



Learning Simple Solutions to Common IT Problems Saves Time and Money

Computers have made us more efficient, and given us a wealth of information and knowledge on just about any subject matter imaginable. But when they don't function as expected, we get frustrated and waste valuable time trying to find out what is wrong. We don't always recognize that sometimes the solution to a problem is easier than we think.

Email Problems

While instant communication, in the form of email, has revolutionized the way people interact with one another, it is also one of the most common problem areas that IT managers face – and one of the costliest. Forbes Magazine reports that, "A 5,000 employee company loses on average, \$1 million a year due to troubleshooting email problems." Of course, many reported email complaints are relatively easy to address. Network Engineer, Miguel Camacho, explains, "When I get a call from a client who can't access their email, it's usually just due to an oversight."

Problem: You're working from a notebook and you can't download your emails. You assume the network server is down.

Simple Solution: Reset your Outlook program or log off and then back on to restore a Network connection. What may have happened is that the computer went into hibernation/standby mode, temporarily losing a connection to the active network.

Or, a user might inadvertently set Outlook to "Work Offline." Again, this can be easily fixed.

Simple Solution: Reset Outlook or access "File" in the menu bar and deselect "Work Offline."

Camacho says clients can usually troubleshoot the problem themselves by looking at the "Status Bar" in Outlook in the bottom right corner. "Outlook actually lets you know what is going on – whether it is downloading the newest emails or if there is a connection problem," he says.

Printer Problems

Adding peripherals can also contribute to possible errors in the way computers interact with scanners and printers, for example. A ready conclusion is that the printer is disconnected or broken. By paying attention to printer messages, however, the problem can easily be detected.



Problem: I try to print a document and nothing happens.

Simple Solution: Check these things first: (1) when submitting a document to print, check the "Task Tray" (the small icons right next to the desktop clock on the lower right). An icon will appear letting you know that the document has been submitted. If there is a problem, the icon shows a small "X" and in most cases lets you know the printing status or gives an error message. If the error points to the printer, check out the flashing orange indicators on the printer; (2) make sure you are printing to the correct printer (assigned to your computer).

Video/Sound Problems

Camacho hears comments about video or sound output quite often. He says, "I usually get a call at least once a week from a client saying that the computer has stopped putting out video or audio."

Problem: There is no sound coming from the speakers.

Simple Solution: Check to see that the power to the monitor is on and the volume is turned up.

Sometimes when people are in a hurry to leave for the day, they turn off the monitor or mute the sound but forget that they took these actions when they come in the next day.

While most people just want their computers to work seamlessly without any problems, the truth is that they are complicated machines. Nevertheless, by learning what simple actions to take for themselves, users can usually restore functionality quickly. In the long run, it can save them a lot of frustration and trouble and save the company time and money.