

March 2016

## Reboot, Reboot, Reboot... or Shutdown?

A series of recent incidents prompted this newsletter... A few clients have had computer issues that only could be described as “weird”. This is not a technical term of course; there should be an explanation for everything, and classifying them as “weird” is not a solution. Here are the situations, and the solutions found...

### **Weirdness #1: Web Filter drops connections**

A school had a new web filter installed, and along with it new login software that allowed teachers and staff more latitude to search websites than student level searching. However, it seemed not to work consistently, some days it did, others not at all, or inconsistently. Extensive troubleshooting of the filter and the software did not provide any answers...

### **Weirdness #2: Online Cloud Service drops connections**

A small business office converted to Microsoft Office 365 and things seemed OK for a day or two, but then users experienced intermittent “drops” similar to situation #1. There was no distinct pattern; it seemed completely random...

### **Weirdness #3: Network Connection Drops**

A brand-new laptop worked fine... for a day. After the first day of use, it refused to connect to the office WiFi network. No amount of begging, pleading, or cajoling could persuade it to connect again...

What’s the connection? The answer is a feature intended to be a power-saving “green” feature of desktops and laptops manufactured since 2008: Sleep and Hibernate mode. The workings of how sleep and hibernate mode differ between each computer and operating system, and in next month’s issue I will attempt to make things a bit clearer. **The short answer to each of these issues** was that the computers were left “on” for days, weeks, or months, and were not shut down or rebooted during that time. Why does that matter? Well, let’s say there are a lot of things that would take several extra newsletters to describe, but can be summarized in two categories: network changes and software updates.

In the case of network changes, your computer may have gone to sleep, and while “sleeping” some aspect of the network changed: maybe the WiFi dropped for a bit, or a new device came online. All you know is when you go back to your computer, it’s offline from the network, you can’t surf, get email, or print. **A reboot will fix that:** reboots “refresh” all network connections to the new settings, and refresh the connection to printers and the internet as well.

Software updates can cause similar problems, and can also make the computer seem slow, or software you need ceases to operate properly. If this happens, a reboot may also fix the issue, but a shutdown may be required. The answer lies in the nature of the update: some are “simple” updates to non-essential applications, and some are crucial operating system updates. In general, software updates can’t install or take effect until the next reboot of the computer. In specific, operating system updates often require a complete shutdown to install. On both Windows and Apple computers, a small pop-up message should appear warning you to do so: **do it, don’t wait or put it off.**

In general, a reboot works wonders for 95% of computer issues. Finally, in the case of a completely “frozen” computer, a “hard” shutdown is sometimes the only answer: press and hold the power button until all lights on the computer are dark. Remove power cords (and for laptops, the battery), then press and hold the power button for 30 seconds, release. Re-attach the power cords, and power back up. Voila! Unfrozen!

-John Becker

PS: These recommendations also work on Cellphones – they are just small computers after all!