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Do you have a computer virus?

This article is largely borrowed from a March 27, 2015 post on the Kim Komando website, at www.komando.com.

As a computer user, you're well aware that computers can be temperamental at times. It will be working fine one minute and then suddenly slow down, glitch, sputter or crash, and then be working fine again a few minutes later.

In most cases, this comes down to a momentary hiccup in the software, which is why rebooting a computer fixes so many problems. It could also be another software or hardware problem you can fix yourself, if you know what to do.

However, it might go deeper – your computer woes could be the result of a nasty virus. How can you tell? Here are five of the most common symptoms of computer viruses. If your computer shows one or more of these, it's probably infected.

1. Pop-up ads. Running into a pop-up ad while you're surfing used to be a serious annoyance, but modern browsers include pop-up protection to keep them away on most sites. If you're still seeing regular pop-ups on more than one site, it could just be a badly-configured browser.

However, if pop-ups are coming at you when your browser isn't even open, it's likely you have a virus. This is especially true if the pop-ups advertise some magic cure to fix your viruses.

2. Messages you didn't send. Most viruses have one goal in mind once they infect your computer – to spread the virus as far as possible. An easy way to do that is to send messages to as many of your friends as possible in hopes they'll get infected too.

These messages can show up anywhere. The virus might try to send out spam through your email account. It could take control of your Facebook or Twitter and send out spam, too. In almost all cases, it will include a link or attachment to the virus somewhere in the post.

Keep an eye on your email's "sent" folder and on your social network posts. If you notice emails and posts that you don't remember sending or posting, it's likely that you have a virus.

3. You're locked out of your computer. You're surfing the Web when suddenly a scary message appears saying you're locked out of your computer. It may claim to be from law enforcement or an anonymous blackmailer.

Either way, the program is lying. What's really happening is

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Managing video bandwidth

Most online video services provide options for selecting video resolution, such as SD, HD, or perhaps even Ultra HD.

Movies in HD often use more than double the bandwidth of movies viewed in SD (standard definition), and in many cases the difference in viewing quality is negligible. Some services also charge a higher rate for HD.

To avoid buffering and possible reduced speeds, try your SD setting ... unless you have a 1080p large-screen TV, you may not notice the difference and your performance will likely improve.

And, if you're paying a premium for HD service, you may be able to save some money.

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Do you have a computer virus?

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that a virus is blocking important programs from running, or even encrypting your files so you can't get to them. The scam is trying to make you pony up some cash to get your computer back. That's why it's commonly called "ransomware," and it's no joking matter.

4. Programs and tools are out of reach. Often enough, a Windows computer user will open Task Manager, which can tell you so much about your computer.

Sometimes, however, you'll attempt to do this and nothing happens. You might get a random error message, too. This is a dead giveaway that a virus is messing with your computer – it's stopping Task Manager so you can't see that it's eating your system resources. It may also block other programs or utilities to try to protect itself, including popular anti-virus programs, and it may even prevent you from shutting your computer down.

5. You're not seeing any symptoms at all. No news isn't always good news when it comes to viruses. Powerful viruses can hide deep in your computer without raising any

red flags. They'll just go about their business without you even knowing they're there.

Just because you don't notice them doesn't mean they aren't dangerous, though. They could be snagging your passwords, sensitive files or other vital information from your computer. The virus could be using your computer to spread to other computers or even attack banks and other organizations.

The only clue in this case might be a slower Internet connection, since the virus is using it. Or, your computer's processor and memory could also be running really high for no good reason.

Every computer user, even Mac users, needs security software running at all times. I know some people who don't bother installing security software because their computer doesn't seem to have a problem. Don't take that risk!

Editor's note: If you suspect you may have a virus, our technicians at OACYS can help. We can often suggest online remedies you can run yourself ... we can use GoToAssist to check your computer remotely ... or you can bring your computer into our shop. Call us for help and more information.

Fan Mail



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Wireless Plan Types	Speeds (Mbps)		Usage Guideline	Mailboxes	One-Time Fees		Monthly Service
	Download	Upload			Installation	Equipment Deposit	
<i>(Note 1)</i>							
RESIDENTIAL							
Basic	1.5M	768K	20GB	5	100.00	Waived	49.95
Premium	3M	1.5M	40GB	10			79.95
<i>All Plans</i>							
BUSINESS							
Business	3.5M	3.5M	60GB	20			129.95
Professional	4.5M	4.5M	70GB	25			159.95
Corporate	6M	6M	90GB	30			199.95
Enterprise	8M	8M	120GB	40			249.95
MOUNTAINS							
<i>(Note 2)</i>							
Yokohl, Balch, Bear Creek							
Alpine, Pierpoint, Nelson	1.5M	768K	20GB	5			69.95

(1) Guidelines are the recommended bandwidth usage per month. There is no charge for excess usage, but prioritization may apply during periods of peak overall usage.

(2) Add \$10 monthly rural service fee to any Residential or Business plan.

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