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Managed IT Services, PC Service and Sales in Central Maryland

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Is Your PC Safe?

Prevention Lessons from Disaster Recovery

by Jerry Stern

When computers stop working, I get phone calls, and I hear stories. These stories are all true, but the names have been changed, no, they're left out to protect the innocent.

"A thunderstorm passed through last night, and now my computer won't start."

Prevention: Use a good surge suppressor, and if you can hear the storm, the switch should be in the OFF position.

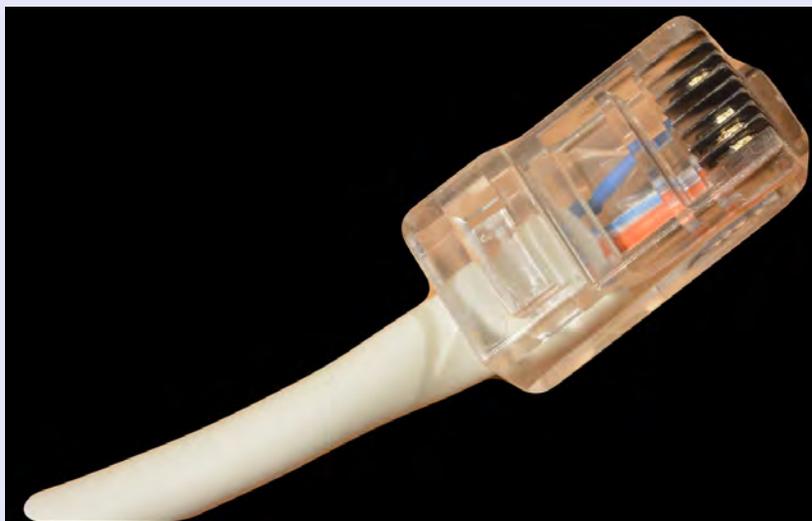
"My cat walked across the keyboard and now my document is a mess."

Cats are the ultimate in random input devices. Use 'undo' or Ctrl-Z multiple times to back out those pawprints. And check that 'autosave' is enabled in Word and Excel, in the 'save options.'

"Lightning hit the internet cable. My internet is dead, and my TV doesn't work."

That's a strike on the NON-grounded Comcast or Verizon wire. Both companies claim that they protect that wire from lightning, but yet, I keep getting repair calls after storms, where they're parked out front working on the pole, their modem is dead and smoky, and several other devices plugged into the network are dead, but they still have good power supplies--that surge didn't come from an electric plug.

Prevention: We can add a surge suppressor on the network cable as it comes out of the Comcast or Verizon internet box, AKA, 'The Modem.'



"My cat was watching the inkjet print head go back and forth. It reached out and swatted it. It won't print now."

Tape the lid of your new printer closed. Consider getting a dog as a distraction for your cat.

"My dog likes to lie by the side of the computer. He's sad that it's here for repair."

I'm sure he just likes warm purring objects; there's this cat he might like... Put the computer on top of your desk, after I vacuum the fur coat out of your cooling fans.

"When everything froze to below zero, the fire sprinkler in my office exploded. Did my computer drown?"

When a sprinkler is triggered, or leaks down from the floor above, some desk areas are sprinkled, some are soggy, but the floor will be ankle-deep in black rust-water everywhere in the room. Don't put any electronics on the floor, ever. Wet surge suppressors blow out rather dramatically.

"Got burgled last night. Computer is gone. Backup drive plugged into the computer is gone. The stuffed 6-foot tall Gorilla from Ocean City that was standing guard in front of the computer is gone."

Always check the references of your security personnel before hiring. And unplug the NEW backup drive between backups, and lock it up somewhere else. 20 feet away is good; 5 miles is better.

"I spilt coffee in the keyboard. My wrds ar all spelt funni nw."

I'm saving a washable keyboard for you. Rinse it in sudsy water as needed.

Have stories? Send them in, with your pen name. We all learn how to prevent disasters from knowing how things fall apart.



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