

How To Avoid Or Quickly Resolve Your Computer Problems

Sooner or later in this computerized world you will experience the frustration of dealing with a computer problem resulting from a hardware failure/malfunction, a software bug, operator error, a computer virus, etc. Fortunately, there are some common sense things that you, the computer user, can do to minimize the likelihood of a problem occurring or can reduce the time required to resolve the problem that does occur.

Things to reduce the likelihood of a problem occurring...

1. Update antivirus definitions and scan your computer / network for viruses weekly.
2. Insure all computer equipment is protected with a good quality surge protector, or better still an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and surge protector.
3. Do not plug anything but your computer and display monitor into your UPS.
NOTE: Some specialized network hardware such as modems, switches, hubs, routers, print servers, firewalls, etc. also require a UPS unit.
4. Check with your support professional regarding compatibility and configuration issues before installing new hardware and/or software on your network. This is especially true if you contemplate changing your Internet Service Provider.
5. Clean your backup tape drive weekly.
6. Maintain adequate ventilation for your computer equipment by not piling clutter on top of or beside your computer and display monitor thus blocking required airflow for cooling. Clean your office regularly to reduce the accumulation of dust and debris in your computers as dust buildup in your computers tends to seriously reduce cooling airflow efficiency.
7. Do not place drinks where they may spill on or into your computer.
8. Use Windows Update and Office Update regularly to download software bug fixes, security updates, ect. from the Internet to insure your software is robust, reliable, and protected.
9. Do NOT change your administrator password.

Things to reduce the time required to resolve a problem...

1. Backup your system to tape daily.
2. Check tape backup history log daily to confirm a successful backup occurred.
3. Accurately record the date, time, conditions, event, and exact wording of error messages each and every time an error occurs including the sequence of events that cause the problem to occur. Note at which computer the problem occurred.
4. Record the details of everything added to your network such as date, time, and description of what was added, whether it is hardware or software.
5. Keep all network documentation organized and in one location. Documentation should include procedures, phone numbers, manuals, software masters, etc.
6. Whenever possible, acquire *identical* hardware and software components for each computer.
7. Maintain a current / accurate list of User ID's, passwords, etc.