

Why does Add or Remove Programs show a large blank space?

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Some people have noticed that certain programs cause the Add or Remove Programs control panel to create an enormous amount of blank space. What's going on?

These are programs that have bad custom uninstall icon registrations.

If you go to the registry key

`HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall` , you'll find a list of programs that have registered for appearing in the Add or Remove Programs control panel. Some of them might have been so kind as to provide a "DisplayIcon" value, thereby saving the control panel the indignity of having to guess at an appropriate icon.

Unfortunately, if they put a bad icon registration in that registry value, the result is a bunch of blank space since the control panel is trying to reserve space for a bogus icon.

The format of the icon registration is a filename, optionally followed by a comma and a decimal number.

```
C:\full\path\to\icon\file.dll  
C:\full\path\to\icon\file.dll,123
```

Since this is not a command line, quotation marks are not necessary (although they are tolerated). Furthermore, the number can be any value except for `-1` . Why is `-1` forbidden? Because the ExtractIcon function treats the value `-1` specially.

If the icon file does not exist in the icon file, or if the icon number is `-1` , then the icon specification is invalid and the Add or Remove Programs control panel will reserve an odd amount of space for an icon that doesn't exist.

Perhaps the Add or Remove Programs control panel should be more tolerant of invalid icon registrations? Or should it stay the way it is, adhering to the "Don't bend over backwards to fix buggy programs; force the program authors to fix their own bugs" policy that so many of

my readers advocate? (Noting furthermore that refusing to accomodate invalid icon registrations makes it look like Add or Remove Programs is the buggy one.)

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