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Are IT Issues Ruining Your Workplace Productivity?

Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

Studies conducted by Career-Builder Harris Poll in the US showed that at least 22 minutes a day are wasted by an average worker dealing with IT-related issues.

According to the poll, the leading cause of time wasted in the workplace is related to cell phone use, which ranked the highest at 50%, gossip which followed at 42%, and closely behind was internet use at 39%. This article will briefly outline how companies can work through IT issues so that they can save on time. And time is money.

How Much Time Is 22 Minutes Really?

Going by the average time in a 40-hour workweek, 22 minutes a day is close to two hours of work time lost each week. Imagine what that equals for a full year or 52 weeks. It comes out to be over 95 hours per year. When translated into days, that is close to two weeks spent dealing with IT-related problems.

What Is The Solution To IT-Related Problems?

Companies should have a help desk where employees can go and report IT issues as soon as they occur so that they can be resolved in the earliest instance. This is to ensure that a problem is resolved before it escalates, thus saving time for everyone.

Apart from fixing the problem, IT staff should be encouraged by the employer to share tips on preventive measures to similar problems to avoid them from recurring.

Educating employees is always a good idea. It's cost-effective and just makes sense. Companies should also invest in modern technical equipment. This way, computer systems, and networks are easier to maintain, less problematic, and also ensure efficient work delivery.

Companies should confirm that the IT staff is well skilled. Hire trainers or allow employees to enroll in various training programs so they can learn all about the changing trends in technology.

Technology is meant to save time and make work more efficient, but when it decides to act up, it can actually cause headaches. Lack of knowledge is another major cause of employees wasting too much time on simple things that can be avoided in the first place.

Whoever provides your IT services should have an in-house department or a third-party firm hired to conduct regular training for employees. They should be performing regular maintenance and upgrades to all systems. Training the employees regularly or after installing a new system can make a big difference when it comes to saving time-related to IT issues.

Training employees might not be the first solution a company thinks of but it's often the most cost-effective way to avoid wasting valuable time.

Of course, it can help to hire savvy employees with proficient computer skills. But even if they know how to fix common IT issues, you don't want a bunch of amateurs working on your valuable software and hardware systems. When the same IT guy does all your upgrades and maintenance, he becomes familiar with your business. This is where you'll get the best return on your IT investment.

Wrap Up

The secret to avoiding costly IT errors is to detect an issue and have it attended to as soon as possible, so it doesn't grow into a bigger problem. Communication is also very important. Make sure employees are aware of how to handle IT problems.

Teach them to report these issues right away. Help them do their jobs better with good cybersecurity training. At the end of it all, employee productivity is the ultimate goal. This will improve your bottom line and make sure your staff is happy and productive.

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RAM And You: How Much Memory Do You Need?

Jason Cooley is Support Services Manager at Tech Experts.

Is there anything as frustrating as experiencing issues with your computer? There are many different performance issues that can affect your experience as a user.

If your computer is running slower than normal (or slower than it should), there are so many things that can factor in. One of the more common causes is system memory being over utilized.

First, we have to understand the different types of "slow" your computer expresses.

If Internet pages are slow to load but programs like Microsoft Word are quick and responsive, your speed issue is Internet related.

If programs are slow, lag out, or won't respond, you are dealing with a system issue.

In these cases, a restart can be your best friend. If a restart doesn't help your system, take a look at your resource usage. The task manager will show in real time the usage of your CPU and memory (RAM).

Let's say your RAM usage is high, even after a restart. This is a problem and you just don't have enough system memory to support your daily tasks.

How does this affect your system?

What can you do about it? How much is enough?

A shortage of RAM on your computer wreaks havoc on the system performance. It not only limits the work that the RAM is capable of handling, but it also affects the CPU and the hard drive performance.

When applications need more than the available RAM, they use virtual memory from the hard drive. The amount of virtual RAM can be increased in your system by increasing the size of your paging file.
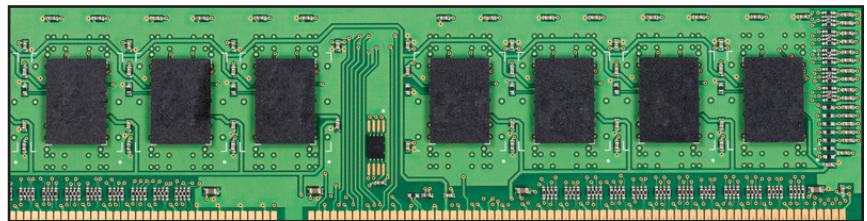
While this may help to run your programs, your system performance will suffer greatly.

The virtual RAM your system will use is much slower than physical RAM, causing a bottleneck where you are now reliant on the speed of your virtual memory. This limits the speed of data traveling between the CPU and RAM as well.

We know the RAM is limiting our performance. While the paging file allows you to run the programs you need to work, your system performance will make multi-tasking nearly impossible.

The best thing at this point is to upgrade to more physical memory.

There are some limitations to upgrading your RAM. Operating systems have a maximum supported amount of RAM. This varies from operating system versions,

from year to year, as well as 32-bit versus 64-bit.

Your motherboard and CPU could also have a maximum amount of RAM.

RAM sticks come in different memory quantities as well and each slot in your computer may have a maximum, as well as an overall system maximum as well. A single stick of RAM can be 512mb or 8gb and anywhere in between.

RAM also comes in many types that can vary based on your specific motherboard. Upgrading your RAM can make your system run better, but there are many things to

factor in when you upgrade your RAM.

So how much RAM do you need? It varies for everyone, but the more programs you use, the more RAM you need.

If you are buying a new computer for modern business, a minimum, of 8gb is strongly recommended and 16gb is even better. If you run many programs, especially things like graphic and video editing software, you may want more. If you are upgrading your current system RAM, similar rules apply.

Your tasks and usage dictate your needs; don't be afraid to give yourself one of the best performance upgrades out there by adding more memory to your system.

What Is The Difference Between Backups And Redundancy?

Chris Myers is a field service technician at Tech Experts.

Modern businesses can generate massive amounts of data in a short period of time. As such, a vital topic of research are ways to project that data.

There are two main categories of data protection: redundancy and backups. These two types of data protection are both very important, but they are not interchangeable.

Both must be understood so that you are not caught unprepared when catastrophe strikes.

What Is Redundancy?

On a single hard drive, data is saved just one time. If that hard drive fails, then that data is lost. In order to prevent this from happening, multiple hard drives are used to store multiple copies of each piece of data.

This setup is called a "RAID," which stands for Redundant Array of Independent Disks.

When a single hard drive fails in a properly set up RAID, the other drives change how they operate and continue saving files with very little interruption and no loss of data. In a business such as a doctor's office where appointments are booked out three months in advance, redundancy can be the difference between a service call with less than thirty minutes of downtime and a multiple day outage affecting hundreds of patients and staff.

What Are Backups?

There are many other ways in which data can be lost, including file corruption, accidental deletion, fire, theft, malware, and more.

Redundancy can protect against hard drive failure, but in cases such as these, it is of no help. For example, if the user accidentally deletes a file, all redundant copies of that file will be deleted.

This is where backups come in. Backups copy your data onto a completely separate storage device.

The most secure backup systems are called offsite backups, because the data is copied to another geographic location entirely. If a user accidentally deletes a file that is backed up, that file can be restored using the backup copy.

However, restoring files from an offsite backup can take quite a long time depending on the amount of data and available network bandwidth. Due to this, many businesses keep another backup on a different device in the same building.

This is referred to as a local backup. Since restoring from a local backups only involve sending the data over the internal network, or even directly copying onto another drive, they can greatly reduce downtime.

So, Which Solution Should You Have?

None of these data protection methods are mutually exclusive and each of these methods has strengths and weaknesses.

With that in mind, most businesses will get the most benefit by having all of them in place because each one fills a gap in coverage left by another.

Redundancy will save data if a single drive is lost to mechanical failure, with very little downtime. However, it can't protect against almost all other types of data loss.

A local backup will protect against all types of data loss except when both the default and backup locations are lost at the same time. Restoring takes longer than a redundant drive, but is still quite fast. An offsite backup takes the longest to restore from, but protects against almost all scenarios.

So, the next time you want to impress your coworkers and possibly save the company, ask whether your server or network-attached storage has both backups and redundancy in place.

> *"There are two main categories of data protection: redundancy and backups. These two types of data protection are both very important, but they are not interchangeable."*
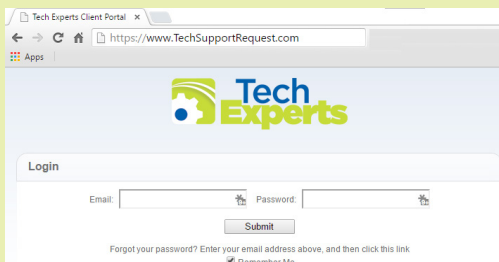
Create new service requests, check ticket status, and review invoices in our client portal:

http://TechSupportRequest.com

Nine Useful Windows 10 Features You Probably Never Use

Frank Deluca is a field service technician at Tech Experts.

Microsoft's operating system runs on nearly half a billion PCs and laptops worldwide. It's so commonplace that most of us don't pay attention to the ways it can make our lives easier.

These are not secret features that Microsoft doesn't want us to know about by any means. We may have just forgotten that these powerful tools exist.

Disk Cleanup

Disk Cleanup is a simple way to delete files you no longer need and to ensure your recycle bin is cleared out.

On Windows 10, type "disk cleanup" into your taskbar where it says, "Type here to search." Then, click on the Disk Cleanup app.

Click on any of the entries in the list to see a description of what the files are and how much space can be reclaimed by removing them. Place a check mark in the box next to each entry you want deleted, such as temporary files.

Malware Removal

It's more important than ever to have a multilayered approach to cybersecurity. Windows Defender is a security tool that can be set up to block malware attacks in real time or you can perform a scan when you need it.

To make sure Windows Defender is running, type "Windows Defender" into your taskbar. Select Windows Defender app.

Make sure it is set to real-time protection and that virus and spyware definitions are up to date.

Quick Assist

We all have that tech-challenged family member, but did you know that you can remotely manage a friend or family member's computer (or vice-versa) so you can help fix their tech-related problems?

This handy feature is called Quick Assist and it can really be a lifesaver when offering IT assistance.

In Windows 10, type "Quick Assist" into your taskbar. Select Get Assistance or Give Assistance and then follow the onscreen instructions. You'll thank me later.

Video Streaming

Windows 10 comes with its own built-in DLNA video and media streaming protocol. All you need is a DLNA-compatible device to stream to, like an Xbox One or Roku.

Type "Media Streaming" into the Windows 10 taskbar. Select Media Streaming Options and follow the instructions.

Task Scheduler

Task Scheduler helps you schedule tasks on your computer, like turning your PC off at a specific time each day. Type "task scheduler" into your taskbar to get started.

Virtual Desktop

The little rectangular box to the right of your "Type here" taskbar will change to display all windows you have open. Or you can click on New Desktop to create a new workspace without closing the windows you have open.

Find Missing Files

The command prompt can help you find files that your Windows operating system needs to work properly. It can also help you fix problems.

Type "cmd" into the taskbar. Right click on Command Prompt and select Run As Administrator. To find missing files, type "sfc /scannow." To check for system problems, type "chkdsk /f."

Print PDF

PDF is a print format that is compatible across multiple operating systems and software programs. You may not know that you can print in PDF format from any program running on Windows 10.

To do this, just go through the steps to print that you normally would. When you see the option to choose a specific printer, select the one that says, "Microsoft Print to PDF."

Record Screen Activity

Did you know you can record videos on Windows 10? Just click the Windows key and the letter 'G' at the same time – then follow the prompts to record.