

A Better Tech, LLC



## **Your Quick Fix Toolkit**

# **Solving Common Computer Headaches**



## FORWARD

This e-book could easily pay for itself with one repair since most techs or repair shops charge in excess of \$80 per hour. Generally, any repair on a computer will take at least an hour to complete. Granted, for someone that doesn't have much experience, the job will take longer. In fact, we recommend that you take your time and do things slowly. Double and triple check yourself since mistakes can cost you much more in the end. That comment alone is the main reason we recommend taking your computer to a pro. If you damage something it will definitely cost you more. But if you're pretty handy and can understand directions, this option is for you.

**NOTE:** This book is only for educational purposes. Any work you perform is your sole responsibility. You agree to not hold us liable for any damage or injuries while following these instructions.

**READ AND UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN THIS E-BOOK BEFORE ATTEMPTING ANY WORK SO YOU UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING INVOLVED!**

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Take care while following these steps or any other maintenance steps on your computer. Excessive damage can be caused if you delete the wrong files or remove the wrong programs or apps. Specific results are not guaranteed. There may be circumstances in which these steps do not work on your computer. You agree to hold us, *A Better Tech*, and any persons associated with or involved with *A Better Tech*, harmless from damages resulting from any work completed by you or anyone else on your computer. The acceptance of this text constitutes receipt & understanding of this disclaimer.

## CHECK OUT MORE TIPS AT OUR BLOG

If these steps don't remedy your problem, you might have bigger issues that may need to be dealt with by a professional. We suggest finding a local computer repair shop to help. Just be sure the tech you use is professional, courteous and competitively priced.

## CONTACT

Website: <https://bettercomputertech.com>

Email: [contact@bettercomputertech.com](mailto:contact@bettercomputertech.com)

# "The Frozen Screen Fiasco: What to Do When Your Computer Stops Responding"



We've all been there: You're in the middle of something important, and suddenly, your computer just... stops. The mouse cursor is stuck, the screen is frozen, and nothing seems to work. Don't panic! Here's a step-by-step guide to help you get your computer back on track.

## Understanding the Freeze:

A frozen screen can happen for various reasons, including:

- **Overloaded System Resources:** Running too many programs at once can overwhelm your computer's memory and processing power.
- **Software Conflicts:** Sometimes, two or more programs might clash, causing a freeze.
- **Driver Issues:** Outdated or corrupted device drivers can lead to instability.
- **Operating System Errors:** Occasionally, glitches in your operating system can cause freezes.

## Troubleshooting Steps:

### 1. Give It a Minute:

- Sometimes, your computer might just be temporarily overloaded. Give it a minute or two to see if it recovers on its own.
- It is possible that a program is just taking up a lot of resources, and will conclude its process.

### 2. Force-Quit Unresponsive Applications (If Possible):

- **Windows:**
  - If your mouse cursor is still moving, try pressing **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to open the Task Manager.
  - In the "Processes" tab, look for any programs that say "Not responding."
  - Select the unresponsive program and click "End task."

- **Mac:**
  - If your mouse cursor is still moving, try pressing **Command + Option + Esc** to open the Force Quit Applications window.
  - Select the unresponsive program and click "Force Quit."

### 3. The "Three-Finger Salute" (Hard Restart):

- If your mouse cursor is completely frozen, you'll need to perform a hard restart.
- **Windows:** Press and hold **Ctrl + Alt + Delete**.
  - If the screen changes, select the power icon in the lower right corner and choose restart.
  - If that does not work, hold the power button down until the computer shuts off. Then, press the power button again to turn it back on.
- **Mac:** Press and hold **Control + Command + Power Button**.
  - If that does not work, hold the power button down until the computer shuts off. Then, press the power button again to turn it back on.
- **Important Note:** A hard restart can result in unsaved data loss, so use it as a last resort.

### 4. After Restarting:

- Once your computer has restarted, take a moment to consider what you were doing when it froze.
- If it happens frequently when using a specific program, try updating or reinstalling that program.
- Make sure your operating system is up to date.
- Run a virus and malware scan.

### 5. When to Seek Professional Help:

- If your computer freezes frequently, even after trying these steps, it might indicate a more serious hardware or software issue.
- In such cases, it's best to consult a computer technician.

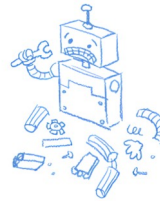
**Remember:** Prevention is key! Regularly closing unused programs, keeping your software updated, and performing routine maintenance can help minimize the risk of frozen screens.

# "Internet Interrupted: Getting Back Online When Your Connection Drops"



404. That's an error.

The requested URL was not found on this server. That's all we know.



In today's world, a dropped internet connection can feel like a major crisis. Whether you're working, streaming, or just browsing, being offline is frustrating. Here's how to troubleshoot common internet connectivity issues and get back online quickly.

## Understanding Connection Problems:

Internet interruptions can stem from various sources, including:

- **Router/Modem Issues:** These devices can sometimes malfunction or require a reset.
- **Wi-Fi Problems:** Weak signal strength, interference, or incorrect settings can disrupt Wi-Fi connectivity.
- **ISP Outages:** Your internet service provider (ISP) might be experiencing technical difficulties.
- **Cable/Connection Problems:** Loose or damaged cables can prevent a stable connection.
- **Device Driver Issues:** Outdated or corrupted network adapter drivers can cause connection problems.
- **Website Issues:** Sometimes a website is just down.

## Troubleshooting Steps:

### 1. Check Physical Connections:

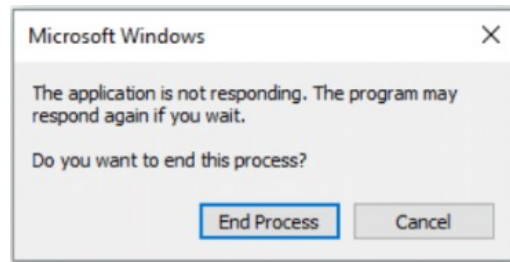
- Ensure that all cables (Ethernet, coaxial) connecting your modem and router are securely plugged in.
- If you're using Wi-Fi, make sure your device is within range of the router.
- If you can, try using an ethernet cable to connect directly to the router to see if the wifi, or the internet is the issue.

### 2. Restart Your Modem and Router:

- This is the classic "turn it off and on again" solution, and it often works!
- Unplug the power cables from both your modem and router.
- Wait for about 30 seconds.
- Plug the modem back in and wait for it to fully power on (the lights should indicate this).

- Plug the router back in and wait for it to power on.
  - Once both devices are back online, check if your internet connection is restored.
- 3. Check Your Wi-Fi Connection:**
- Make sure your device is connected to the correct Wi-Fi network.
  - If you're experiencing a weak signal, try moving closer to the router.
  - If possible, try connecting to the Wi-Fi network from another device to see if the problem is specific to one device.
  - Check that the wifi adapter on the computer is enabled.
- 4. Use Your Operating System's Network Troubleshooter:**
- **Windows:**
    - Right-click on the network icon in the system tray (lower right corner).
    - Select "Troubleshoot problems."
    - Follow the on-screen instructions.
  - **Mac:**
    - Click the Apple menu and select "System Settings" (or "System Preferences" in older versions).
    - Click "Network."
    - Select "Assist me" then "Diagnostics."
    - Follow the on-screen instructions.
- 5. Check for ISP Outages:**
- Visit your ISP's website or social media pages to see if they've reported any outages.
  - You can also use online outage maps to see if there are widespread internet problems in your area.
  - Call your ISP.
- 6. Check if the Website is Down:**
- Use a website like "downforeveryoneorjustme.com" to check if the website you are trying to access is operational.
- 7. Update Network Adapter Drivers:**
- Outdated drivers can cause connection issues.
  - Visit your computer manufacturer's website or the network adapter manufacturer's website to download and install the latest drivers.
- 8. When to Call Your ISP:**
- If you've tried all of these steps and still can't connect, it's time to contact your ISP.
  - They can help you troubleshoot more complex issues and determine if there are any problems on their end.

# "The Slow-Motion Computer: Speeding Up a Sluggish System"



Is your computer taking forever to load programs, open files, or even just browse the web? A slow computer can be incredibly frustrating, but often, the fix is simpler than you think. Here's how to diagnose and address the common causes of a sluggish system.

## Understanding Computer Slowdowns:

Several factors can contribute to a slow computer, including:

- **Too Many Programs Running:** Overloading your computer's resources can significantly impact performance.
- **Insufficient RAM:** Random Access Memory (RAM) is crucial for running programs smoothly.
- **Hard Drive Issues:** A nearly full or fragmented hard drive can slow down your system.
- **Startup Programs:** Many programs automatically run at startup, consuming resources.
- **Malware/Viruses:** Malicious software can hog system resources and disrupt performance.
- **Outdated Software:** Older software versions may have performance issues.
- **Temporary Files:** Over time, these files accumulate and slow performance.

## Troubleshooting Steps:

### 1. Close Unnecessary Programs:

- The simplest solution is often the most effective. Close any programs you're not currently using.
- Use the Task Manager (Windows: Ctrl + Shift + Esc; Mac: Command + Option + Esc) to identify and close resource-intensive programs.

### 2. Check Startup Programs:

- **Windows:**
  - Open Task Manager (Ctrl + Shift + Esc).
  - Go to the "Startup" tab.
  - Disable any programs that you don't need to run at startup.
- **Mac:**
  - Click the Apple menu and select "System Settings" (or "System Preferences").
  - Click on "General" then "Login Items"
  - Disable any programs that you don't need to run at startup.

### **3. Run Disk Cleanup (Windows):**

- This tool helps remove temporary files and other unnecessary data.
- Search for "Disk Cleanup" in the Windows search bar and select it.
- Select the drive you want to clean (usually C:).
- Check the boxes for the files you want to remove and click "OK."

### **4. Uninstall Unused Software:**

- Go to your operating system's control panel or settings and uninstall any programs you no longer use.

### **5. Check for Malware/Viruses:**

- Run a full system scan with your antivirus and anti-malware software.
- Make sure that your antivirus software is up to date.

### **6. Update Software and Drivers:**

- Ensure that your operating system and all your software are up to date.
- Check for driver updates, especially for your graphics card and storage devices.

### **7. Consider Upgrading RAM:**

- If your computer consistently runs slowly, you might need to upgrade your RAM.
- Check your computer's specifications to see what type and amount of RAM it supports.

### **8. Defragment Your Hard Drive (Windows):**

- For traditional hard drives (HDDs), defragmenting can improve performance.
- Search for "Defragment and Optimize Drives" in the Windows search bar.
- Select your drive and click "Optimize."
- Solid state drives (SSDs) do not need to be defragmented.

### **9. Check for Hard Drive Health:**

- Hard drives can degrade over time.
- There are many free programs that can check the health of your hard drive.

### **10. When to Consider a Professional:**

- If you've tried these steps and your computer is still slow, it might indicate a more serious hardware issue.
- A professional technician can diagnose and resolve complex problems.



# "The Mysterious Error Message: Deciphering Those Annoying Pop-Ups"



Error messages can be cryptic and intimidating, but they're often your computer's way of telling you something's wrong. Instead of panicking, learn how to decipher these messages and find solutions.

## Understanding Error Messages:

Error messages appear for various reasons, including:

- **Software Glitches:** Programs can encounter errors due to bugs or conflicts.
- **Hardware Problems:** Faulty hardware can trigger error messages.
- **Operating System Issues:** Problems with your operating system can lead to errors.
- **Missing Files:** Programs might fail to run if necessary files are missing.
- **Connection Problems:** Network or internet connection issues can generate errors.
- **Malware:** Malicious software can cause many different errors.

## Troubleshooting Steps:

### 1. Read the Message Carefully:

- Don't dismiss the message immediately. Read it thoroughly to understand what it says.
- Pay attention to any error codes or specific keywords.

### 2. Copy and Paste the Error Message:

- Select the error message text and copy it (Ctrl + C or Command + C).
- Paste the error message into a search engine (Google, Bing, etc.).
- Adding keywords like "Windows 10" or "Mac OS" to the search can narrow down the results.

### 3. Identify Reliable Sources:

- Look for results from official software or hardware websites, reputable tech blogs, or support forums.
- Be cautious of websites that offer quick fixes or downloads from unknown sources.
- Microsoft, Apple, and other large companies have very good support pages.

#### 4. Look for Solutions and Explanations:

- Search results will often provide explanations of the error message and suggested solutions.
- Follow the steps carefully and make sure they apply to your specific situation.

#### 5. Common Error Message Examples:

- **"File Not Found"**: This often indicates a missing or corrupted file. Try reinstalling the program or restoring the file from a backup.
- **"Blue Screen of Death (BSOD)" (Windows)**: This indicates a critical system error. Write down the error code (e.g., STOP: 0x0000007B) and search for it online.
- **"Kernel Panic" (Mac)**: Similar to a BSOD, this indicates a critical system error. Restart your Mac and check for software updates.
- **"Website Not Found" or "DNS Error"**: This indicates a problem with your internet connection or the website you're trying to access.

#### 6. Be Wary of Pop-Ups:

- Many pop-ups claiming your computer has a virus are scams.
- Do not click on links or download software from untrusted pop-ups.
- If you are unsure, close the pop up by closing the browser, or using task manager.

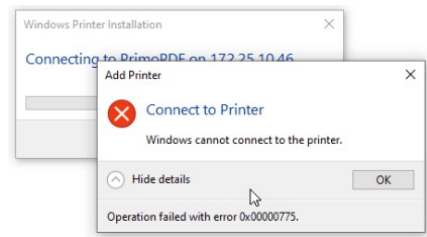
#### 7. System Restore (Windows):

- If the error started recently, you can try using System Restore to revert your computer to a previous state.
- Search for "System Restore" in the Windows search bar and follow the instructions.

#### 8. When to Seek Professional Help:

- If you're unsure about the error message or if the solutions you find online don't work, it's best to consult a computer technician.
- They can help you diagnose and resolve more complex issues.

# "The Printer Panic: Getting Your Documents to Print"



When your printer refuses to cooperate, it can bring your workflow to a screeching halt. Don't let printer problems frustrate you. Here's a guide to troubleshooting common printing issues.

## Understanding Printer Problems:

Printer problems can arise from various sources, including:

- **Connection Issues:** Problems with cables or wireless connections.
- **Driver Problems:** Outdated or corrupted printer drivers.
- **Paper Jams:** Physical obstructions in the printer.
- **Ink/Toner Levels:** Low or empty ink or toner cartridges.
- **Print Queue Issues:** Problems with the list of documents waiting to be printed.
- **Printer Settings:** Incorrect printer settings.
- **Printer Offline:** The printer is turned off or not connected to the network.

## Troubleshooting Steps:

### 1. Check Physical Connections:

- Ensure that the printer is plugged into a power outlet and turned on.
- If using a USB cable, make sure it's securely connected to both the printer and your computer.
- If using a network connection (Wi-Fi or Ethernet), verify that the printer is connected to the same network as your computer.

### 2. Verify Ink/Toner Levels:

- Check the printer's display or your computer's printer software to see if ink or toner levels are low.
- Replace empty or low cartridges as needed.

### 3. Check for Paper Jams:

- Carefully inspect the printer for any paper jams.
- Follow the printer's instructions for removing paper jams.
- Make sure to remove all torn pieces of paper.

#### **4. Restart the Printer and Computer:**

- Turn off the printer and your computer.
- Wait for about 30 seconds.
- Turn the printer back on, then your computer.

#### **5. Check the Print Queue:**

- **Windows:**
  - Search for "Printers & scanners" in the Windows search bar and select it.
  - Select your printer and click "Open print queue."
  - If there are any stuck print jobs, right-click on them and select "Cancel."
- **Mac:**
  - Click the Apple menu, select "System Settings" (or "System Preferences"), and then "Printers & Scanners."
  - Select your printer and click "Open Print Queue."
  - Cancel any stuck print jobs.

#### **6. Update or Reinstall Printer Drivers:**

- Outdated or corrupted drivers can cause printing problems.
- Visit the printer manufacturer's website to download and install the latest drivers for your printer model.
- Sometimes uninstalling the printer from the computer, and then reinstalling the printer will solve driver issues.

#### **7. Run the Printer Troubleshooter:**

- **Windows:**
  - Search for "Printers & scanners" in the Windows search bar and select it.
  - Select your printer and click "Manage."
  - Click "Run the troubleshooter."
- **Mac:**
  - Click the Apple menu, select "System Settings" (or "System Preferences"), and then "Printers & Scanners."
  - Select your printer.
  - If there is a problem, Mac OS will often provide a prompt to assist in troubleshooting.

#### **8. Check Printer Settings:**

- Ensure that the correct printer is selected as the default printer.
- Verify that the paper size and orientation settings are correct.

#### **9. Check that the Printer is Online:**

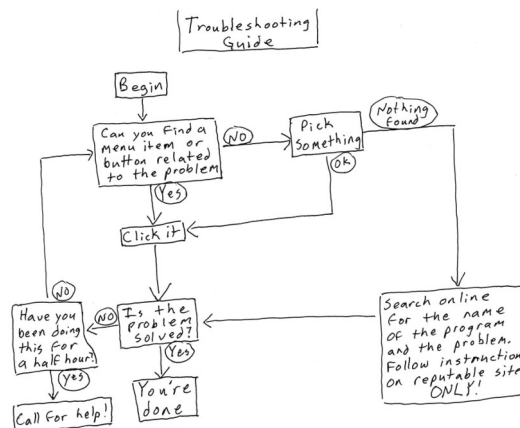
- Many printers will have a display that shows whether or not the printer is online.
- If the printer is offline, consult the printer manual.

#### 10. When to Seek Professional Help:

- If you've tried these steps and your printer still isn't working, it might indicate a hardware problem or a more complex issue.
- Contact the printer manufacturer's support or a qualified technician.



# "The 'Non-Computer Person' vs. The 'Tech Pro': A Hilarious Look at Troubleshooting"



We've all been there. Staring blankly at a screen, clicking buttons with increasing desperation, hoping something – anything – will magically fix the problem. Let's face it, for those of us who aren't "computer people," troubleshooting can feel like navigating a minefield blindfolded.

## The "Non-Computer Person's" Troubleshooting Steps (A Comedy of Errors):

### 1. "Button Roulette":

- *Start:* Spot a button or menu item that *vaguely* relates to the problem.
- *Action:* Click it. If it does something, great! If not, try another. (Repeat until you've clicked everything.)
- *Result:* Either you've fixed it, or you've created a whole new set of problems.

### 2. "The 30-Minute Rule":

- *Condition:* You've been clicking random buttons for 30 minutes.
- *Action:* Surrender. Ask a "computer person" for help. (Prepare for a mix of pity and amusement.)

### 3. "Google It (Maybe)":

- *Condition:* All the buttons are exhausted.
- *Action:* Google the program name + a few words vaguely related to the problem.
- *Caution:* Rely on the first result, regardless of how questionable it looks. (Just kidding! Stick to reputable sites... mostly.)
- *Result:* Either you've fixed it, or you're now convinced your computer is haunted.

## The "Tech Pro's" Troubleshooting Steps (The Truth Revealed):

Have you ever watched a tech pro troubleshoot a problem? It's like watching a magician at work. They navigate menus, type commands, and seem to know exactly where to click at lightning speed. To the untrained eye, it appears to be some kind of mystical, almost supernatural ability. But in reality, it's a combination of experience, logic, and a systematic approach. While you might see a blur of motion, each step is a calculated move in a well-defined process.

- *Start:* (Internal Monologue: "Okay, what's *actually* happening?")
- *Action:*
  1. **"The Systematic Button Check"**: Start with the most logical menu items, working step by step. (Yes, we click buttons too, but with *purpose*.)
  2. **"The 30-Minute (or Less) Rule"**: If a logical path doesn't reveal the answer within a reasonable time, it's time to dig deeper.
  3. **"Google-Fu Master"**: Precise search queries, reputable sources, and a healthy dose of skepticism. (We've seen it all, trust us.)
  4. **"The Process of Elimination"**: Rule out possibilities one by one, using logic and experience.
  5. **"The Restart Ritual"**: Yes, we do it too. Don't judge.
  6. **"The Driver Dance"**: Checking and updating drivers is a very real part of our lives.
- *Result:* Problem solved (hopefully). If not, we escalate to higher powers (i.e., more experienced techs or vendor support).

## The Moral of the Story:

Troubleshooting is a process, whether you're a seasoned tech pro or a casual computer user. We all start somewhere, and even the most experienced techs rely on a combination of logic, research, and a bit of trial and error. So, don't feel too bad if you've clicked a few random buttons along the way. Just remember, there's a method to the madness – even if it sometimes looks like pure chaos!

# Troubleshooting Guide

