

Basic Computer Troubleshooting Guide

1. Computer Won't Start

- Examine the cables, connectors, and power cords to make sure they're plugged in securely. Often times a loose cable or connector (power, network, keyboard, mouse, speaker, monitor cable, etc.) is the cause of the problem.
- If you're using a power strip or a surge protector, make sure it's on and that it works. Remember that a surge protector may not be working because it is designed to self-destruct. When an electric jolt is too much, your surge protector takes the hit saving your more expensive hardware from the voltage.
- Try plugging something else directly into the electrical outlet to make sure there isn't a power problem.
- Check to see if your monitor is on.

2. Can't Connect to Network or Internet.

- Check to see if anyone else around you is having a similar problem. If so, there may be a service outage affecting a wider area
- Check to make sure the network cable is connected to both the computer and the wall or modem.
- Check where the network cable connection is made to the back of the computer, you should see a little green light right where the cable connects. If the light isn't on or flashing, then you are not getting a signal to the computer. Try REBOOT.
- Check if Modem / Router is powered off or connected.
- Restart Modem / Router, unplug power cable, wait 10 seconds, reconnect power.

3. Error Messages

- What tipped you off to the problem? Sometimes it's an error code or message displayed on screen. Be sure to write it down — it may describe the problem and how serious it is. Be sure to document the exact wording of any error messages.
- Other times you get no warning — everything just freezes. Message or no message, be sure note what was going on when the problem occurred.
- Try REBOOT.
- Check for software update that would need to be installed.

4. Frozen Screen

- Try tapping on the Num Lock key. It's located on the right-hand side of the keyboard above the number 7. While tapping the Num Lock key, notice whether or not the Num Lock light goes on and off. If it doesn't, the computer is completely locked up. You'll have to REBOOT the computer. If the light does go off and on, wait a minute before giving up hope. It may come back to life on its own.
- If a software program stops working or freezes up, try pressing the ALT+F4 keys to close the window that you're currently working in. This can shut down a frozen window and bring the computer back to life. If the keyboard is frozen as well, you'll have to REBOOT.
- When you press the Ctrl-Alt-Delete buttons together, you will bring up a control panel where you can select "Task Manager" and see if any of the programs are shown as "not responding". You may be able to shut down the offending program from there. If you can't get to this screen, you'll have to REBOOT.

5. "Blue Screen"

- There's not a lot to be done except to REBOOT the machine. If it keeps occurring, this is an indication of a major problem with the computer.

6. Not Printing

- Check to see if printer is on and/or no error on printer. Restart printer by unplugging power cable, check toner, paper jam.
- Printer queue may be jammed. Go to control panel, devices and printer. Double click on printer to view queue. Under file click clear queue.

7. Rebooting can do wonders

- A simple reboot may clear up most problems. Go to the Start Menu and select Shutdown. Didn't work? It's time to try a forced reboot — with, unfortunately, no way to save your work — by pressing the keys **CTRL-ALT-DEL** simultaneously twice in a row.
- If that didn't work, you have no choice: you have to turn the computer off manually with the power switch. Hold the power button down (for about 5 -10 seconds) and the computer will shut down. Wait at least 10 seconds for the hard drive to stop spinning and then restart the machine.
- If the computer starts up, start the applications you were using when the crash occurred. Some programs, like Microsoft Word, make timed backups of your work and may bring up recovered files. If the program notifies you that there is a "recovered document" save the file under a different name and compare them to your previously saved files.