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Technical Support

Tips For Getting Technical Support Help Online

by Cavyl Stewart

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Sometimes your PC will start acting strange for no apparent reason or a program which you use regularly will all of a sudden stop working as it should. This can be a frustrating experience especially if you have no idea where to go for help.

If this happens to you, don't panic! Here are some simple tips which may turn your frown upside down... how to get technical support online.

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Getting technical support online?

Technical support idea 1.

Sometimes your PC will start acting strange for no apparent reason or a program which you use regularly will all of a sudden stop working as it should. This can be a frustrating experience especially if you have no idea where to go for help. If this happens to you, don't panic! Here are some simple tips which may turn your frown upside down.

Don't assume that your problem is unique. The chances are that someone else has had that problem and it has already been solved. Google is a great place for getting technical support help believe it or not. You may have to experiment with wording your problem and refining your search, but it's worth a try. For example my Outlook email client stopped showing me the 'Subject' field when I was composing new email. As a result all of my email was going out without a subject. After a bit of experimenting with wording the

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problem I found the answer by searching on the phrase "Outlook subject field missing".

Someone in an online discussion group had the same problem and the answer was provided. When you find good discussions groups bookmark them for future use. I have a bookmark I call Technical Support Help and it's full of great web sites.

Technical support idea 2.

The Google trick is good for lots of software but you should always try the web site of the program's manufacturer as well. Sometimes your problem is really a bug and there may be a new release or work around available. Many software web sites have FAQs, discussion lists, and help desks available that provide free support. Sometimes there is a telephone number that you can call but you may have to pay for live help.

Technical support idea 3.

There are companies that offer free general help for simple questions and then charge a sliding scale for more complicated ones. Support Freaks (www.supportfreaks.com) is a good one to try. Even if you have to pay, the rates are reasonable. Click on the "Freebies" link, under the "Quick Links" menu to see if your question is eligible for free help.

Technical support idea 4.

There are probably any number of local PC support groups that meet in libraries and other locations near your home. Some of these groups are very specific in nature and some are general. Try searching Google for "PC Support Group" or "PC User group" and the name of your town. Also check with your local librarian and computer stores. They often know of these groups.

Technical support idea 5.

Speaking of computer stores, you can often pick the brains of the more knowledgeable salespeople if you are lucky enough to find any. Many times these employees love computers so much that they will act as your big brother or sister if you need some quick help. Sometimes they moonlight as consultants at a good rate.

This ought to be enough information to get you started on the road to solving your next PC or software problem. If you are having Internet connectivity problems then your ISP is the first place to start. If you can't get online at all, and you don't think you know their phone number, think again. I'll bet that it's printed on every bill that they send you. You'll also need your account number and you can bet that it's printed on the bill as well.

Remember -- When it comes to getting technical support help, the first rule is: Don't Panic!

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