

Basic Computer Troubleshooting Tips

Take A Deep Breath

- 1) **RELAX:** Unless the computer has been physically damaged to the point that you can hardly recognize what it once was, there' almost nothing that can't be fixed.
- 2) **MAKE A NOTE:** Write down a note of exactly what was being done at the time the computer had its problem, which programs were open, and what, if any, unusual symptoms were apparent. If there's an error or even a blue screen, write down the error word-for-word including any error codes. Also, make a note of anything that may have been recently changed on the computer as well. These changes should include everything from hardware changes, software installs/uninstalls, setting changes, file deletions and even simply moving the computer from one location to another.

Get Physical

- 1) **CHECK THE CONNECTIONS:** Make sure all the connectors and cables are firmly in their respective places. If a particular device, such as the keyboard, has been intermittently flaky, disconnect and reconnect the connector.
- 2) **CHECK THE CD DRIVE:** Misreading a CD can be caused by a small bit of dirt, lint, or any other foreign substance either on the CD itself or in the CD drive. Remove the CD and check the surface. Foreign substances can be removed using fingers or a clean cloth by gently brushing the CD from the center to the outside.
- 3) **CHECK FOR OVERHEATING:** Computers have at least on internal fan that is supposed to keep it from overheating. The cooler a computer is, the faster it runs. Check to make sure all vents on the computer, usually on the back side, are unobstructed and are at least a few inches away from any other objects.

What Next?

- 1) **CHECK THE PROGRAM SETTINGS:** If the computer is still alive, but a particular program isn't quite working right, a program setting or option may have been changed. This can happen very easily when a program crashes or even just by hitting the wrong key at the wrong time and entering something into an option field. Many printing problems are the result of an application calling the wrong print driver. Checking the printer that is supposed to be the default in the Print menu can resolve this issue. Internet Explorer settings are a source of many problems reading Web pages. After restarting your

browser, check the settings in Tools > Internet Options.

- 2) **CHECK THE NETWORK:** If the computer is having a hard time printing to a shared network printer, accessing shared files, or accessing e-mail, the office network may be down. Try to access two popular websites, such as Google or CNN. You can also logoff and log back on to the network. If either of those two methods fails, the problem more than likely is on the local network, not the computer. Call for IT support if this is the issue.
- 3) **REBOOT THE COMPUTER:** Whether it's one misbehaving program or the entire computer is frozen solid, rebooting solves many problems. Rebooting the computer flushes the computers memory (where programs actually run while the computer is turned on) and starting over from scratch can cure many problems.

If All Else Fails

- 1) If the computer still isn't working right, it's time to throw in the towel and call for tech support. By following the steps above, the most common causes of problems will be eliminated and some very useful information will have gathered that will help the IT support technician diagnose the cause of the problem.

About Desktop Resources, Inc.

Desktop Resources, Inc. was founded in 1995 by Tony Schafer, and is a leader in helping organizations couple their business initiatives with the technology to address those needs. DRI's "InformIT" managed services offerings proactively manage client infrastructure and strive to prevent problems before they occur. For more details, contact DRI at (317) 596-3650 or <http://www.DesktopResources.com>