

Shep Bostin, Geeks On Call

# The Computer “Owner’s Manual”

*What should have come in the ‘glove compartment’ of your computer...*

**Geeks On Call**<sup>®</sup>  
Professional Services

## What are we going to cover?

---

- The Missing Manual
- Daily Tasks
- Weekly Tasks
- Monthly Tasks
- Annual Tasks
- **BONUS:**  
Tips to stay “Healthy”



©2014 – Shep Bostin

2

Our topic today is to talk about how to try to have a trouble-free, “healthy” computer by taking care of it PROACTIVELY and REGULARLY. My goal is to give you simple, practical tips and tools to help you achieve a hassle-free computing experience.

## The Missing Manual

---



- NO Documentation
- Emphasis on *Fixing* Problems
- Prevention Ignored
- Need for Ongoing rather than Reactive Action



©2014 – Shep Bostin

3

A modern computer is a like a new car with an empty glove compartment. You rarely get anything more than a warranty card with a new computer, and few people in this room can remember the days when computers came with owner's manuals such as those that come with cars.

To make matters worse, online resources tend to focus on fixing problems – prevention is ignored. A worry-free computing experience is all about doing the right things on an ongoing basis, not just waiting for trouble and reacting.

## Daily Tasks

- Backup New and Changed Data
- Anti-Virus Updates
- Operating System Updates
- Check 'Spam' or 'Junk' Folders



**Geeks On Call**<sup>®</sup>  
Professional Services

©2014 – Shep Bostin

4

**Backup your data. Every day. Yes, EVERY day.** You don't want to lose yesterday's work anymore than you want to lose last week's, so your new and changed documents, pictures, and application data should be backed up daily. Whatever backup solutions will cost you, it will be a fraction of what a data recovery lab would charge to reconstruct your data from a crashed drive – let alone a burnt one. And if your computer is totally destroyed in a fire (it can happen), you could be out of luck completely.

**Update your security and operating system software.** Most Anti-Virus updates occur automatically, but it can't hurt to check or even to hit that "Update Now" button just to be safe. Out of date security software is about as useful as last year's flu shot. Ditto for the most critical operating system updates (i.e., Windows, for most of you).

**Check your "spam" folder.** Spam or junk e-mail filtering is great – but it's not perfect. To be safe, check your junk e-mail folder to make sure nothing important got filtered inadvertently. This is true whether you use a computer-based system like Outlook, or an online system like Gmail.

## Weekly Tasks

---



- Scan for Malware
- Perform a FULL Backup
- Take a Backup Offsite
- Clean Your Screen, Mouse, and KEYBOARD



©2014 – Shep Bostin

5

**Scan for Malware.** Pick a time when you plan to walk away from your computer for a while and run a FULL security scan.

**Perform a FULL Backup.** Back up EVERYTHING – files, programs...the whole system.

**Take a Backup Offsite.** Take that full backup offsite to a safe location, or at least put it in a fireproof safe.

**Clean Your Screen, Mouse, and KEYBOARD.** The average computer keyboard has FIVE TIMES more bacteria than the average toilet seat. Ewww. Shut down your system and use ammonia-free wipes to clean your screen, keyboard and mouse. (I use lightly moistened lens cleaning clothes made for eyeglasses.) This not only keeps them looking good, it keeps them free of germs.

## Monthly Tasks

---

- **Clean Up Temporary Files**
- **Scan Hard Drive for Errors**
- **Change Passwords**



©2014 – Shep Bostin

6

**Clean up temporary files with a specialized program.** Programs like this will get rid of temporary files you don't need anymore, freeing up space and optimizing performance. Don't play with the options in these programs unless you know what you are doing! And don't run so-called "registry optimizers" – their performance gains are questionable and the risks are substantial.

**Scan your hard drive for errors.** You're not looking for viruses or worms here, and this isn't "de-fragging", which most modern computers don't need. You are looking for physical or logical problems with the disk that could render parts of it unreadable. You probably want to run these scans overnight when your computer isn't in use; the steps to run this depend on your operating system.

**Change Passwords.** Lots of us use the same password for many things – from news web sites to online banking. While this makes things easy to remember in the short term, it makes you more vulnerable in the long term. The best defense against all of these online passwords "hacks" you hear about? Change your passwords often, and, if you can manage it, don't use the same password for everything.

## Annual Tasks



- Change Passwords!!! 😊
- Clean Computer Inside and Out
- Update Critical Software
- Evaluate Upgrade / Replacement of System

**Geeks On Call**<sup>®</sup>  
Professional Services

©2014 – Shep Bostin

7

***Clean your computer inside and out.*** Shut down your computer and unplug ALL wires. Use a can of compressed air to blow all the dust off the outside of your computer; vacuum dust off the floor – never directly off the computer. Wipe the outside of your computer (the “tower” part – NOT the monitor) with an unscented cleaning wipe. Do not use a sponge or anything that might drip into the inside of the computer. Carefully remove the cover of your computer if you know how to do so, and spray the inside with compressed air to loosen and eject any dust. Avoid touching any of the inside components of the computer with your fingers, which contain oil and conduct static electricity. Don’t be surprised if there’s a lot of dust – especially if you have pets! Vacuum the dust off the floor and NEVER vacuum the inside of a computer – NEVER. Also, NEVER use any moist cleaning products inside a computer, and do not try to open the big box that the power cord goes into; the power supply is dangerous and the inside should NEVER be cleaned except by blowing compressed air through it from the outside.

***Update the most critical programs you use in your business.*** Aside from making money for software companies, major upgrades of software programs generally contain bug fixes, security and reliability patches, and new features that may be

required for regulatory compliance within your industry. Software companies also tend not to support very old versions of their programs if problems arise. You may not want to be FIRST in line to update your software. But if a major upgrade has been available for three to six months or more, you will want to protect your data, security and long-term investment in hardware and software by updating to the current version. In general, it is not a good idea to be more than two years behind the latest release for any business-critical programs.

***Decide if it's time to replace your computer.*** It's always better to be proactive about this. What are some signals that it may be time for a new computer?

- Your computer always seems sluggish even though you have followed the maintenance steps and had it checked by a professional.
- You get a lot of seemingly random errors on your computer such as “locking up”, screen flickers, USB ports not working for a few minutes then coming back on, etc. Software errors tend to be consistent and resolvable, but hardware problems usually feel random and are more costly and difficult to fix (in most cases).
- Your computer is a desktop more than four years old or a laptop more than three years old; per “Consumer Reports”, modern computers are more cost-effective to replace than repair when they are more than a few years old.
- Your computer is running Windows XP, Mac OS 9, or doesn't have sufficient specifications to run recent versions of critical software programs for your business.
- You realize that a better performing computer may cost relatively little compared to the time you save (and revenue you can generate) by not waiting for your computer or dealing with computer issues!

## **BONUS: Tips to stay “Healthy”**

- **Avoid Unexpected Attachments**
- **Watch Out for ‘Phishing’**
- **Be Wary of Free Stuff**
- **Use a GOOD Surge Suppressor**
  - **and replace it every couple of years**
- **Don’t waste \$\$\$ to save ¢¢**



©2014 – Shep Bostin

8

### **BONUS Tips**

- Don’t open e-mail attachments you aren’t expecting – even if they appear to be from a trusted source. Call or e-mail the source first.
- Watch out for “phishing” schemes in your e-mail – these are official looking messages from banks or other financial entities with whom you do business that contact “Click Here” types of links. MOST of these are bogus and are trying to steal your passwords or personal information.
- Be wary of any free stuff online – free games, free software, free music, etc. If they aren’t charging you money, there has to be money made somewhere – either through adware in the benign cases, or through viruses and spyware in the worst cases.
- Use a good surge suppressor or battery backup made for computing equipment and replace it every couple of years – they don’t last forever and you can always use an old one as a simple “power strip” for household uses (not expensive electronics!).
- People often waste dollars trying to keep an old piece of equipment going rather than buying something new. If you have a six-year-old laptop that is running terribly slowly, it’s time to replace it not fix it.

## About Geeks On Call

---

- Founded 1999, franchising since 2001, merged with  in 2012
- Franchises in major cities across U.S.A.
- Focus on high-quality, high-value service to small and medium sized businesses, +homes
- VERY selective hiring
- NOT those geeks at Best Buy!



©2014 – Shep Bostin

9

## Questions and Follow-Up

---

Slides & video, and more about Shep:

**[www.ShepBostin.com](http://www.ShepBostin.com)**

For computer support, call 301-869-8690  
24/7/365 or go to:

**[www.GeeksMD.com](http://www.GeeksMD.com)**

*Watch your e-mail in November for information about my new  
Amazon book based on the content of this presentation!*

