Today's

INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS®

WHEN MOTHER NATURE SHAKES THINGS UP

Insuring the **UNINSURABLE**

DEALING WITH
ACIDIC ATTITUDES

Improve
PERFORMANCE

?

25 TIPS TO HELP IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY

by: Jerry Fetty

Laptop Users

1. Set your laptop to hibernate. Though it will take a few more seconds for your computer to wake up, this will lengthen the life of your battery.

2. Use adaptive brightness. Many newer computers (and smartphones) have light sensors built in that allow you to take advantage of the adaptive brightness option, which will brighten your screen in well-lit room, and dim it in a darker room. This is another battery-saving feature you should consider.

3. Remove "bloatware". Most new computers—particularly laptops—come with many programs you don't need or want. If you pull that new laptop out of the box and notice about 20 icons on your desktop, or if you look at the bottom right near your clock and you have a lot or unfamiliar programs, know that these will slow your computer down. Removing unwanted programs should improve your laptop's performance.

Wi-fi

4. Although the speed of wi-fi has improved greatly in recent years, in nearly all cases wi-fi is still slower than a wired connection. Plus, the more people you have on wi-fi, the slower the speed, so keep laptops at your office wired when possible.

5. If you've had the same access points and devices for many years, consider replacing them with newer ones that offer higher speeds. (But again, even this will not provide anything close to a gigabit wired connection.)

6. Placement of access points is still critical. Some people mistakenly think that, because wireless has improved so much, the placement of access point is not nearly as important as it used to be. But even today, the further you are from your wi-fi, the slower it is going to be, which is by design to ensure a stable connection.

Windows Hotkeys

Though they have been around since the early days of Windows, it is incredible how many people don't take advantage of Windows Hotkeys. Here are some of my favorites:

7. Windows Logo + (left or right arrow) pins the current window to respective screen edge

8. Windows Logo + M minimizes all desktop windows

9. Windows Logo + R will open the run command

10. Windows Logo + X will open Windows Quick Access Menu

11. Alt + Tab allows you to switch between open programs

12. Ctrl + Shift + Esc will open the Task Manager

Free (even for business use!) Software

Most free software is not free for business use. These two are free for commercial use as well:

13. 7-Zip (www.7-zip.org) is a file archiver with a high compression ratio. It helps you extract compressed files and create your own compressed files in several different formats.

14. PDFCreator (www.pdfforge.org/pdfcreator) although it is not a PDF editor, this free software allows you to print to PDF and combine multiple documents.

Cool Built-In Windows Tools You Didn't Know You Have

15. Reliability Monitor – This tool in the Control Panel displays a list of your computer's errors, allowing you to pinpoint what changed in your system and when so that you can "undo" something you may have done accidentally. (In the search box, type "reliability" to access)

16. Snipping Tool – Allows you to take screen shots by highlighting areas of your screen. (In the search box, type "snipping" to access)

17. Steps Recorder – In the past, users would have to write out or try to explain in detail a software problem they were having. Steps Recorder is great for recording actions taken by a user on a computer. Once recorded, the video can be sent to the company or individual helping you troubleshoot. (In the search box, type "steps" to access)

18. Windows 10 comes with Cortana, which allows you to talk to your computer, similar to Apple's Siri. If you haven't tried it out, you should. Just make sure you invest in a good microphone, not a Bluetooth one.

19. If you want a more robust product, try Dragon Naturally Speaking, which used to be a dictation tool but allows you to now talk to your computer.

PDF Editor Alternative

20. We are often asked about PDF alternatives. One good PDF creator and editor is Bluebeam Revu, (http://www.bluebeam.com/) which is about half the price of Adobe and has all the features you need.

MS Office Tips

21. Did you know you can save documents as PDF in Microsoft Office? Just hit the Save as Type dropdown box in the Save As screen and select PDF (*.pdf). This will save you from having to go through the Print to PDF process.

22. Customize the Quick Access Toolbar: At the top left of MS Office applications you will find the Quick Access Toolbar (QAT), a small, customizable toolbar that presents Commands that are specified by the application or selected by the user. For example, you can add the Quick Print option, which will save you several clicks by automatically printing to your default printer. The More Commands option will provide you with hundreds of options for adding to your QAT.

Increase Smartphone Performance

23. Turn off all the great features, such as eye tracking, hand gesture tracking, and pickup/move actions. The more of those you have on, the slower your phone goes.

24. Fewer notifications will make your phone run faster. If you are constantly getting popups, this means a lot of software is running in the background and tying up resources; shutting off your notifications will help your smartphone perform better.

25. Android phones have a hidden option under Settings > Developer Options > Animation Scale. If your phone seems slow, it might be the animation speed. With this option you can slow down your animation speed or even turn it off. In most cases, this will improve your smartphone's performance.

About the Author

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