MC Connect

"Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, and More Profitably"

5 (Cheap) Ways To Make Old Computers Faster and More Reliable

#1. Add Memory.
One of the most inexpensive and effective ways to improve a computer's performance is to install more RAM (random access memory). This will speed up the applications installed on your computer and allow you to open and run more programs simultaneously.

#2. Upgrade The Processor Or Add A Graphics Accelerator.
If you are just looking for a little more "zoom," upgrading the processor or installing a graphics accelerator will give your computer the ability to process information faster and improve its overall speed.

#3. Perform Regular Maintenance On Your Servers and Desktops.
Computers, like cars, need regular maintenance to perform at top speed and reliability. At a minimum, you should run ScanDisk and the Disk Defrag Utility on your machines once a month. This will make your applications and files load and run faster.

#4. Run A Spyware Scan Once A Week.
One telltale sign that your computer is infected with spyware is slow, unstable performance. Spyware sucks up your system's resources to carry out its evil intent, slowing down your computer and even causing it to freeze and crash.

#5. Disable Or Remove Unnecessary Programs Running In The Background.
Many computers have pre-installed software programs that use up system resources and slow down your computer.

While these recommendations will certainly speed up your system, they aren't a miracle cure for a seriously out-of-date computer network. If your computer or network constantly crashes, freezes up, or runs painfully slow, then it's time to give us a call for an upgrade.

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"
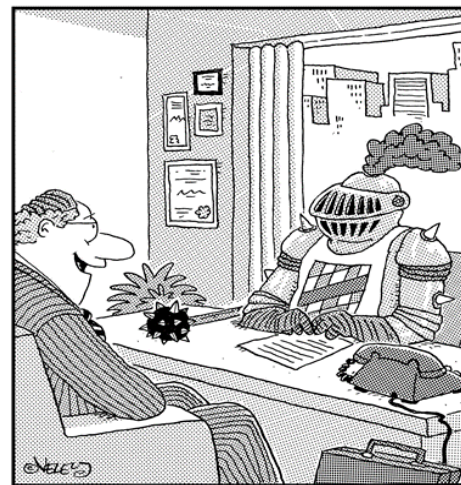
- Justin Shelley, Master Computing

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DENTON, TEXAS

Inside This Issue…

"Hey, no problem! I've always felt that a little sales resistance is a healthy thing!"

Outlook E-Mail Signatures
Protect You From Lawsuits

Do you hate typing your name and contact information at the end of each e-mail you create? Would you like to include legal disclaimers to help protect you and your company? Then use an Outlook "signature" to automate the insertion of this information.

Here's how… On the Tools menu, click Options. Then click the Mail Format tab. Then click the Signatures button. Click the New… button and give your signature a name when prompted and click Next. Type the text you would like to have appear at the end of each email in the box and click Finished. That's all there is to it. Be sure the name of the signature you just created appears in the box titled Signature For New Messages: and Signature For Replies and Forwards: and click the OK button. You can test the signature by creating a new email message. The signature you created should automatically appear at the end of your email message.

Once you have successfully created this basic e-mail signature, you can experiment with adding company logos, color and custom fonts to the signature. For more MS Office features, go to http://office.microsoft.com. For more on email disclaimers, go to http://www.emaildisclaimers.com.

Here is a template for a disclaimer message. *Be sure to have your lawyer approve your disclaimer prior to use.*

DISCLAIMER: This e-mail message and any attachments are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information which is proprietary, privileged, confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you are not the named addressee, you are not authorized to read, print, retain, copy or disseminate this message or any part of it. If you have received this message in error, please notify Your Name at Your Company immediately (by replying to this message or by sending an email to Your Email or by calling Your Phone Number) and permanently delete this message and any attachments. Thank you.

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9 Warning Signs
Your Computer Is Infected With Spyware

Spyware is Internet jargon for hidden programs that advertisers install on your PC without your permission to spy on you, gather information, and report this information about you and your online activities to a third party.

Spyware is NOT harmless; it can be responsible for delivering a boatload of spam, altering your web browser, slowing down your PC, and serving up a bounty of pop-up ads. In some of the more extreme cases, spyware can also steal your identity, passwords, e-mail address book, and even use your PC for illegal activities.

Most spyware finds its way onto your computer via file downloads including free programs, music files, and screen savers found everywhere on the Internet. These nasty programs piggyback the download and run undetected on your computer collecting information about you and sending it out to a third party until they are removed. Although spyware has malicious components, it is not illegal, and it is not considered a virus because it doesn't replicate itself or destroy data.

If you are experiencing one or more of these warning signs, chances are your computer is infected and you will need to seek professional help in getting the spyware removed.

#1. Your browser has been hijacked. If you open your Internet browser and a strange-looking homepage pops up and won't go away, chances are you have a spyware program installed on your computer. You may also discover that you cannot modify your browser settings and that your favorites folder has been modified.

#2. You conduct a search but another (unauthorized) browser completes it for you. For example, you type a search term into Microsoft IE but another browser pops up and lists various websites tied to your search term. This is a surefire sign of a spyware infection. You'll also notice that if you try and remove this program, it comes right back.

#3. Your computer is unstable, sluggish, locks up, or crashes frequently. Spyware programs run in the background taking up disk space and processor speed which will cause serious performance problems.

#4. You constantly get pop-up ads displayed on your screen, even if you aren't browsing the Internet. Some of the ads may even be personalized with your name.

#5. You receive expensive phone bills for calls to 900 numbers that you didn't make. Some spyware programs can use your computer to make calls on both a broadband and dial-up line.

#6. The send and receive lights on your modem blink actively as though you are surfing the Internet or downloading files online, even though you aren't. More than likely this is due to spyware programs sending and receiving information via your computer without your permission or acknowledgement.

#7. Mysterious files suddenly start appearing on your computer, your files are moved or deleted, or the icons on your desktop and toolbars are blank or missing.

#8. Your CD drawer starts opening and closing by itself.

#9. You find e-mails in your "Sent Items" folder that you didn't send.

Because spyware is so prevalent on the Internet, it's a good idea to scan your system once a week to clear out any potential infections. Most spyware programs are designed to run undetected by the user. That means you could be infected and not even know it.

Do I Need To Back Up Data That's A ready In The Cloud?

The computing world is forever changing. Over the last 15 years, SaaS (software as a service) providers have offered the convenience of data backup for your cloud applications such as CRM systems, SalesForce, Google Apps and Microsoft 365. The business question is, if I'm already working with a SaaS provider and my data is already "in" the cloud, do I really need to back up my data to another cloud? After all, isn't the SaaS provider doing that for me?

Well, yes and no. Yes, your data (one of your company's most valuable assets) is being backed up by the service provider. And yes, it's in the cloud. And yes, these providers have backups to their backups … but are they backing up your business-critical information? Can you guarantee that? And do you have access to it in a timely manner? The answer to these questions may be no. As a rule, SaaS providers do not open backups to customers, nor do they make restoring critical data easy or intuitive. For example, SalesForce, the first commercially available SaaS application, does nightly customer backups. But if you need to recover your data, you have to go directly to SalesForce and pay a minimum of $10,000, then wait a few weeks for your data to be restored.

There's no question that the results of data loss can be devastating to your company. But when it comes down to it, it's your company information and you need to take responsibility for safeguarding it. You need to have a strategy in place.

Want to learn more about how to back up your cloud SAAS applications? Contact our office at 940-220-7817 or via e-mail at Connect@master-computing.com to schedule a time to discuss your particular situation and what solutions are available to you.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Have you ever felt overwhelmed or even drowning with the number of emails in your inbox?

Then SaneBox could be your answer. This month's gadget is a cloud-based software application that helps you manage your email. SaneBox analyzes your email behavior on all your devices. Then, based on which emails you let slide and which ones you open right away, SaneBox creates rules about sorting your email for you. The result? Your inbox only has emails you need to attend to now. All other emails go to your SaneLater folder. You can drag and drop emails from that folder to your inbox, and from then on, those emails will display in your inbox.

SaneBox keeps you focused on high-priority emails. There's nothing to download. There are additional productivity features to manage tasks, your calendar, and your attachments. And the SaneBlackhole is the fastest way to unsubscribe from emails. See www.sanebox.com.

What SaaS is and Why You Urgently Need to Know About it BEFORE Buying Your Next Software Upgrade or Application

Would you like to completely eliminate the cost and hassle of upgrades, patches, and other support issues associated with Microsoft Office, e-mail, and other applications you use?

Do you dread the profit-sucking outlay of cash every time you need to upgrade Microsoft Office, purchase new applications, or when you add a new PC to the network?

Would you like to be able to access your e-mail, database, and other applications while on the road without having to deal with synchronization problems once you get back to the office?

Then you'll definitely want to consider SaaS.

SaaS is geek-speak for "software as a service" and it's quickly growing in popularity for companies who want to offload the heavy costs of installing and maintaining a computer network.

Until recently, companies purchased software and then ran their applications on their own servers and computers. As you know from experience, this leaves the entire responsibility (and cost) of upgrades, troubleshooting, security, and maintenance up to you.

With the new SaaS model, you don't pay to own the software—you only pay to use it via the Internet. Since you, the SaaS provider, are responsible for keeping the applications available 24/7/356, THEY take care of all maintenance, scalability, disaster recovery, security, upgrades, and more. And since you are only renting the application along with hundreds of thousands of other companies, you only pay a small fraction of what it would cost to purchase, install, and maintain the software on your own.

Why are so many business owners opting for SaaS instead of the traditional network model?

¨ **Low Cost of Entry and No Heavy Annual License Fees**. SaaS is delivered on a subscription basis, usually billed in a per-user, per month basis. This completely does away with the heavy up-front costs of purchasing and installing new software, upgrades and annual license fees.

¨ **No Maintenance Costs or Hassles**. You offload the need to support, secure, and upgrade the PCs and servers in your office. All maintenance is done by the SaaS provider.

¨ **Drastically Lowered Hardware Costs**. You can use the most up-to-date applications on older and less powerful PCs without any negative effect on speed or performance of the application. This eliminates the heavy costs of upgrading aging technology and protects you from expense spikes.

¨ **Access Your PC from Anywhere**. You can access your desktop—securely– from any PC at any remote location. This eliminates synchronization issues and gives you the freedom to work from anywhere.

¨ **No Expensive Commitments**. Under the "pay as you go" model of SaaS, you can buy an application for two employees and then after a few months, give access to an entire department. Plus, if you find out you don't like a particular application, you simply cancel that service without penalty.

¨ **Improved Security.** Software as a service providers are in the business of providing uninterrupted, reliable services. They know that data must be backed up religiously, and information security is a fanatic priority. Skilled technicians, network redundancies, stand-by power, up-to-date security and intrusion detection are mandatory for any SaaS provider, but usually ignored by most small businesses.

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Is Google The Computer From *Star Trek?*

If you've ever seen a *Star Trek* episode, you'll know that "computer" always knew the answer to whatever the commander needed to know to run the starship, do battles with aliens and it even made tea…Earl Grey…hot. In business today, Google has taken on the role of answering questions and providing information. In fact, the company name has become a verb in our language and you can google just about anything on this easy-to-use search engine.

"Computer" gave you one answer, Google gives you many. But there's an easy way to limit the responses and that's by the way you search. If you only want to see responses on exactly what you're searching for, then type the **minus sign** at the end of your search. Another way to limit your responses is to take advantage of Google's specialized search sites, for example **Google's Public Data Explorer**. This site allows you to search specifically on public statistics.

The *Star Trek* computer spoke every language. Google speaks 80. You can ask Google to translate a single word by typing "**translate** (word) to (language)" into the search bar and you'll get the translated word. There's also a Google application called **Google Translate** where you can type, speak or handwrite the phrase into your device – you can even take a picture of a sign or other text. Then it's your choice to have Google speak the translated phrase or display it for you. Need an easy-to-use price-comparison site for business travel? Try Google **Flight Search**. Pick your starting point and destination—or destinations—on the map, and then pick your dates. When you pick the dates, be sure to pay attention to the prices on each date and Google's graph of days with the cheapest tickets. Then, you can filter the results by flight length, airline, price, stops and more. When you find a flight you like, you can book it directly on the airline's site.

Like the *Star Trek* computer, Google provides definitions and conversions. In the search bar, type **define** (word) or **convert** (unit of measure), and you can even compare the nutritional values of one food item to another's: just type **compare.**

So is Google the computer from *Star Trek*? With all these features, what do you think?

Free Report: What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems

PROTECT YOUR NETWORK
"What Every Business Owner Must Know About Protecting and Preserving Their Network"

Don't Trust Your Company's Critical Data And Operations To Just Anyone!

Free Report Download: What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems

This report will outline in plain, non-technical English common mistakes that many small business owners make with their computer network that cost them thousands in lost sales, productivity and computer repair bills, as well as providing an easy, proven way to reduce or completely eliminate the financial expense and frustration caused by these oversights.

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Memorial Day
By Jessica Shelley

A brief history of Memorial Day: Originally known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day was first started as a federal holiday after the Civil War and was created to remember the soldiers that died during that war. In the 20th century, however, it was extended to honor all fallen soldiers. Many people place American Flags in their front yards to honor the fallen soldiers. Another popular tradition, especially in the south, is to place an American Flag on the graves of fallen soldiers.

A Veteran's story in honor of Memorial Day:

"Ed Bray stormed the beach at Normandy during World War II, earning two purple hearts. And yet, the toughest thing the 89-year-old said he had to face in his life was his illiteracy. For decades, Bray went to extraordinary efforts to keep his inability to read or write a secret. While on the job at an Air Force base, he had a coworker help him with documents. At home, his wife did the same for 62 years until her death in 2009. Finally, the determination to shed the shame and learn how to read broke through. 'I want to read one book,' he said. 'I don't care if it's about Mickey Mouse. I want to read one book before I die.'

In early 2013, Bray found Professor Tobi Thompson at Oklahoma's Northeastern University. Her patient and dedicated attitude helped Bray accomplish what he never thought possible. In February the veteran read his first book, a grade-school biography of George Washington. 'It just makes me feel good,' Bray said. He's since gone on to read three books, and has no plan to stop now."

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Yahoo Is Shutting Off Telecommuting – Should You?

The recent decision by Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer to stop telecommuting has cast a negative light on this practice. After checking the company's VPN log to see how many remote employees were logging in, she didn't like what she saw. Effective June 2015, telecommuting is no longer an acceptable practice at Yahoo. The media excitement added fuel to the fire for those who think that employees working at home aren't putting in an honest day's work.

Mayer's now-public memo talked about communication and collaboration. She thought the best way to make that happen is for people to be in one place. But that's just one opinion.

There are many companies who use telecommuting practices very successfully. They also believe in communication and collaboration and use tools such as Google Hangout video chat service, GoToMeeting, Skype, WebEx and Campfire chat by 37signals to do just that. They support these tools with products such as Google's Gmail and Calendar apps for business and Asana's task management software, to name a few.
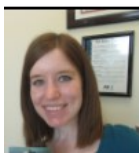
Telecommuters are often employees who live in other parts of the country or even in other countries, and other time zones. After trying several techniques to work with a remote team member, David Bloom, the CEO of tech start-up Ordr.in, now uses Google Hangout for daily virtual meetings. He says, "We have five employees, and four of us are in the same place, but we all log on separately. This allows us to have a face-to-face meeting where everyone's equal. It's not the four of us sitting in one place, with our colleague sitting somewhere else." He finds this arrangement keeps everyone accountable for their work.

Josh Siler, CTO of HiringThing, a virtual company, says it's all about your company culture. "We're trust-based, and we don't micromanage our employees. We judge everyone based on their output. Anyone can make their schedule flexible, as long as they meet their commitments to their coworkers," he says. "Our employees know that their performance is what matters, and we talk about it on a regular basis."

Bloom and Siler would tell you that telecommuting is successful when you have a culture of accountability and trust.

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?

The Grand-Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Rachel Smith! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month: **One famous April Fool's Day hoax occurred in the 1957 when the BBC aired a curious story that tricked quite a few viewers into believing they could grow what?**

a) Musical Shrubbery b) Horse-sized Hamsters c) Spaghetti Trees d) Chocolate Potatoes

The correct answer was **c) Spaghetti Trees. Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Chuy's!**

What is a petaflop?

a) your dog after a long walk   b) the latest toy for kids   c) a measure of a computer's processing speed expressed as: a quadrillion (thousand trillion) floating point operations per second (FLOPS)

E-mail Us Right Now With Your Answer!

Trivia@Master-Computing.com

The Lighter Side:
The First Computer Bug Was Actually A Moth?

- The first actual computer "bug" was a dead moth stuck in a Harvard Mark II computer in 1947.

- Big banks don't process checks and debit card charges to your account in the order they're received, but instead use a computer program that selects the biggest amounts first and charges them against your account, emptying your account faster and resulting in more overdraft fees (profit).

- In September 1956, IBM launched the 305 RAMAC, the first "SUPER" computer with a hard disk drive (HDD). The HDD weighed over a ton and stored 5 MB of data.

- A computer as powerful as the human brain would be able to perform about 38 thousand trillion operations per second and hold about 3,584 terabytes of memory.

- The first entirely computer-generated movie sequence in cinema history was the Genesis Device demonstration video in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. The studio that made the scene would later become Pixar.

- CAPTCHA is an acronym for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart."

- MIT has developed computer software that can identify and distinguish a real smile from a smile of frustration.

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connect@master-computing.com
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