



# TechTidbit.com

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## Lights Out?

### Not For Local Manufacturing Company Who Turned On Tech Experts' Disaster Recovery Planning Services

When spring storms rolled through the area and took out power to her company's offices and plant, Sue Brey, Complete Packaging's controller, knew she had to make two phone calls right away.

"My first call was to the power company," she explained, "and my second call was to Tech Experts. I knew they'd have our computer systems handled."

Complete Packaging is one of the industry's leading suppliers of just in time inventory and specialized "total-solution" packaging products, working primarily in the automotive and glass industries. Because of the unique nature of their businesses, Complete Packaging's clients require accurate and on-time deliveries of their packaging materials.

Sue's first call, to the power company, didn't go well. "Our power went out on Monday, and they told us it wouldn't be restored until Friday," Sue said. "We were in crisis mode."

The Tech Experts support team sprang into action immediately, calling Complete's telephone service provider to

have the company's main phone numbers transferred to staff member's cell phones.

"Things were touch and go for a few hours," Sue continued, "but when it became clear our power wasn't coming back on, we had to get our office systems up and operational."

Tech Experts relocated Complete Packaging's server and several office workstations to spare office space in its building, and set up Complete's phones to ring at the temporary desks.

"We moved right into the Tech Experts office," Sue explained. "And they had our systems up and printing on their printers in less than an hour. We were able to print out orders, send and receive e-mail, and get production documents completed for the factory."



*Sue Brey, Complete Packaging's Controller, at her temporary desk at Tech Experts' offices.*

Complete Packaging's maintenance crew was able to get much of the factory running on generators, so the company was able to ship orders. "We have performance clauses in a lot of our contracts," explained Sue. "If we didn't ship our orders on time, we could have lost tens of thousands of dollars in business. Thanks to Tech Experts, we were able to fulfill our commitments to our customers."

The Tech Experts Disaster Recovery service is part of the comprehensive management and maintenance program offered to every Tech Experts client who is a service agreement subscriber.



For a copy of our free report, "The Three Most Expensive and Deadly Computer Disasters That Wipe Out Small Business Owners... And How To Avoid Them," simply complete the enclosed request form. Or, you can call our office at (734) 457-5000 and request your free copy.

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Need help? Call the Tech Experts 24 hour computer emergency hotline at (734) 240-0200.



## Three Easy Steps to Get Seven Years of Hassle Free Service From Your Laser Printer

*Do not plug a laser printer into a UPS or other battery backup system. The printer's power draw is too much for a battery to handle.*

Printers - the necessary evil of every office. From paper jams and error messages, to problems like smearing, misfeeds, and ghosting, printers can really make your blood pressure rise.

Plus, it's easy to sink thousands of dollars into maintenance and repairs. If you want to avoid common printer problems AND save yourself a small fortune on replacements and repairs, follow these 3 easy steps:

### Keep It Clean

There is no faster way to gunk up a laser printer and cause printing problems than by letting it get dirty.

On a monthly basis, use compressed air to blow out the inside of the printer. Remove the toner cartridge for better access, and don't forget to do the back if it is

accessible. It also helps to take a vacuum to the outside. If you print labels or use any other type of specialty media like transparencies, use rubbing alcohol to clean the rollers inside the printer.

### Do Your Maintenance

You can almost infinitely extend your printers lifespan by doing the regular maintenance suggested by the manufacturer.

This includes replacing rollers, filters, and occasionally replacing the fuser (the printer's internal furnace.) Here's a little money-saving secret: you only need to do this type of maintenance at 1.5 to 2 times the manufacturer's usage recommendation.

So, if the manufacturer says to replace rollers every 100,000 pages, you really only need to do so every 150,000 to 200,000 pages.



### Use a Surge Protector

Nothing will send your printer to the bone yard faster than an electrical surge caused by lightning or other issues on the power grid.

When internal components are fried, it is often cheaper to buy a new printer than it is to fix the existing one. It is easy to protect yourself with a \$25 surge protector. DO NOT plug a laser printer into a UPS or other battery backup system. The printer's power draw is too much for a battery to handle.

## Has Your Computer Been Taken Over By A Bot?

David Perry, global director of education for security software provider Trend Micro, was recently quoted in PCWorld as saying, "An unprotected [Windows] computer will become owned by a bot within 14 minutes."

A bot is an automated program that takes over your computer and uses it as a spam machine, to copy your personal information, such as credit cards numbers, or something equally as evil.

One way to spot a bot is to be aware of network activity when you aren't



A 'bot' is a type of malware which allows an attacker to gain complete control over the affected computer. Computers that are infected with a 'bot' are generally referred to as 'zombies'. There are literally tens of thousands of computers on the Internet which are infected with some type of 'bot' and don't even realize it.

on the Internet. You can put a network status light in your system tray. If you see it blinking when you are not using the Internet, there might be a problem.

Do this: In Windows XP, choose Start, Control Panel, Network

Connections. You will see an icon for your network connection. Right-click the network connection and select Properties from the pop-up menu. Check "Show

icon in notification area when connected," and click OK.

Remember, lots of unexplained network activity can mean your computer is "owned" by a bot.

Double check by going to one of several free scanning sites such as McAfee Free Scan or Trend Micro's House-Call. Then buy anti-virus software, install a firewall, and never open e-mail attachments from unknown sources.



## What To Do When Things Go Technically Wrong

It's amazing how many things can go wrong with your computer; bad drivers, hardware malfunctions, viruses, software glitches, spyware... and this is only the beginning.

Computer problems always seem to happen at the most inconvenient times and can leave you stranded for hours, even days without a computer. However, vendor "help desk" support can be frustrating and in some cases, expensive.

The next time you have a computer problem, here are six simple things you can do to try and resolve the problem yourself or to at least prepare and get the most out of your help desk support.

**1. Check your connections.** This may sound obvious, but check all the cables to make sure they are plugged in securely. Don't ignore this step because USB, printer, and serial cables have a way of working themselves loose and causing problems.

**2. Reboot.** Windows sometimes gets into a state of confusion or overload and locks up. You can clear the memory and set things straight by simply rebooting your system. Similarly, if you're having a problem connecting to the Internet, try rebooting your cable/DSL modem and router by unplugging them for 15 seconds to reset them.

However, this isn't something you should have to do often. If you find yourself rebooting your router once a day, the problem is a bit deeper. If you still can't resolve the problem yourself, then here are a few more steps to take before calling support that will save a lot of time

and get your problem resolved quicker...

### **3. Try to narrow down the problem as much as possible.**

Identifying what went wrong is 90% of the journey to the solution. Try to isolate when and where the problem happened and note the last thing you installed, changed, or plugged in to your computer. You'll also want to narrow down the error message as much as possible.

For example, if you discover your printer isn't working from Word, try to print from another application.

Maybe you can print when you first boot up, but everything seems to go haywire after you scan a document. Does the problem occur all the time or only after the machine has been running for a while? Does the problem repeat itself or is it only occasional? Observing what situations lead up to a problem can be a great help in determining what is causing it.

**4. Access crash logs.** If you are using a Microsoft operating system, you can access an application called Dr. Watson that will report information about your memory and configuration to a crash log file.

In Windows XP, the default location is C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Microsoft\Dr Watson. The crash log is a text file called Drwtsn32.log, which can be read in Notepad or sent via e-mail to a tech-support person.

**5. Know your system.** When you talk to a support technician on

the phone, they are going to want to know what specific hardware, operating system, and software you're using.

To save time, know the make and model numbers for all your hardware. You can access CPU and memory info by selecting Control Panel | System. Drill down from here into Hardware | Device Manager for information about other devices such as your sound and graphics cards.

Write down new software, no matter how small or insignificant, that you've downloaded and installed lately, including upgrades, screen savers, emoticon software, and web browser updates. It can also help to jot down any services running in the background.

To access a list of what is running on your Windows XP system, press Ctrl-Alt-Del and select Task Manager. You can also get very detailed info from Start | All Programs | Accessories | System Tools | System Information.

**6. Back up your data.** Before you start following directions over the phone from a support technician or tearing your system apart to fix it yourself, make sure you have a backup of all your important documents, e-mail, and other data.

Although many fixes will be as simple as downloading a new driver, you'll be glad you have a backup if you find yourself reinstalling the operating system. You should also have your original CDs around in case you need to reinstall applications.



### Contact Information

#### 24 Hour Computer Emergency Hotline

(734) 240-0200

#### General Support

(734) 457-5000

(866) 993-9737

support@MyTechExperts.com

#### Sales Inquiries

(734) 457-5000

(888) 457-5001

sales@MyTechExperts.com

Take advantage of our client portal! Log on at:

<https://connect.expertsmi.com/support>



**TECH  
EXPERTS**

980 S. Telegraph Road

Monroe, MI 48161

Tel (734) 457-5000

Fax (734) 457-4332

info@MyTechExperts.com

## The ExpertsMobile: "What The Heck Is It?"

What the heck is it?! Boy, do we get that question a lot!

The "ExpertsMobile" is a 2008 Smart fortwo. It is a two seat ("for two," get it?!) gasoline-powered car manufactured by Smart, a division of Daimler. That's right, it is a 100% gasoline engine, not electric. We're averaging about 40 miles per gallon driving around town.

The fortwo received four out of five stars in front impact crash tests, and five out of five stars in side-impact crash tests, so it is very safe! The body panels are made out of 100% recyclable materials. And it



has a lot more space for transporting sick computers than you might think!

We like the Smart for a couple of reasons, but most importantly, it is *smart* for the environment, and *smart* for our company, since it saves us so much money on gasoline and maintenance. Plus, it's fun to drive!

The Smart is like our philosophy in supporting small business computer networks: The latest appropriate technology, delivered in an efficient and cost effective way.

If you'd like to learn more about the Tech Experts Smart car, visit: [www.SmartComputerGuys.com](http://www.SmartComputerGuys.com).

And, for more information about Smart cars in general, visit [www.smartusa.com](http://www.smartusa.com).



## Don't let unexpected computer troubles ruin your summer fun...

As temperatures warm up, dust and debris that accumulate inside your computers can act just like insulation, making them run much hotter than they should. This can cause lockups, freezing and costly downtime.

Our 15 point system inspection is designed to keep your computer equipment running smoothly, and pinpoint potential problem areas before they turn into expensive repairs.

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980 South Telegraph Road - Monroe



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