



TECH FACTS:

- There are estimated to be 900 million to 1 billion computers in the world today.
- For those of you who know what this means, Farmville surpassed 80 million users this month.
- 75% of Americans use the Internet and spend an average of 3 hours a day online
- Photoshop turns 20 this year

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Should You Leave Your Computer On All The Time?

I'd have to say this used to be one of the most frequently asked question that I heard. My answer, in a word, is NO! It is not a good idea to leave your computer on all the time.

The original thought behind leaving a computer on is definitely not unfounded. Memory modules, expansion cards, even the CPU itself, have been known to creep out of their sockets with heating a cooling of the computer case from powering on and off.

Well, computer components have become hardier over the years, expansion cards are screwed in, and components such as memory modules (and even CPUs) clip into their sockets on the motherboard to prevent them from creeping out. So, it's no reason to leave your computer running all the time.

So this is where the 'common sense' part comes in. If you're going to the bathroom, leave your computer on! If you have to stop for lunch, but intend to work on the computer afterwards, leave it on. But if you are leaving work for the weekend or going out of town on vacation, shut it off!

Why?

1) A lot of things you do on your computer such as installing new devices or programs, configuration settings, file changes, additions or deletions to the Registry and other configuration files, don't take effect until you restart your computer.

2) Programs need a certain amount of memory to operate, and this is allocated when the program is started. That memory, and any other resource required by the program, is not available again until the program closes and releases those resources.

Thus your available resources may become depleted and you'll see memory errors or illegal operation errors start to pop up. You may have seen the error "running low on virtual memory". Turning off your computer will clear memory and reallocate resources upon startup again.

3) Computers are constantly sucking air through them to cool down components. At the same time, they're pulling dust, dead skin, fluff and dust balls inside the case. This has a tendency to insulate the components and add to the heat build up, and overheating can have a very detrimental effect on your computer's components. Leaving your computer on all the time will only add to the amount of debris collected inside.

4) The power supply fan that pulls the air through your computer is not infallible.

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We Have Issues !

In an effort to keep in closer contact with the POA staff, the IT Department has decided to issue a monthly newsletter highlighting technology at the POA and pass along tips and news to the POA staff. This is our first issue. We welcome sugges-

tions, questions and comments from the staff. Tell us what you would like to see, what issues you would like discussed or send us any questions you may have about technology. I hope you enjoy this issue and the issues that we compile in the future.

Please email questions or comments to Kevin Alfont at kalfont@tvpoa.org.

Should I Leave My Computer on All the Time? (cont)

If one should fail when you've left your computer on overnight (or at the office, over the weekend) then the computer will overheat and could cause irreversible damage to some of the major components.

Kevin Alfont
IT Manager

Next Newsletter: How do I know if an email contains a virus?

So it is a good idea to periodically shut your computer completely down. At a minimum you should begin a habit of shutting down your computer and completely restarting it at least once per month.



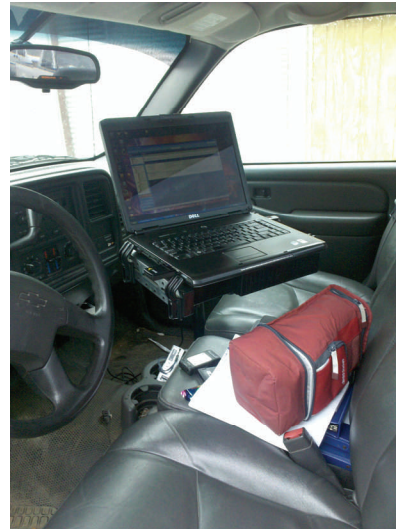
Spotlight on Public Works

Public Works and the ACC Dept utilize technology in amazing ways. About three years ago, Jeff Gagley asked the IT Department to come up with a way to keep the staff in the field connected to the office.

Today, field personnel are equipped with laptop computers connected to the Internet through broadband wireless cards. By using software VPNs, the staff are able to access all the files and emails they would if they were sitting at their office desks. This helps the staff obtain ACC permits, letters,

emails and files while they are on site during inspections. Delays are minimized and approvals are faster.

Prior to this technology, a member of ACC or Public Works might have to make several trips between the POA office and the worksite to accomplish the task that can now be accomplished in one trip. The quicker responses and approvals have been greatly appreciated by contractors and our members and have reduced costs for the POA.



Typical in-car setup for Public Works/ACC Field Personnel

“It allows us to do our work in the field without having to go back to the office”
Jeff Gagley

Lunch and Learn

The IT Department is starting Lunch and Learns. They will be held once a month at various POA locations. These sessions will be held from 12 to 1pm and will include pizza for all who come. This month's discussion will be about the new remote support software that the POA has purchased. It will allow us to remotely fix computers while

the staff members watch us. We can now fix computers over the Internet no matter where the end user is located. Staff can be at home, on vacation, etc. and we can fix any issues. We will also be discussing remote access options.

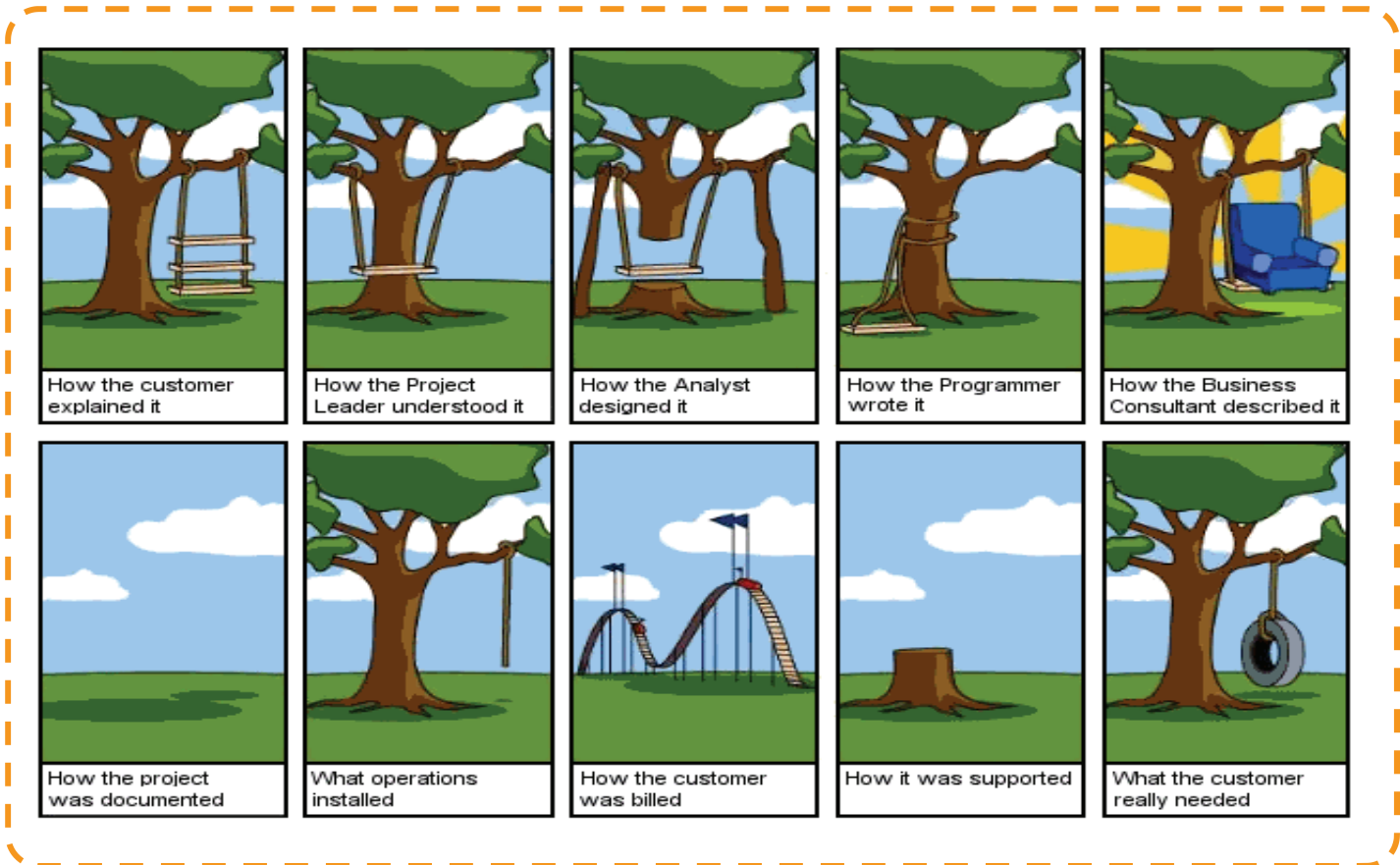
We will be at the following lo-

cations on these dates:

POA Office March 15

Wellness Center March 16





If POA Has Antivirus Why Do Machines Still Get Infected?

All POA computers have McAfee Antivirus installed on them. POA uses a very specific version of McAfee called Protection Pilot. This is a centrally monitored antivirus product that allows the IT staff to see what virus activity is happening throughout the network.

Over the last few years, McAfee has done an excellent job at keeping POA computers safe from attacks. The problem is that hackers and virus programmers have taken notice of McAfee's success. Almost all of the infections seen on POA computers over the last two years have not been from virus infections but from Malware.

What's the difference you may ask. Well a computer virus acts just like a human virus. They move to and infect other machines. Malware is designed to cause interruption only on the machine it currently resides on.

McAfee has not kept up a good pace with identifying and deleting Malware.



There are a multitude of anti-virus products available. Which ones do the POA use?

When a malware infection occurs on a POA computer, we are forced to use manual methods to remove the malware. Typically we start by using Malwarebytes, a program designed to remove such infections. If unsuccessful we use ComboFix. A more powerful program.

To help eliminate these threats, we have begun to remove McAfee from POA computers and are installing a product called Kaspersky. This anti-virus, antimalware, antispyware program has proven to be much more aggressive against identifying and removing infections of all kinds.