

Computer Observer

September 2007

Preferred Copy \$1.95 (FREE)

The Top 3 Ways Most People Ruin Their Laptops

by Adam J. Richter M.S.

Laptops are very fragile and they have a lot of technology packed into a small box. Over the years I've seen a lot of laptop problems; both avoidable and unavoidable. Below I've provided you with the top 3 avoidable ways most people ruin their laptops.

1. Power connector – The power connector on the laptop is where the A/C Adapter connects to the laptop to provide power. This connector is usually not a problem except when it is used a lot. A lot of use and disregard can cause the connection to break the solder inside and the connection will become loose. If this happens your laptop will no longer charge and you will have to send it away to get it fixed. This usually costs around \$200-\$400. To avoid this problem be sure to plug in the power evenly and make sure not to move the laptop to an uneven surface that will apply pressure on the connection when plugged in.
2. Heat – Laptops have a very intricate cooling system that involves an intake and an exhaust. The fans and exhaust fins are carefully placed on the sides and bottom of the laptop. If you use your laptop on a bed or other loose surface it can cover the fans and suffocate your laptop. This can cause your laptop to overheat. To avoid this always use your laptop on a hard flat surface.
3. Liquids – Keep liquids away from laptops. I've seen wine, beer, soda, and coffee spilled inside laptops. If you're lucky it will only damage the keyboard. If your not it can completely damage the entire laptop. If you ever do accidentally spill something into the laptop unplug it and remove the battery immediately. Let it dry and take it to a repair center.

Ann's Tips By Ann Dodderidge

Does your cursor get in the way while you are typing a document? Then you have to quit typing and move the mouse. There is a way to stop this from happening. Go to the Control Panel in Windows; double click on the Mouse icon. Click on the tab titled "Pointer Options". Near the bottom of that window, put a check in the box titled "Hide pointer while typing". Click OK, and then close the Control Panel. Problem solved!

Do you have trouble reading some of your email messages because they come in HTML script? I usually delete them right away because I know they are trying to add virus to my computer. If you want to catch these nasty folks then go into Tools, Options, Preferences, email Options and check "Read all standard mail in plain text".

If you do not have Roxio CD burner or one of the other good burners you might want to look into www.deepburner.com. This is a free burner for you CD's and DVD's and it even makes it easy to print your own labels and booklets.

Are you looking for a free telephone? Skype might just be the right answer for you. Check into it at www.skype.com.

I just found some papers on my desk that took me to an interesting website having to do with commonly confused words. I found it most interesting and thought you might also like the site so here is the address: <http://www.pnl.gov/ag/usage/confuse.html> If you have trouble just go to Google and type in commonly confused words.

We Fix Computers

Computer Pros is a full service computer repair and tutoring store located in South Sarasota. Computer Pros services the following areas: North Port, Rotunda, Englewood, Venice, Osprey, Nokomis, Sarasota, Myakka City, Bradenton, Palmetto, Ellenton and more.

Call today to get your computer question answered.
Sarasota/Venice (941) 918-0300
Manatee (941) 756-5300
<http://www.computerpros.cc>

Do you pay \$24.95 for AOL

If you pay \$24.95 for AOL Dial-up I can save you \$5 a month and upgrade you to highspeed internet. If you have \$24.95 AOL Dial-up you can call Verizon and if DSL is available in your area you can get the basic DSL package for \$19.99/month. This will give you highspeed internet and will free up your phone line when you're on the internet. Once you have DSL you can call AOL and have them convert your AOL to the free version since you have your own internet service. You will still be able to use AOL as you did before but it will be a lot faster.

You Can Get Surged Through Your Phone And Cable Lines

By Adam J. Richter M.S.

We've still have a little time left this hurricanes season and thankfully I've seen very little damage. I have one more pointer to keep your computers protected this season. This point is highly overlooked but extremely important. Be sure to protect your phone and cable lines from surge.

If you have highspeed internet, a surge can come through the cable and phone line just as easy as it comes through the power line. It doesn't matter if you computer is on or off, the lightning can travel right down the phone or cable line into your computer. I've seen over 9 computer get fried this season from lightning traveling through the cable/phone lines.

Fortunately, you can buy surge protectors with coaxial and phone line protection. Be sure to get one and install it so your computer will be safe during those lightening storms. Make sure to get enough surge protectors to protect other expensive devices in your house like your TV and phones. These devices are also very susceptible to surge.

Advertising

Advertising in the Computer Observer is simple.

Market: Approximately 1000 confirmed addresses

Locations: All of Sarasota and Manatee County

1/3 page is \$220/month

1/6 page is \$120/month

Contact Adam for more information
(941) 918-0300 or adam@computerpros.cc



Sarasota/Venice
(941) 918-0300

COMPUTERPros

Manatee
(941) 756-5300

How To Fix Your Computer

Internet Problems by Adam J. Richter M.S.

Types of Internet

Dial-Up Internet – Uses the phone line to connect to the internet and has a maximum speed of 56kbps. Typically providers like AOL, MSN, Yahoo, Netzero, Earthlink and other companies offer dial-up service.

Highspeed – DSL and Cable Internet (Comcast/Brighthouse) connect through a highspeed connection and have speeds at least 10 times faster than dial-up internet.

Dial-Up Internet Not Working?

If your dial-up internet is not working, check the obvious first:

- Is the phone line still plugged in from the wall outlet to the computer? Did the connection come loose? Did something damage the cable (perhaps an animal or small child)?
- Does the outlet still have service? Try plugging in a phone to the outlet where your computer is plugged in to determine whether the phone outlet is still working.
- Are there any surge strips connected through the phone line that could be causing a lack of connection? Try connecting the computer phone line straight to the wall and bypassing the surge strip.
- Try a different phone cable.
- Make sure the phone line is connected from the wall to the 'Line' connection on the modem. There are usually two connections on the modem: 'Phone' and 'Line'

When you complete checking the above things you will know for certain that the phone service, outlet, and cable are all connected correctly. Now you can start checking the operating system for problems.

- Check to make sure the modem is still installed. Go to the Device Manager in the 'Control Panel' to make sure the modem is still installed and that you don't have any 'Unknown Devices'

After checking the above options you will know whether the modem is installed correctly.

The final thing you will want to check is whether the ISP is setup to use your modem. This depends on the ISP you use but you will need to make sure it is not setup to use an old modem or a different connection.

If you still cannot get online you may need to replace the modem.

Highspeed Internet Not Working?

If your highspeed internet is not working you will also want to start with the basics:

- Check to make sure that all of the connections are secure
- Does your DSL or Cable Modem have the lights on?
- Try unplugging your DSL or Cable Modem, wait 2 minutes, then plug it back in and restart your computer.
- Is the internet or Cable light on?
- Call your service provider to make sure the internet is not down in your area.

If you check the above you can be fairly certain the hardware is working. Now let's investigate the software.

- From within Windows, click Start>Run, type 'cmd' and then click 'OK'
 - Type 'ipconfig' and see if the computer is getting an IP address, it usually starts with 192 or something close to that.
 - Type 'ping www.google.com' to see if your ping requests get replies or if they do not. This will tell you if you have an internet connection.
- Try opening a webpage in Internet Explorer, go to www.google.com or another reliable webpage. Sometimes webservers go down so it could just be a problem with the website you were trying to visit.
- Have you installed any firewalls lately that could be blocking your connection?

If you still cannot connect, you may have a bad network card.

If you are on wireless internet you may be connecting to the wrong wireless network. It is common for wireless computer to pick up neighboring networks sometimes. Be sure you are connected to your network.



The Venice Area Computer Users Group

The Next Meeting is Monday September 10th 2007 at 4:00 p.m. Venice Library
www.thevacug.com

The VACUG is a non-profit organization designed to help its users become more adept in using computers. This is accomplished through classes, Q&A sessions, and through the networking of members.

Presentation meetings are held the first Monday of each month. Family, guests, and the general public are welcome. Meetings feature industry leaders such as Adobe, Corel, Microsoft, Quicken, and local experts demonstrating the latest software and hardware on the market.

One year membership is \$35.00.

Invite a guest to the next meeting FREE. Non-members may join at the meeting or may print and bring an application from www.thevacug.com

Meeting Schedule

4:00-4:05 PM.....Sign-in
 4:00-4:45 PM.....Forum
 4:45-5:00 PM.....Break
 5:00-6:00 PM.....Guest Lecture & Class
 Computer Pros
 6:00-6:15 PM.....Prizes and Raffles

Meeting Location

Venice Public Library (in the auditorium)
 300 Nokomis Ave S
 Venice, FL 34285



COMPUTERPros
 8392 S. Tamiami Trail
 Sarasota, FL 34238

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 MANASOTA, FL
 PERMIT NO. 239