

IT 101 Tips & Tricks

At the SeedSpark Technical Support Desk, we receive hundreds of calls each week regarding a wide range of technology issues. While we are always ready to tackle any questions you may have, there are a few simple tricks you can try before calling the Help Desk that will speed up the process and ensure that you're back on track as quickly and efficiently as possible. Next time you experience a technical issue, try following these tips before calling and you might find yourself saving both time and money!

My computer
froze!

Why is my computer
so slow?

I forgot my
password!

Reboot

When in doubt, reboot. Have you tried turning your computer off and on again? If an application starts acting up, or your computer starts running slowly, go ahead and reboot your computer. Consider rebooting as a chance for your machine to forget everything that's troubling it, regroup, and get its act together. Recent patches or updates might not take effect until you restart your computer — so if your machine recommends a reboot, it's a good idea to do so.

Logging off and on is different from rebooting. When you log off of your machine, you're simply signing out of the system so that someone else can sign in. To achieve a full restart, you'll either need to shutdown or restart the machine.

Turning the monitor off and on is different from turning your computer off and on. It's important to note that the power button on your monitor only turns off the screen without restarting the computer.

General Knowledge

The terms “computer” and “CPU” mean different things. The computer is your entire machine – memory, hard drives, case, and all. However, the central processing unit (CPU) is the main computer chip inside of the computer, most likely made by Intel or AMD.

The computer’s desktop and recycling bin should not be used to save important files.

Where you save your files matters. For example, IT departments might only back up files located in certain folders, such as those on a network drive. In the case of the recycling bin, files might be automatically deleted forever.

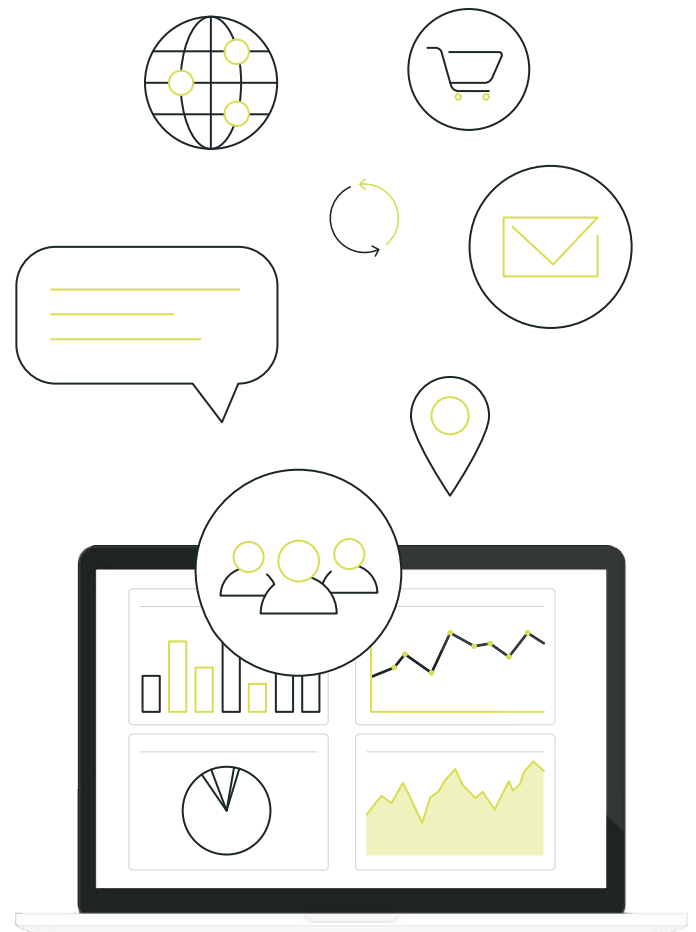
There’s a difference between the internet, your network connection, the intranet, and a specific website being down.

Losing your connection to the internet and the internet being down are different things. You can be connected to the network in your office without being connected to the internet. Even if you can access shared folders and internal websites, you might not be able to reach external sites like Google. In other cases, individual websites experience their own problems. It’s best to check out a couple of websites in an effort to rule out a connection error or a single site being down.

Clicking options. When simply clicking on a button isn’t doing what you want, or presenting you with the right menu, try a different mouse function such as right-click, double-click, or click-drag. If one doesn’t work, try one of the other options for a greater chance of success.

Lock your computer when you walk away.

When you leave your computer behind without locking it, anyone can use it without a password. From there, they might copy (or delete) important files without your permission, install malware, or even send emails pretending to be you. Every time you leave your desk, you should lock your computer (on Windows, press the Window key+L or press Ctrl+Alt+Del and lock). When you press Ctrl+Alt+Del, you can do other things such as change your password, run the task manager (which lets you know what's running on your computer), or log off.



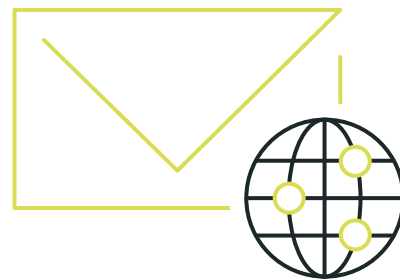
Email

The “deleted items” section of Outlook is not a good place to file important emails. Just like the recycling bin, the deleted items folder in Outlook gets automatically cleaned out from time to time. Believe it or not, some people like to store their most important emails there! For the task of holding your important communications, you should create a special folder instead.

Not everything that can be emailed should be emailed. Because it isn't the most secure method of communication around, and because of regulatory issues, you shouldn't include the following in emails: confidential materials, customer information, trade secrets, social security and credit-card numbers (and more!). A different method of delivery should also be considered for large files because they often won't go through in an email — if they do, they put a large burden on your company's email server. It's best to use a secure file share instead.

Don't “Reply All” unless necessary. In regard to communications sent to large groups of people — for example, the entire company — don't feel the need to reply to everyone in the email. This will needlessly generate a lot of extra data that will clog up/slow down the mail server for everyone else.

If an email is returned as undeliverable, it likely won't go through the second, third, or tenth time you try to send it. Trying to send an email multiple times will only frustrate you. Try addressing the underlying issue first (perhaps your computer isn't connected to the network?) before trying to send multiple times.



Trigger Happy Hands

Printing. Trying to send a print command 10 times likely won't get the printer to work, but it might give you 10 copies of the same thing when the issue is finally resolved. Refrain from pressing print multiple times and give your printer a chance to respond, if nothing, you may want to try rebooting your printer.

Links. When clicking a link multiple times, it could unexpectedly cause 50 windows to pop up at once when your computer decides to start responding again. Refrain from clicking the link multiple times and give your computer a chance to respond, if nothing, you may want to try rebooting your computer.

Passwords & Access

Password problems? If your password doesn't seem to work for some reason, no matter what you do, it might be because you're entering it in all capital letters without realizing that caps lock is enabled. If you use numbers in your password, make sure that num lock is on the correct setting.

DO NOT write your passwords down and keep them near your computer. Hacking your machine is as easy as someone coming into your space and reading off the passwords right in front of them. Even if someone is not physically right in front of your computer, they might snap a photo of your exposed passwords.

Be careful if you rely on your web browser to remember passwords. If you forget to lock your computer and someone gains access to it, they'll be able to log into all of your accounts, potentially stealing important data or ordering stuff on the internet with your money.

Website access. Computers at work should be treated differently from your home computer. Companies must worry about hackers, malware, legal issues, and ensuring there's enough bandwidth for everyone at work. (Your excessive video streaming really slows down the network.) IT sets up firewalls, filtering software, and puts restrictions in place for a reason — to keep everyone safe, keep the company out of trouble, and to ensure that all employees can do their job.

Help Us To Help You

Give as many details as possible. The IT department needs more information than "the system is down". Tell them exactly what's wrong and they'll be able to help you more quickly. A vague description of the problem might lead to unnecessary delays.

Take a screenshot of the issue. The "print screen" button on the keyboard captures a picture of everything that's on your screen. You can then paste the image into an email, or to a program like Word. Alternatively, you can use the "Snipping Tool" to capture a specific part of the screen. On a Mac, Command+Shift+4 will allow you to capture a screenshot.

If you need support, be available for follow-up questions. If you're not there, either in person or on the phone, IT might not be able to fix your issue in a timely manner. Please remain near your phone so your issue can be resolved as quickly as possible.

Remote support. IT can often use a remote support tool to see what's on your screen. They can even take control of your computer to resolve issues for you. This can only happen if the program is running, which means your system must be powered on.

Get In Touch

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