When something goes wrong with your PC ...

There are some basic things that you can do yourself to remedy many of the common problems that occur on your PC.

Your PC Collects Clutter

The reality of computers and software is that nothing is perfect. Sometimes the software makes immediate obvious mistakes, but more often it makes small-unnoticed errors. **Over time small errors and problems can accumulate** in your PC’s memory (RAM). They tend to stay there and grow. Think of it like when you have a headache that develops as you work over the course of a day. Eventually that headache may be distracting enough to cause you to overlook something important, or to make a mistake. Same with computers, some little number gets changed in some obscure memory location by accident, and an hour later that number is used for something important and blam, your screen goes blank!

Quit and Restart the Program

The first and easiest way to try and clean out those little errors is to quit and restart the program you are using. Programs are things like Explorer, Firefox, Word, Outlook and Excel. When you quit a program, your computer ‘cleans out’ the memory that the program used. When you **restart the program**, it generally uses fresh, clean memory. Think of quit and restart a program as stepping outside to get some fresh air, and maybe ending that (PC) headache.

Logoff and Logon

Sometimes restarting one or more programs is not enough and you have to go further. **Logoff and logging back in to your PC** is the next step. Lots of things get set up when you logon to your PC. Logging off cleans out all the memory for all the programs you were running. Your remote disks, G, H, and others are attached to your computer at login. For instance, if you didn’t get your H disk, it won’t try to attach it again until the next time you login. All your permissions and capabilities are also determined when you login. If someone changes the permission of a file, mailbox or calendar, your computer may not check for the new permissions until the next time you login. Think of logoff and logon as taking a short nap. Hopefully when you wake up you will be refreshed and ready to go again.

Restart is Your Friend

Some programs, Windows Operating System for instance, don’t get cleaned out and restarted when you logoff. To give them a fresh start, you need to **restart or shutdown** and turn your PC back on. Restarting cleans the entire memory and lets everything start fresh. This is the ultimate in PC house cleaning. Think of restart like going home to a nice dinner, a glass of wine, and a good night’s rest. Tomorrow is a new day! You really should restart your computer at lease once a week as
‘preventative medicine’. I recommend shutting down at the end of work Friday and turning it back on Monday. This also saves energy when the PC is not used over the weekend.

**HRMS is Different**

HRMS is an application on a website. It does not really run on your PC. You run a browser program (Explorer or Firefox) on your PC that gives you a ‘window’ into a website like Yahoo, U of R, HRMS, Front Office and many others. Problems that occur on that website may not have anything to do with your PC. For problems with web applications, you will most likely have to contact the help resource for that application. **For HRMS problems you should send an email to HRMS.**

**But it wants an Administrator Password**

HR computers don’t allow you to install or update the software. When some software (like Java and Adobe Flash Player) sees that there is a newer version, it tries to update itself. That requires an administrator (Mark) to enter a password. No way around it. The good news is that most updates are minor and you don’t really need them. The current software is usually more than adequate for most jobs. It’s ok to ignore those updates for a while. If you want or need the update, you’ll have to make arrangements with Mark to update it.

**Google Knows All**

Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) is an incredible resource! If you can think of a question, Google probably has an answer. For instance, lets say you want to make a two-column document in MS Word, but you don’t know how. In your browser (Explorer or Firefox), go to Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and type the key words of your questions ‘2 columns in word’.

You’ll probably notice that before you can enter everything that Google has anticipated several possible questions and it displays them for you to pick one. It couldn’t be easier. After you hit enter you’ll receive lots of articles that may answer your question. This is a good place to mention that not everything on the Internet is accurate. Sad but true, you may have to sift thru some ‘rocks’ to find the ‘diamonds’. It’s not perfect, but it can be a real help when you are stuck.

If you get an error message on your PC, you can type, or better yet copy and paste the message into Google. It’s a safe bet that others have seen the same message and have more information about the cause and perhaps even a solution.

**Now You Know All My Tricks**

This article covers most of my favorite tricks to remedy PC problems. If you have a problem in a particular program, quit and restart. If that doesn’t fix it, logoff and back in, or jump right to PC restart. If you wonder what a particular message means, or if you need to know how to do something try Google. This is what I’ll do when I show up at your desk!