

What is your problem!

Are these the words that you utter when your computer isn't performing as you expected? I bet for many of you the words get much more harsh and heated when your computer malfunctions. It wouldn't be that big of a deal if your computer acted up during times when you weren't against an important deadline, but it never happens that way, it's almost like your computer knows when you really need it. The fact is your computer is no superman and it is bound to let you down at some time during its life. The question is; what can you do to get it back up and running fast so that YOU look like the superman.

Many of you probably have a buddy, relative, or a computer geek you can refer to when your computer is acting out. What if you couldn't contact that special person who has always come through for you in the past? People do go on vacation or have other obligations that may keep them from helping you get out of the hole your computer dug for you. For those times you should fix it yourself. You heard me right, every one has the ability to perform a few trouble shooting procedures.

The appropriate solution to your computer problem is going to depend on what's wrong with your system. In this article I want to present some problem solving solutions that are worth trying. These solutions won't pertain to every computer problem but you should be willing to give a few of these procedures a try. In general it is a good idea to keep your computers drivers and operating software up to date. Microsoft provides a great easy to use tool called Windows Update. Make sure you are connected to the Internet and then click the Windows Update icon, which is generally located on the column of the start button. Follow the onscreen prompts and you will soon see a list of updates in the left column. One warning for dial-up users; many of the updates could take a long time to download, DO NOT stop the download early, you could really mess things up worse than they already are.

Windows 95, 98, and ME do not handle memory very well and many times it simply gets confused. The best thing to do in this situation is to reboot the system to clear the memory and start over. Windows XP and 2000 do not have as many memory problems as the older operating systems do, but restarting the system is always worth a try. Keeping a log of when your computer has a problem is another important trouble shooting technique. Some times the best way to fix a computer problem is just to watch the system. Keep a logbook near the system and write down what you were working on, what programs were open, and what malfunctioned. The goal is to find a pattern of activity that leads to the malfunction of the computer. Many times you will find that one certain program is causing the problem. In this case try un-installing that program from the ADD/REMOVE PROGRAMS icon in the control panel. Then reboot the system and try re-installing the software.

I have many customers that have reported problems with their computer after moving the system. There are two common problems that arise when this happens. You may find that system just beeps and nothing comes up on the screen except something that refers to no signal. If this happens you may want to open the case and re-seat the expansion cards, also it may be a good idea to reset the memory. Many computer cases flex when they are moved and I have seen cards pop out like ice cubes in a tray. One

other note about moved systems, recheck the cables! It is especially easy to reverse the mouse and keyboard connections.

Lastly, if your still having problems then it may be time to take that log book and your computer to your local computer shop. Most shops have either a free diagnostic service or a very low cost service that will determine what ails your system. If your looking for a new computer "Doctor" I hope you will consider contacting Thomas or Roger at the Computer Depot at 947-0749.