Some Common Problems running Windows *(9x, Win ME,XP)* *& Possible Solutions*

- *a presentation by Peter Tsang and Helen Perryman at Q&A, 02/05/07*

Something annoying and sometimes frustrating, but relatively to fix

1. It takes increditbly long time for my PC to shutdown, or not at all?

- o Possible causes:
    - Some Programs are still running, e.g., Windows or your antivirus program might be updating or scanning. *Press, ctrl-alt-delete and see what programs are still running*
    - USB devices might be still runnin (e.g., folders are still open
    - CD-ROM, DVD-ROM might be still running in the background, especially if you were burning a CD/DVD

Suggestions:

  - Next time, *before shutting down*:

  - try to close all applications

  - close USB thumb drive folders; unplug it

  - wait till CD/DVD burning process has completed or ejected

2. It takes a long time for a desktop or especially a laptop to boot up, or not at all:

  - *Most likely it is caused by a plugged- in USB external hard disk drive. Unplug it, and reboot*
  - *For the laptop, plugging in the power cord may help the booting up process*

3. My CD/DVD will NOT eject!

  - *This can happen, if the CD-rom is still being accessed by something in the background, e.g., your RealPlayer, Windows Media Player, Explorer, or the CD/DVD burning software. Try to close all applications. Then, open MyComputer, right-click the CD-Rom, click eject.*

  - *If it still does not work, turn off the PC (-may have to resort to brute method, if the proper shut down does not work). At reboot, right at the*

time Windows spash is show, before fully booted to Windows, press the CD-rom button to open to remove the CD/DVD

4. I don't know what I did, but lost all my icons on my Desktop!
  - *On your Desktop, right click anywhere, select "arrange icons", select "show destop icons"*

5. My icons on desktop scattered at reboot!
  - *Download a small program and install it, SaveDeskIconPosEXE from:*
    o *http://www.download3k.com/Install-Save-Desktop-Icon-Pos..html, or,*
    o *Just type in SaveDeskIconPosEXE in **Google search***

6. I cannot find Scandisk in my WinXP, how can I run it?
  - *Open MyComputer*
  - *Right Click the **C:\ drive**; select properties*
  - *Click the tools tab*
  - *Click the button, "check now", check the box, "automatically fix error"*
  - *Click OK. You'll get an message that "**windows cannot do check disk now**, but do you want to schedule one at the next start up. Click YES. The next time pc is started, a "blue screen" will show up and the "Check Disk" process will start BEFORE booting into Windows. Don't worry about this worrisome looking "blue screen".*

7. I keep up with running my Adaware/Spybot, but it seems some spyware keep on coming back at the next scan. Why?

  - *Try to turn off "System Restore" feature, and run the antispyware programs one at a time in the SAFE Mode to run them*

8. When I run ScanDisk in Windows ME, it gives an error message that it cannot finish after 10 tries!

  - *Try to close ALL the running programs, including Antivirus/ZoneAlarm before running ScanDisk, better yet, run Scandisk in the Safe Mode, especially you are running the "thorough mode"*
  - *By the way, if you run defrag, it definitely should be run in the Safe Mode for Windows ME or Win 98*

9. I lost my broadband internet connection, no email, no internet!

  - *For **Win ME, Win98**: click Start/run type winipcfg; click the buttons "release all", "renew all"*
  - *For **Win XP**: locate the "network connection" icon in the Systray. If it's not there, click Start/show all connections.*

Right click your icon for internet connection (wired "local area connection", or " wireless network connection"; select "repair", wait till finish. Keep your fingers crossed. Try your internet again

- *Restart the PC, if the above didn't work. **If all fails**, do the following:*
  - o *Unplug power cord your Router (either wired or wireless) for a minute or two – remember/mark the cord for identification*
  - o *Unplug the power cord to your Cable modem for a minute or two (also mark your power cord so as not to plug it back into a wrong device!)*
  - o *Plug the correct power cord back into the Cable Modem (- yes, this one 1ˢᵗ!), wait till the blinking lights are stabilize, then plug in the power cord back into the Router. Wait till the blinking lights are stabilize.*
  - o *Keep your fingers crossed. Try the internet connection again. If not restart pc. If it still does not work, repeat the process above*

10. I lost my Dial-Up internet connection, help!
- *Check modem status (- a little bit more involved, but nice to know. I'll demonstrate how)*
- *Re-install TCP/IP (- a little bit more involved, but nice to know. I'll demonstrate how)*

11. Windows activation – after I reinstalled Win XP, I was asked to activate my Winows. How can I skip this process?
- *You cannot skip this at this time. But, even calling in my phone to activate is still a relatively painless process, though definitely a nuisance! The good news is, you could skip this process the next time you have to reinstall Windows. Search for the WPA.dbl file and save it to safe place, e.g., a thumb drive, a CD-r, a floppy.[Start\search; put in wpa in the key word box, click search. Find the wpa.dbl   file, copy and paste it to somewhere safe].*
- *Next time, after you reinstall Windows XP again, copy this wpa.dbl file into C:\Windows\system32 folder. Reboot.*

12. My AVG won't update; uninstalling and reinstalling it did not help
- *Restart PC, and see if it works. Sometimes it is necessary to restart after finishing the updating*
- *Check if ZoneAlarm is blocking it (- open ZoneAlarm; go to Programs, click the "Programs" TAB, to make sure that ZoneAlarm is set to allow AVG update to go to internet.*

- *If all fails, open C:\Program files\Grisoft\AVG free, find and delete the upd_vers.cfg file; try to update AVG again*
- *If not, go back to that AVG free folder and delete the other two most recent files; try to update AVG again*

- If nothing works, uninstall AVG. Then delete the whole "AVG Free" folder [C:\Program files\Grisoft\AVG free], reboot; then re-install AVG – it should now be able to update normally
- If it still does not work, call Helen

13. I can go to internet, but cannot send or receive emails with my Outlook Express
   - Check if AVG is updated (may need to reboot the pc to get into effect)
   - Check if ZoneAlarm
   - Check and see if you can send/receive your webmail, e.g., Cox's webmail in "webmail.west.cox.net". If you can, then, it's Cox is NOT the cause of problem. Check your OE for problems.
   - If OE is at fault, see if the setup for account's user id/password, and pop/smtp (- i.e., settings for the incoming/outgoing) entry are correct

14. I can receive eMail in Outlook Express but cannot send. My outgoing email seems to get stuck in the Outgoing box
   - Check if your recipient's address is correct (the reply address might be wrong itself, try to type in the one you know is correct)
   *- By the way, if send out an email with a "**distribution list**, it takes only ONE faulty address to cause a send-error message, and email will not be sent to any recipient!*
   - Also, see if you can send emails out in your Webmail system, e.g., Cox's webmail in "webmail.west.cox.net"

15. I lost all my eMail address book after reinstall Windows. How can I save my adress book? I don't want to lose it again!
   - Easy, open OE, click the Address book, click File\export
   - Select, address book (.wab)
   - Select the location,(e.g., A:\ or X:\ to your CD-r, or thumb drive)in which you want to save the file, give the file a name, e.g., 020507.wab. If you have problems with this instruction, take the Workshop, "File Management" and/or "Outlook Express".

16. I use OE, can I save all my eMail messages, along with all the folders I created in a folder somewhere?
   - Yes, indeed. Open OE, click Tools\Options;
   - Click the Maintenance Tab. Click the button, "Store folder", to find out the location where all your messages/folders are stored. Then find it and make a copy of it to a CD-r, thumb drive…..
   - You can also use the "run\search feature" to look for "Outlook Express" folders. There are several of them, and you need to make certain which one is for your account.

17.   My Outlook Express will not open, giving me a message that my address book is causing an error.

- *Use the run\search feature to locate your xxxx.wab address book. In the key word box, type in ".wab" and press enter, or click the search button.*
- *There might be more than one.*
- *Make a copy and save it on a floppy, or CD-r, or….*
- *Now, deleted it, and see if you can open your OE. If not, deleted other .wab files you have found. And try again. If not, reboot your PC*

18. My Outlook Express will not open, giving me a message that MSIMN.exe is causing an error and has to close!
- *use your Run\search feature, locate all .dbx files (- type in the key word box, *.dbx*
- *right-click each of the .dbx file, and de-select the box, "read only"*
- *If that didn't work, make a copy of these .dbx files first and save them somewhere. After that, you can delete them.*
- *Try to open OE again. Keep your fingers crossed – BOTH HANDS! If necessary, reboot pc.*

19. I lost my "Quick Launch Bar". Re-installing it didn't work.

- o Go to the following location, *C:\Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Internet* Explorer*quick launch; delete the the "Quick launch" folder, reboot your pc.*
    - ▪ *If you have problems understanding this intruction, try to take the Workshop, "File Management"*

- o *If that didn't do the trick, try the following:*
    - ▪ *Click Start\run type in ie4unit.exe press enter*
    - ▪ *Start\run type in regsvr32 /i shell32.dll*
    - ▪ *Start\run type in regsvr32 /I browseui.dll*
    - ▪ *Reboot PC*
    - ▪ *Now, right click taskbar; select toolbars; click "quick launchbar" to install it again*

20. My PC refuses to shut down. I press the Power Switch, even after I pulled the *power cord, but it stayed on for quite a while!*
  - *Hold the power switch down until the power goes off, it might take a few seconds.*

21. I got an error message, that Explorer (or, sometimes, " Internet Explorer") has caused an error and needs to close!

  - *Click Start\run type in regsvr32 /i shell32.dll; Or, do as follows:*
  - *Open Add/Remove in the Control Panel; select Microsoft Internet Explorer; select the option, "Remove", then it'll give several options: "Repair Internet Explorer", or, "Revert back to an earlier version". Then restart pc. If that works, re-update your Windows.*

22. My Windows ME was trying to update my internet explorer, but kept on telling me to restart the pc, and could not complete the installation – after the rebooting, it still asked me to restart my pc!

- *Locate and delete the "uninstall.inf file in C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer\uninstall.info. Try the Windows update again*
  - *If you have problems understanding this intruction, try to take the Workshop, "File Management"*

23. How to find solutions to my computing problems, besides calling Helen?
- *Use Google search, type in your problem in the search box, e.g.,"my icons scattered at reboot!"*
- *Go to SmartComputing's Tech Support on the web, and do a search*
  - *http://www.smartcomputing.com/techsupport/detail.aspx?guid=EF41 C52EB5754A0781B45F8DDCF26C13&ErrorID=21304*

24. I <u>can not</u> <u>download</u> anything after I click "Download" on a website
- *In your browser, click <u>Tools</u>, disable "<u>Popup Blocker</u>", or select "<u>temporarily allow</u>"*

25. My PC just went completely DEAD, no sound, nothing appeared on the monitor. Help!
- *Try the following first BEFORE calling Helen, or taking your pc to the HWSIG*

  - *If your desktop does not start, actually looks completely dead, i.e., when you press on the power button, there was no beep, no noise from the fan (although sometimes there might be a light green light somewhere in the pc (if you could peek inside somehow), **don't** panic – YET! Try the following first, before you send out an S.O.S.:*

    - *Unplug the power cord from the tower; turn the I/O switch off, if there's one at the back of the PC tower*
    - *Press the power button on (-yes, with all the power cord unplugged!), to <u>discharge all components</u> inside your pc (there's some residual electrical charges in some of those components), which <u>might self-protect and prevent the pc from starting</u>*
    - *After you wait for 10-15 minutes, plug back in the power cord to the pc, switch the power switch at the back to "I" at the back of your pc*
    - *Now, go to the front of your pc, press on the power button. Make sure you keep your fingers crossed – BOTH hands! If you are lucky**, this time the PC will turn on**!*
    - *If it still does not, repeat the process, but wait longer this time, before you plug back in the power cord…..*

- *Note: Instead of going through the above procedure, you could also just <u>wait it out</u> for a few hours (- to let the components to discharge themselves), and <u>then try to press the power button</u>; pray hard. Hopefully, this time your pc would start!*
  - *Only when all these failed, should your call the helping hands and/or bring your ailing pc to the HWSIG.*

Some other easy tips - <u>**before**</u> *picking up the phone for help!*

- Do NOT call technical support, *most of any kind* – if you want to spare yourself of anguish, more grey hair……and don't want to waste time!

- If you must call, call one of the helping *hands in our own club first.* ***Most of them are quite knowledgeable and more patient and helpful, and much less intimidating than regular technicians.*** In addition, most of *our own helping hands' accent and lingo are usually much easier to understand than the Outside Tech Supports'*

- *What should I do before I call Helping Hands?*

  - *Be considerate, call between 9am-5pm, as recommended by the Helping Hands Section in the Gigabytes. Leave a NICE phone message, if no one answers.*

  - *Check Item 25 above*

  - *Be able to describe your problem, jot down the error message..... be able to answer the question, "**What happened after you did what**.."?*

  - *Make sure you know where your CD's (Recovery/Restore CDs, Drivers) are, that came with your PC. Your helping hands mostly likely will need them, especially <u>if you don't know</u> where these CDs are - them – good old try-and-true Murphy's Law!*
    - *Keep your important CDs in a nice and secure place, e.g., a shoe box - just like what I would do for my Receipts for my Tax Return.*