



Answer Quest Tip Sheet

We Answer Your Technology Questions

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GETTING A NEW PC? DO THIS FIRST!

As soon as you get your computer BEFORE you go surfing or let the kids on it, please make sure the following is done ... you will have to connect to the internet to perform these tasks:

1. Connect to the Internet
2. Run Windows Update and install all Critical updates (run until there are no more updates)
3. Make sure Anti-Virus software is installed and run Anti-Virus Updates (run until there are no more updates)
4. Install pest finding software (run updates until there are no more updates)
5. Run Office Update (if you have Office or Works installed, run until there are no more updates)
6. Run Windows Update and install all Critical updates (yes do this again).
7. Back up your entire hard drive.

You are asking yourself “But I just bought it!” Yes and it could have been sitting on a warehouse shelf for months so there are updates that need to be done.

Here’s a short explanation for each of the steps above:

1. If you connect to the Internet through a cable modem or DSL you are considered ALWAYS ON. You need to make sure that your Anti-Virus software and Windows Updates are automatically occurring at night when you are not using your computer. If you connect with dial-up, you still need to do your updates. Even though your computer is not connected to the Internet all the time, when your computer is online, it’s still vulnerable.
2. Windows Update (<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>) is essential to keep up with bug patches and enhancements. You want to install ALL Critical Updates. You may have to run Windows Update more than once. Run it again until no other Critical Updates are displayed. One important update that came out recently is Service Pack 2 for Windows XP. It will turn on some additional security features such as the internal Firewall and schedule the Automatic Updates. If you are on fast Internet (DSL or cable modem), set Automatic Updates to run automatically every night. This service pack will also install a pop-up blocker in Internet Explorer (which is GREAT!).
3. Anti-virus software is a MUST have. I use Norton Anti-Virus (<http://www.symantec.com>) but there are other software packages available. Most new computers come with either a 90 day or 1 year subscription for automatic updates. At the end of that time, renew the subscription. If you get a virus, it will cost you more in time to rebuild the PC then it would have to make the purchase. Your Anti-virus software should ALWAYS be running. Do not turn it off (the rare occasion being when you play some games it might suggest turning it off for performance issues, but make sure you turn it back on). Having the software is only the first step; the second is keeping it up to date. That’s where the subscription comes in. Under options, you will want to select “automatically install updates.” You want this running on your pc ALL THE TIME, not just when you are on-line.
4. Install pest finding software such as Pest Patrol (<http://www.pestpatrol.com>). There are some free ones out there but I have found that Pest Patrol works best for my needs. The idea here is to ALWAYS have something running looking for pests. If you do use Pest Patrol, make sure under Options -- What To Search For -- that you check everything.

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5. If you have Microsoft Office or Microsoft Works, run Office Updates at <http://office.microsoft.com>. Click on CHECK FOR UPDATES. You will have to install a small program that will see what software is on your PC for updates.
6. After you are done all this -- run Windows Updates again! Yes you should do this to verify that another update didn't cause a new Critical Update to appear.
7. Back up your computer. If your PC did not come with a backup program, you can purchase one. I have been using Backup My PC by Stomp (<http://www.stompsoft.com>). The reason you want to backup your PC right now is it has all the "basic" software and updates on it and it's BEFORE you have installed any other programs! This is important. It's called a "vanilla" backup. If you have problems later and need to restore your system back to an earlier time, you want a "vanilla" backup instead of restoring to factory defaults (which will not have your updates or other essential software you just installed). You can backup to CDR or DVDR (do not use re-write media, you want a permanent backup and read-only media is less expensive). You can also back up to a 2nd hard drive if you have one installed in your PC.

NOW you are ready to install your other software. Just one word of warning, when installing software please do not install EXTRA software that some companies try to pass on to you. One instant messenger software manufacturer wants you to install 3 extra programs: weather reporting, gaming, and a toolbar. 99% of new pc users do not need these and they are always running which will help make your pc slower. Also, be very careful with installs on the web. Just because it pops up and says you have to install, don't believe them. That is how a lot of pests are installed. Once you give one piece of software permission to install, you may have technically given it permission to install MORE software. We see this happening more and more to the point that I just had to redo a PC that had more then 4,700 pests on it (it froze at that point). This meant many hours to get it back to square one (there was not recovery backup set) at a cost to the parent.

There are a lot of other settings that should be set in these and other software packages. If you need help, please give us a call.

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SCAM ALERT!

Please be careful about opening email or clicking on a link in an email message. A scam called "**phishing**" is growing in numbers. Here is how it works. A person sends an email disguised as a bank or other company using a copy of their logo. The email indicates that your information may have been compromised and needs to be updated. A clickable link is given in the email which will actually take you to a fake site that resembles the real one. You type in your "updated" information.

Your information has **now** been compromised. You just gave them your name and account number needed to make illegal purchases. Please be careful and **never** click on these links. If in doubt, type the web address for the company directly into your browser address bar. This will take you to the real website. Most of the fake websites use numbers instead of a name. Always check your browser address bar that you are at the correct website.

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