

Proactive vs. Reactive

Disclaimer: All information in this article is Copyright © 2019 Customer First Computing and can be used by customers of Customer First Computing. However, the information provided is not to be used, abused or transferred in any means without the express written consent of Customer First Computing.

Preamble

This article was written back in October of 2002 – but is still applicable to today. However, I have re-read this article and updated this article accordingly in light of today's computing environment – particularly with regards to the dynamic nature of computers. Also, it is worth mentioning that the majority of problems facing computers today are not "hardware-related" – but rather "software-related" is important.

Introduction

To help you to better understand the dynamic nature of computers, it will be helpful to understand this dynamic nature of computers from the perspectives of "proactive" and "reactive" and through the use of some simple questions.

First of all, where do software updates come from? Software updates come thorough the Internet. For those that do not know, the Internet is made up of two key elements namely, Browsing/Surfing and E-mail. And though there are other means available for the provision of software updates, these are the ones pertinent to most users.

Proactive and Reactive

With a better understanding of software updates and the "venues" in which they are provided, a word or two about the terms proactive and reactive.

Proactive

Software updates have been with for some time now and the proactive approach to the management of software updates is to know of these software updates beforehand – hopefully *before* these software updates actually get installed on your computer system. Remember that updates to software can be either good or bad – and which is entirely dependent on what these actual software updates are being designed to do. Therefore, the proactive approach to whether or not software updates get installed is through *knowledge*.

Reactive

However, most end-users are simply not in a position of *knowing* whether or not a particular software update is either good or bad – *and rightly so*. As a result, when a particular software update "goes bad", such as when a software update actually deleted user's files, the end user is left with no other alternative but to react to this dilemma.

Troubleshooting

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – author of Sherlock Holmes, once made the following statement, "Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth" – and I sincerely believe that this statement can be applied to computer usage.

For example, you are what would be referred to as a conscientious computer user, and discover one day that you no longer have access to your printer. You then call a service technician informing them of the issue wit the printer". Inevitably, the service technician will ask the all important question, "What has occurred to cause this particular problem?" – and to which the common response is, "Nothing!" Interestingly, the caller is actually stating the truth in that they have done nothing to cause the problem. Therefore, if it was impossible for the end user to be the direct cause of the printer no longer working,

the cause must then be attributed to something else – no matter how improbable that cause might be, and therefore, this cause must be the truth". This improbable cause is none other than being connected to the Internet. This "being connected to the Internet" thus permitted the manufacturer of that printer to update the software and as a result, caused the printer to no longer function as it used to.

Once the cause has been ascertained, the next step is an attempt to resolve this issue. Notice that I use the word "attempt" – meaning that the service technician *will do all that they can to make a concerted effort to resolve this issue – with no guarantee that the problem will be resolved.*

- Note: My typical response to resolving such issues is, "We are attempting to locate a pin in a very large haystack." For those that are interested in knowing the reasons why this can only be an attempt to resolve this issue are 1) the service technician is not the manufacturer of the printer, and 2) the service technician is not the developer of the software. Redeemer, that the majority of problems facing computers today are not "hardware-related" – but "software-related" – both of which are out of the immediate control of the service technician. Hopefully, this point will not be construed as a "pass-the-back" scenario, but as to what it really is – *a fact.*

In closing

There are three points that I have implemented over the years that I would like to share with you with the sole objective in mind that you, as an end user, can expect to enjoy many hours of trouble-free computer usage.

Lesson #1: As much as it is possible, ascertain the present condition of your computer system.

- For example, is the present computer system stable or unstable? If the computer system *is* stable, then make a note of this date as it will be used as a reference point for any future service calls. If the computer system is unstable, then either you or someone should be called upon to ascertain just what is the cause of this instability.

Lesson #2: As much as it is possible, try to be aware of any and all software that is being installed on your computer system.

- There is a saying that goes like this, "*Computers would function a whole lot better if we did not install software on them.*" Therefore, only install software that you know to be safe and that this software is something that you will actually use. In my shop, I have a computer system built solely for the purpose of testing software.

Lesson #3: Realize that most things that are provided on the Internet *are really not free.*

- To me, there is always a cost to something. With regards to software updates, this cost may be improved usage – *which is good*, or the deletion of my personal data – *which is bad.*

Thank you for your time and interest in the above.

Sincerely,

Dell Krauchi