

Troubleshooting with Microsoft Windows

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

Users who have a general understanding of the Windows operating system are able to find solutions to many common problems, without needing to seek any professional assistance. In this tutorial, we will review some of the problems that can occur, as well as methods for troubleshooting the operating system in these instances.

Our discussion will break down as follows:

1. Common Windows Problems

As you use Windows, you may occasionally encounter problems that will need to be resolved in order to ensure that the computer is working optimally. The problems that users typically have to deal with while using Windows can be categorized as being system performance problems, application/hardware crashes, or file management issues. Listed below are examples of some of the most common problems and their solutions.

- **System Performance Problems:** System performance problems are problems with the overall speed that it takes for a computer's hardware to execute instructions sent to it by software. Typically these types of problems manifest as a slow or system “lag.”

Sometimes a computer will not recognize peripheral devices. For example, you might plug in the USB cable to your digital camera to upload photos, but your computer will not recognize the device, and you won't have access to the files. A similar performance problem may be that you cannot access a shared drive or resource on a network. For example, your computer might regularly connect to your employer's shared network, but your computer might not recognize the network connection.

Finally, another common system performance problem is the inability of the computer to identify an application software. For example, you may have deleted Microsoft's PowerPoint application from your computer. Without this application, if someone sends you a .ppt file, which is the file extension for PowerPoint, your computer will not open the file.

- **Application/Hardware Crashes:** An application or hardware crash occurs when a system component stops working suddenly with no warning. With software, crashes usually occur due to programming errors. Hardware tends to crash due to malfunctioning equipment.
- **File Management Issues:** File management issues tend to describe incompatibilities with system files and hardware or software. These types of issues can also occur between user generated files and software.

Common file management issues include the portability of files, corrupted files, or extremely large file sizes. Portability of files refers to the ability to use files across different operating systems (such as being able to open a word document on a Windows and Mac computer). Sometimes, files are corrupted, and may be viewable on one computer's operating system, but not another. Having enough memory and storage can also be an issue with file management. Your computer may not have the capacity to open or download files that require too much memory or storage.

2. Addressing System Performance and Crashes

What should you do if you experience issues with system performance, or if your applications or hardware crash? The examples below describe common problems, and tools you can use to solve the issue.

➤ EXAMPLE

Problem: System performance suddenly feels slow

Solution: Typically, sudden slow downs in your computer's performance tend to be caused by changes made to the system settings. Unintended changes can sometimes occur if a new software application has been installed. One solution could be to uninstall the new software and run **System Restore** to go back to the system settings prior to installing the new software. System restore requires you to activate this option which is, by default, not activated. If you did not recently install new software, run the system restore back to a time when you weren't having problems. Windows creates daily System Restore points automatically.

➤ EXAMPLE

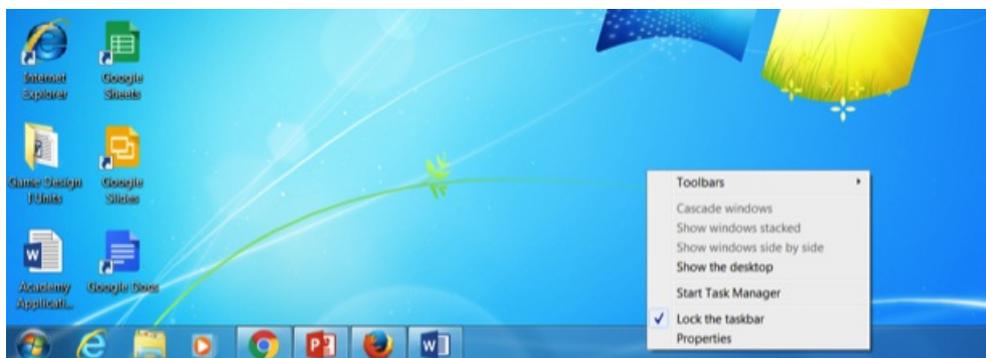
Problem: The application does not respond

Solution: If an application does not respond (freezes), first use the Task Manager. The **Task Manager** is an operating system component that enables the user to view running tasks and process and shut down any that malfunction. The task manager also provides a way for users to view the overall system performance and restart the computer if needed.

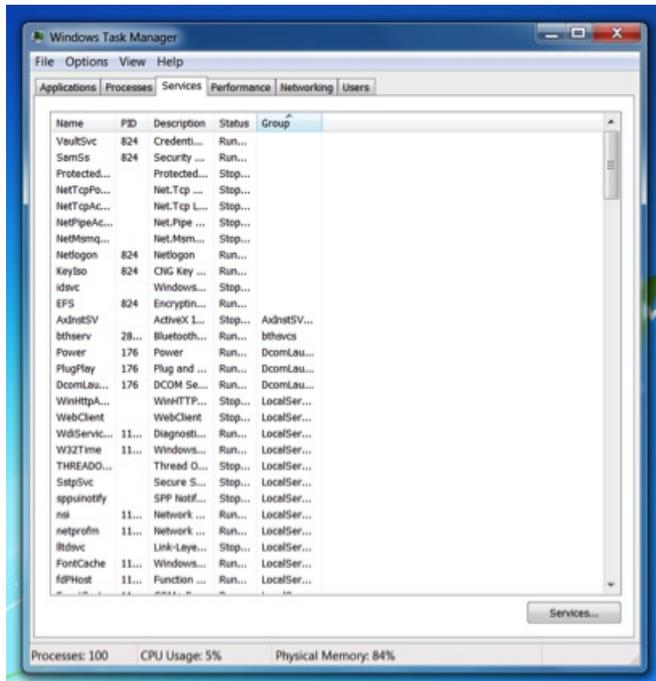
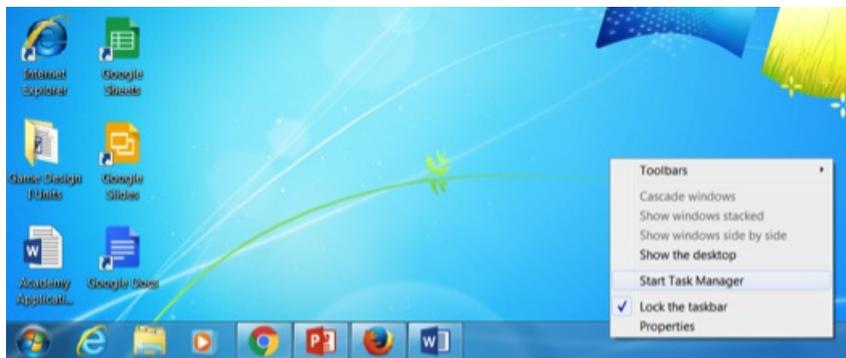
Use the following steps to display the Task Manager.

STEP BY STEP

Step One: Right click an empty area on the taskbar.



Step Two: Click on Start Task Manager.



You can also display the Task Manager by pressing Ctrl + Alt + Delete

➔ EXAMPLE

Problem: Windows crashes when booting up

Solution: This problem tends to be caused when users have unwanted or corrupt background applications automatically loading at startup. To solve this problem run Windows in **safe mode**. Safe mode is a special mode in which only the necessary software loads.

Use the following steps to run Windows in safe mode.

STEP BY STEP

1. Restart the computer. At the sound of the beep press F8.
2. At the advanced boot options menu, use the arrow keys to select safe mode.
3. Press Enter.

TERMS TO KNOW

System Restore

Provides users with a way to go back to previous system settings.

Task Manager

Operating system component that enables the user to view running task and processes.

Safe Mode

Special mode in which only the necessary drivers and software load.

3. Troubleshooting Using the Help System

Included with Windows is an onscreen Help System. The Help System can be accessed through the Start Menu. The **Help System** is a collection of stored files on your hard disk, as well as information retrieved from the Internet. Because the Help System is a combination of files on the hard disk and Internet, you can always access the most recent information, as well as receive help even when you are offline.

Review the following steps to use the Help System.



STEP BY STEP

1. Click on the Start Menu.
2. Click on Help and Support.
3. Click on the Browse Help button.
4. Click the Email and other communications option; a list of articles shows related to email.
5. Read the article explaining how to send pictures in an email message.
6. Close the Windows Help and Support window.



TERM TO KNOW

Help System

Collection of stored files on your hard disk as well as information retrieved from the Internet.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial we discussed how to resolve some of the most **common problems Windows** users encounter while using Windows. The **Windows Help System** is a searchable collection of files on your computer's hard disk and on the Internet that can provide you with detailed information on how to **resolve a problem or complete a task**.

Source: All images provided by Sophia



TERMS TO KNOW

Help System

Collection of stored files on your hard disk as well as information retrieved from the Internet.

Safe Mode

Special mode in which only the necessary drivers and software load.

System Restore

Provides users with a way to go back to previous system settings.

Task Manager

Operating system component that enables the user to view running task and processes.