Computer Tips.

Computers today are just another household appliance. While we may use the computer very little or a great deal, there are many things about computers that most aren't aware of.

One thing you can do to preserve the life of your computer is to leave it ON. That's right I said it ON! Computers actually use very LITTLE power. There are settings that make the computer use much less power after it is idle for a certain period of time. The monitor however uses more power and should be shut off. You should also shut off your computer if you're going to be away for an extended period of time or if you have a storm watch in your area.

Why? Not only does this make the computer readily available to you but can prevent physical damage to your computers components. The motherboard and other control boards in your computer are made up of delicate solder joints. When you turn the computer off and on regularly the temperature inside the computer fluctuates. Voltages may also fluctuate causing unnecessary physical damage to the circuitry. In theory heating and cooling causes expansion and contraction. When you relate this theory to the delicate solder joints in your computer, the heating and cooling may cause damage to your motherboard over an extended period of time.

When you shut down your computer you should always avoid manually shutting the computer off. Always use your start button to say "shut down". If your computer is froze try hitting the control, alt and delete keys all at once. This will bring up your task manager and you can select shutdown from the top of the menu. Shutting your computer of by power does not allow windows to close out important system files that may become corrupt.

Always remember that hard drives are not a safe-haven for your data. If there is data (pictures, documents, music etc.) on your computer that you cannot lose it's strongly suggested to back the data up. There are several ways you can back your data up such as CDs, DVDs, and backup drives.

Be sure that your computer and its components are plugged in to a reliable surge protector. While most of us go and buy the cheapest surge protectors around (which is fine) we may not realize that these surge protectors become less and less effective after each surge that hits. It is a good idea to invest in a warranted surge protector (many offer insurance based on the price) or replace the surge protector over a period of time to ensure effectiveness.

Keep your computer clean! Your computer system is dust magnet! If your computer becomes too dusty it may cause the computer to overheat. Constant overheating can lead to component failure. Its important to keep as much airflow space as possible around the computer. If possible keep the computer out of musty areas like basements or areas with a lot of pet hair. The computer should be checked for dust every few months and can be blown out with canned air. DO NOT use the vacuum to clean out the computer. Vacuums contain static electricity which can damage fragile components.

You can limit clutter inside the computer as well. Install only the programs you use. Be sure to get all your windows updates to receive the latest security packs and bug fixes. Ensure that your antivirus is updating regularly to increase effectiveness.

Most new computers today do not come with system disks. If you did not receive a system disk you usually have the option to make one when you first turn on the computer. This is CRITICAL because if you do not make discs and your hard drive fails you will have to purchase disks from the manufacturer. Save yourself the headache and don't

Keeping your computer well maintained can keep the cost and headache down in the future. We recommend having your computer cleaned up annually by a professional. Even paid versions of antivirus are not perfect. Be wary of all software that you install. Usually the terms of use agreement is never read and the software you are installing may be installing third party software on your computer. This can help to identify any underlying issues that could cause a computer crash in the future.