Seven tips to having a healthy computer

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"Malware, viruses, identity theft and spyware account for about 80% of all computer issues resulting in downtime," said IT guru Chip Reeves, the national director of Computer Troubleshooters. "It is estimated that the lost productivity cost due to these alone is around $50 billion, and the associated IT costs of dealing with it has skyrocketed from $20 billion to $198 billion in the last five years."
Reaves explains that there are certain simple tips everyone could adhere to - businesses and individual computer users alike - that will keep our computers (and wallets) in tip-top shape.

1.â€‚Old Hardware. "Studies have shown that the likelihood of physical problems with computer equipment goes up significantly after 24 to 36 months," says Reaves. "Consider replacing computer systems every three years - considering how inexpensive computers have become, one major repair bill could easily cost more than purchasing an entire new system."

2.â€‚Power Protection. "Surges and power drops can cause data loss and are always damaging to sensitive components, reducing their lifespan. Most people do use surge protectors, but what many don't realize is that surge protection wears off over time. For the best protection make sure that the surge protectors for all your computer equipment are replaced every 2 to 3 years. "

3.â€‚Illegal Software. "Many businesses don't realize that they don't 'own' software; just the licenses to use it on a specific number of PC's. Many software programs automatically report their usage via the internet, and breach-of-license letters and audits from software manufacturers to businesses are on the rise."

4.â€‚Training. "Having to spend money training your staff might sound like a waste, but most employees understand less than 20% of the software packages they use. The gain in productivity far outweighs the training costs."

5.â€‚Firewall and Security. "The internet is full of hackers who regularly try to access computers for nefarious purposes. If they get in (either directly, or with the help of exploits from malware or viruses) the list of problems they can cause is pretty big; including stealing files or customer records, and deleting important data. It's important to be sure that all computers in your organization are updated with the latest security patches from Microsoft or Apple, and that firewalls are installed and maintained properly."

6.â€‚Backup Data. "It sounds so obvious but most companies fail to keep 100% of their important data backed up 100% of the time - there are often gaps in what's being backed up which are only discovered when it's too late. The consequences of lost data can put a company out of business on the spot, and data retrieval is frighteningly expensive."

7.â€‚Spam, Viruses and Spyware. "80% of all Computer Troubleshooters' service calls worldwide are from people with problems directly linked to these issues. You should consider good virus

protection, spam filters and anti-spyware programs as mandatory if you want a trouble-free computer."

With a small amount of common sense, weekly maintenance (much of which we can set our computers to do themselves) and some small financial outlays, we can have many more trouble-free workdays and spend far less on the IT repair man. This will allow us more 'up' time to complete our work and give us the chance to explore the myriad other technology opportunities that can help us improve our businesses, or our lives. Now that's technology in action.