

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime."



The Catch of the Day



Learn To Fish the vast ocean of computer know-how!

Surviving the Call to Tech Support

by Kathy Montgomery

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I hate calling technical support.

Maybe it's for the same reason that they say doctors make the worst patients, since I spent 10 years working in some form of computer tech support. I'll tear my hair out before I call the toll-free number, no matter how broken my hardware or software appears to be. Yet sometimes, bald and ego-bruised, I have to pick up the phone (or send the e-mail). I admit that more often than not I have a helpful interaction with the person on the other end. Here are some tips to make your tech support call go smoothly.

Calm down. Computer problems can be frustrating, and it's tempting to use your techie as a verbal punching bag. Even if the problem is the company's fault, exploding emotionally won't help. If you're upset, take a moment (or a day if it can wait) to settle down. If you can't speak rationally, don't call.

Gather as much info as possible. Prepare to say more than "My printer isn't working." If an error message appears, write it down, even if you don't understand it. Can you make the problem recur or is there a pattern? Share that with the support rep — it will be helpful if he can recreate your problem on his end. Have all manuals, serial numbers, and other documents handy. Be at your computer when you call.

Follow the leader. Your tech agent may be required to ask questions from a (tedious) troubleshooting script. Be patient and let her lead you through the process, offering your input as appropriate — but don't overwhelm her with too much information at once. A good agent will escalate your issue to higher-ups if she can't solve it herself.

In the end, following these steps will help technical support to help you.



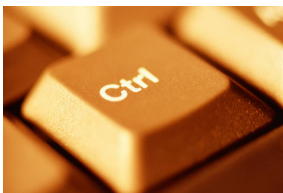
Service Spotlight:
Troubleshooting & Support Seminar



Getting help from technical support staff or your company's IT guy can be tough for the computer novice. But there's hope to make that relationship better!

LTF Tech offers a **one-hour seminar** for your group to improve troubleshooting skills and help you better relate to technical support personnel. Contact for details!

Shortcut of the Month (brought to you by the letter ...)



Increase efficiency with keyboard shortcuts!

Select All: Ctrl-A (⌘-A on Macs)

Who says you can't have everything? Though this option is available in the Edit menu of many applications, it's much easier to use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl-A**. This command lets you highlight everything in the location of your cursor. If you're in an e-mail, it will highlight all the text. If you click on a web page, you'll select all the content. This is helpful for deleting all text at once. It also helps in Publisher for selecting all objects on a page (to move or copy them). Try it out! (In non-Microsoft programs, double-check the Edit menu to make sure "Select All" doesn't have a different keyboard shortcut.)

The Random Resource

...because your computer isn't just for computing

And you thought you were done learning how to tie your shoelaces. *Ian's Shoelace Site* at www.fieggen.com/shoelace will teach you everything you didn't know you needed to know about shoelaces. Learn different tying and lacing techniques, and discover how to correct lace problems (such as crooked/vertical bows). Author Ian Fieggen claims his "Ian Knot" is the world's fastest shoelace tie.

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