

Most Common Issues that Need Repair from a PC or Mac Repair Shop Perspective

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This month I am updating the presentation highlights from the session I gave at the APCUG virtual Technology Conference held back in 2019. I spoke on "Most Common Issues that Need Repair from a PC/Mac Repair Shop Perspective." Here are some of the highlights:

Failing or Failed Hard Disc Drives/HDD

Symptoms

- Poor performance
- Boot failure message
- Hard drive failure prediction message issued by Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology (SMART)

Solution

- Replace HDD with HDD (I no longer recommend doing this; you will be much better off with an SSD in almost every case)
- Replace HDD with Solid State Disk (SSD) If old HDD is still bootable, clone to a new drive
- If the old HDD is not bootable but is still readable, copy personal files off for later transfer to the new drive

Web Scammer Messages

Symptoms

- Locked out from PC with message panel displayed with a number to call
- Phone calls claiming to be Microsoft, Dell, etc.
- Web page that states you are infected and must call

Solution

- System Restore to last system checkpoint
- Clean/reset browser start pages and/or search engine
- Install Malwarebytes and perform a scan to remove any nasty programs

Poor Performance

Symptoms

- Slower boot times than normal
- Mouse/keyboard slow to respond
- Browsers/apps slow to load/respond

Solution

- Check for hard drive errors, and excessive usage in Task Manager - many hard drives with capacities of greater than 500GB are failing much sooner in my experience
- Check for malware/spyware - run Malwarebytes

- Check for obvious 'junk' programs in Programs & Features, especially programs that claim to maintain drivers
- Check for missing Windows updates
- Check Event Viewer logs for error messages

Lockout/Loops After Updates

Symptoms

- Spinning circle with black screen
- Loop constantly restarting
- A message with automatic repair failure/attempts

Solution

- Try using System Restore in Advanced tools
- Sometimes just letting it run 15-30 minutes fixes it

If these do not work, back up personal files and try a reset of the OS. Sometimes, the HDD must be wiped and reloaded if Windows cannot be booted after all recovery actions fail.

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