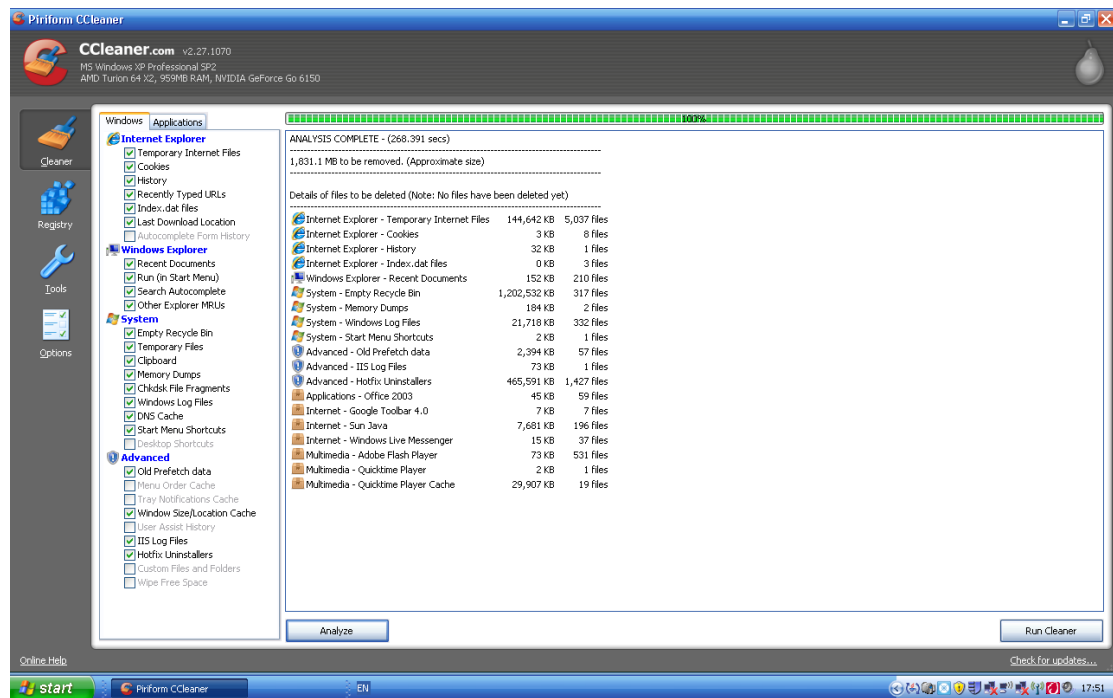
There are still a few references to harmony hollow, conduit and sparklebox in the registry. These don't appear (stress appear) to be causing any problems.

Removing Sparklebox Toolbar – January 2010

To tidy up ..

Download and run ccleaner .

Note the options selected - make a decent job of it!



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