Article: COMPUTERS BEHAVING BADLY
Topic: Troubleshooting
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For a multitude of reasons, either viruses, spyware, faulty hardware, poorly tested software or the current phase of the moon, your computer will occasionally freeze, lock up, fail to respond or display the dreaded 'blue screen of death'. When this happens, and before you call for help, there are some simple, effective steps that you can try that may help.

Firstly, try a 'cold boot'. This is when the PC is started from scratch. Turn it off, wait a few seconds and turn it back on. A 'warm boot' is when you hit the reset switch or tell the computer to restart. If the PC stopped responding, a reboot will generally fix most things of this nature. If the problem persists, especially doing the some function, further investigation is required.

Make sure all your protective software (adware, spyware, firewall, and virus) is up to date and perform full system scans of each. This will remove the possibility that your problem is caused by these malicious programs.

Pressing Ctrl Alt Delete simultaneously will bring up the Task Manager. This shows all processes currently running on your machine. From here you can terminate a program that is not responding or you suspect of causing a problem. Of cause some of these processes are required by the system so a certain level of knowledge is needed to decide which process should go and which should stay.

Also, check what programs are started each time the PC boots up. Go to Start, Programs, Startup and see what gets started. A lot of unneeded programs are listed here that can simply be deleted. Also go to Start, Run and type in MSCONFIG, this will bring up the System Configuration Utility where you can also check programs that automatically start. Some programs are obvious whereas others are harder to decipher.

During boot up, as soon as your screen shows signs of life, continually hitting the F8 key will display a menu where you can select Safe Mode. If your machine failed to boot normally, it may boot to safe mode from where you can try to undo some recent changes or disable new hardware. It's also a good place to do Defrags and virus scans.

Also from the F8 menu is the Last Known Good Configuration option. This is only available to Windows ME, 2000 and XP users. It allows you to roll back the system to a known, stable state.

But sometimes things just won't work. Knowing one day that something WILL happen to you computer, if the above steps don't work, more drastic measures may be called for. So backup now and backup often!.

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