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"As a business owner, I know 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!"

Bryan Lachapelle, President
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b4 networks

What To Do When Things Go Wrong With Your Tech

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 5 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 and allowing them to reset themselves.

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. Use the rule of five W's.

What? - What error message are you exactly seeing? Jot down as much details as possible about the problem.

When/Where? - 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.

What part of the computer does the problem manifest itself? What program were you using when the problem started?

For example, if you discover your printer isn't working from Word, try to print from another application. Also note the order of events leading up to the problem.

Who? - Is this affecting you or are others affected by this as well? This could give you an indication if it's your own computer, or a problem with something else in your network.

Why? - Has anything changed recently in your configuration?

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. 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 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.

5. 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.

- Bryan Lachapelle, B4 Networks Inc.



How To Avoid The Top 4 Budget Busting, Stress-Inducing Mistakes When Moving Your Office

Moving is always a pain in the rump, but it doesn't have to be a horrific, expensive experience. The number one lament from someone who's experienced a "bad" move is, "I didn't know I needed to" followed closely by "I completely forgot that" In other words, it's what you don't do that makes the move a disaster.

To make your move easy and effortless, here are the 4 most common mistakes to avoid:

Mistake #1 — Not Using A Checklist

This may seem like a no-brainer to those who manage projects, but project management may not be a forte of someone placed in charge of your move (like an office admin). Even those who use a list typically fail to make the list detailed enough.

Mistake #2 — Trying To Save Money By Moving Your Own Computer Network

Don't ask your staff to disconnect, move and reconnect computers, phones and other devices just to save a few bucks. You'll frustrate them and end up with phones ringing at the wrong extension, lost cables, and workstations that get dropped rendering them useless. You don't want to let the movers do this job either; they may be great at moving furniture, but a network is a lot more sophisticated and sensitive. Be smart and hire an IT pro to pack and move your network.

Mistake #3 — Not Hiring The RIGHT IT Firm To Move Your Network

Make sure you know what to look for when outsourcing the move. A few things to look for would include references from other clients, proof of insurance, a service level guarantee limiting the amount of time you are down, and a professional, organized approach to quoting the move. A real pro will insist on visiting your current location as well as your new location to conduct a detailed site survey. NEVER hire anyone who wants to quote moving your network over the phone. Additionally, look for an IT company that will apply the charges for conducting your site survey against the total cost of the move if you choose them.

Mistake #4 — Not Giving Your Phone, Internet And Cable Vendors Enough Advance Warning

80% of unexpected communications, blackouts and cost overruns on network moves are caused by failure to properly plan voice, data and electrical installation in advance. Just because the prior tenant had computers and telephones is no guarantee that the cabling is suitable for your phones and your computer network. Advance planning will help you avoid emergency rush fees or band aid fixes to make things work.

Internet and telephone connections require as much as six weeks advance notice to be installed, tested and ready the day you move in.

And if you are building a new office, don't leave it up to the builder to decide how many power outlets, network and phone connections you will need. Remember, changes and additions after the walls are up are at your expense. With printers, scanners, faxes, and other technologies connecting directly to the network these days, the rule of thumb of one electrical outlet, one phone and one network connection per employee is woefully outdated.

Are you or someone you know planning on moving? Contact us for a FREE Office Move Toolkit.

- FREE Office Move Checklist to make sure you don't overlook important action items.
- FREE Site Survey and Network Move Plan. At no charge we'll map out your move to minimize costs and downtime.



The Lighter Side

Two Men from Ireland

A man stumbles up to the only other patron in a bar and asks if he could buy him a drink.

"Why of course," comes the reply.

The first man then asks: "Where are you from?"

"I'm from Ireland," replies the second man.

The first man responds: "You don't say, I'm from Ireland too! Let's have another round to Ireland."

"Of Course," replies the second man.

Curious, the first man then asks: "Where in Ireland are you from?"

"Dublin," comes the reply.

"I can't believe it," says the first man.

"I'm from Dublin too! Let's have another drink to Dublin."

"Of course," replies the second man.

Curiosity again strikes and the first man asks:

"What school did you go to?"

"Saint Mary's," replies the second man.

"I graduated in '62."

"This is unbelievable!" the first man says.

"I went to Saint Mary's and I graduated in '62, too!"

About that time in comes one of the regulars and sits down at the bar.

"What's been going on?" he asks the bartender.

"Nothing much," replies the bartender. "The O'Malley twins are drunk again."

How To Keep Your Laptop Secure

You can't beat the convenience of checking e-mail and hopping on the Internet at (Wi-Fi) hotspots found in airports, coffee shops, bookstores, and even in some major parks. For the uninitiated, Wi-Fi hotspots are areas where you can use your wireless laptop to surf the Web and check e-mail.

But the question you have to ask yourself is, just how safe is it to connect? With the proliferation of hackers, viruses and identity theft at an all time high, you are smart to be concerned. Wi-Fi spots are very attractive to hackers because they can use what's called an "evil twin" connection to access your laptop.

An evil twin is a wireless hotspot set up by a hacker to lure people from a nearby, legitimate hotspot. For example, when you log in at your favorite coffee shop, you might actually be logging onto the evil twin Internet connection set up by the innocent-looking person working on a laptop at the next table.

The most dangerous evil twins remain invisible and allow you to do business as usual. But in the background, they record everything you are typing. Buy something online and they are recording your credit card information. Log on to your bank account, and they can grab your password. Some hotspots

may even feed you a fake Web page after you log on asking you to update your billing information. This is the same tactic used in phishing scams.

So what can you do to make sure you are not giving an evil twin access to your laptop?

First, know the name of the hotspot you're going to use by asking someone who works there. Some businesses will give you printed instructions that include the hotspot name. Again, be careful. Hackers will try to name their evil twin network by a very similar name as the real hotspot, and may even show up as a stronger signal.

The best protection you can have is connecting via your company's VPN (virtual private network). A VPN will protect your online information by encrypting your data and activity even if you're connected through an evil twin.

If you don't have a company VPN, you should assume that someone is looking over your shoulder and recording everything you type in. Therefore, the BEST protection without a VPN is to never type in information such as credit cards, passwords, or social security numbers when connected to a public Wi-Fi hotspot.



TRIVIA CHALLENGE

This month's winner will receive a \$50 Gift Card to **Staples**

Enter our monthly trivia contest for a chance to win a prize each month.

Congratulations to February's Winner:
Brad Mumford
From:
Sterling Fuels Inc.

To enter, visit the website below or email me:
bryan@b4networks.ca and answer the question below.

www.b4networks.ca/trivia

According to Guinness Book of World Records, What's the most amount of leaves ever found on a clover.

- a. 3
- b. 4
- c. 14
- d. 56

Submit your entry by the 25th of the month, and if your answers are correct, your name will be added to the draw for a \$50 Gift Card.

*See website for full trivia rules

Family Update



Amanda (my wonderful wife) did a photo session with the boys last month. Here were the results of our smiley little guys! They are both so photogenic.

© Amanda Lachapelle Photography - www.amandalachapelle.ca

Need Help Right Away? Call our team 24/7 at 905.346.4966.

FREE BUSINESS ADVISORY GUIDE:

What Every Business Owner Must Know About Hiring An Honest, Competent Responsive, And Fairly-Priced Computer Consultant.

Don't Trust Your Company's Critical Data And Operations To Just Anyone! This Business Advisory Guide Will Arm You With 18 Revealing Questions You Should Ask Any Computer Consultant Before Giving Them Access To Your Company's Network

Choosing the wrong computer consultant to support your network can not only be incredibly frustrating and expensive, but could end up costing you in downtime, data loss, and expensive repair bills, not to mention the headaches and frustration!

You'll learn what most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about making sure your company's critical data is safe from loss, corruption, cyber criminals, natural disasters and employee sabotage, in addition to:

- The "dirty little secret" of the computer repair industry that most people don't know and will NEVER be told by their current IT guy. (Knowing this alone could save you from wasting tons of money and untold aggravation when outsourcing your computer support.)
- How to spot an unethical or grossly incompetent computer repair/support technician in minutes.
- 3 costly misconceptions business owners have about computer maintenance and repair; one you will need to know BEFORE you talk to anyone on the phone.
- 4 mistakes to avoid when choosing a computer consultant.

Download your FREE copy today: www.b4networks.ca/free-technology-reports/

SECURE YOUR NETWORK

"18 Revealing Questions You Should Ask Any Computer Consultant Before Giving Them Access To Your Company's Network"



Discover What Every Business Owner Must Know About Hiring An Honest, Competent Responsive, And Fairly-Priced Computer Consultant.

Tek Tip of the Month

Calculate More

At first glance the Windows 7 calculator looks just like Vista's version, but explore the Mode menu and you'll see powerful new Statistics and Programmer views. And if you're clueless about bitwise manipulation, then try the Options menu instead. This offers many different unit conversions (length, weight, volume and more), date calculations (how many days between two dates?), and spreadsheet-type templates to help you calculate vehicle mileage,

Client Of The Month

Capital Wealth Management is a privately owned, comprehensive financial advisory firm based in St. Catharines, Ontario.



Capital Wealth Management

Management, Risk Management, Estate Planning and Business Succession and Transition Planning.

Their qualified advisory team has over 100 years of combined financial planning experience. Capital Wealth provided expertise to assist both individual investors and business owners with Wealth

The advisory team at Capital Wealth host a radio show called "Its Your Wealth" on 610 CKTB every Saturday from 8 – 9am.

Phone: (905) 682-5789
<http://www.capital-wealth.ca>

B4 Networks has been providing Capital Wealth Management with support for their computer and technology requirements since 2005. B4 Networks was an integral part of a smooth move of Capital Wealth to their new offices at 92 Church St. To ensure all data is properly backed up, B4 Networks also manages the onsite / off-site backup solution used by Capital Wealth Management.

We can help you too! Contact Bryan via email: bryan@b4networks.ca, or call 905.346.4966

Services We Offer

- General Computer / Network Repair and Troubleshooting
- Network Design & Implementation
- Backup and Business Continuity Solutions
- Anti Spam & Email Solutions
- Virus and Spyware Protection
- Network Security / Firewall Solutions
- Commercial Wireless Networking
- Fixed Cost Monthly Managed Services
- Remote Monitoring and Diagnostics, Troubleshooting and Repair
- Project Management
- Technology Consulting
- Hosted Exchange Service
- Cloud Services



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