**Computer Troubleshooting Guide**

**A Vancouver Public Library Guide**

**Introduction**

This guide will help you find the tools you need to troubleshoot and repair your computer. It includes communication tips, library resources and where to find expert assistance.

**Tips on Properly Communicating Your Computer Problem**

Follow these simple tips to ensure that you are effectively communicating your problem:

### Be Prepared: make sure you’re prepared to explain your computer problem

### Be Specific: describe the problem as much detail as possible. Be prepared to answer the questions below.

### Be Calm: Computer problems can be stressful. It is important to keep in mind that most problems can be solved with a little time and effort.

Be prepared to answer the following questions:

* If you have an error message: What's the *exact* error message on your screen?
* If you don't have an error message: What *exactly* is your computer doing? *"It just doesn't work"* isn't helpful information.
* When did the problem start happening?
* Did anything else happen at the same time the problem started? (e.g. a blue screen of death, smoke coming from the computer, virus warning, etc.)
* What have you already tried to troubleshoot the problem?
* Has the problem changed since it first started happening? (e.g. computer shuts off more frequently, error message appears at a different time now, etc.)

Remember, many problems can be solved quickly with the following resources:

* Check the manual: in print, on the device itself, or search online
* Google your problem and see if solutions are posted online.
* Contact the device manufacturer
* Contact the store where you purchased the device

## Library Resources on Computer Troubleshooting

A good way to start searching is to use the library catalogue. The library catalogue is the search box located in the top right-hand corner of [www.vpl.ca](http://www.vpl.ca). Type a title, author or keyword into the search box and hit *search*. Example keywords include:

* Computers / Maintenance and repair
* Laptop computers / Maintenance and repair
* Macintosh (Computer) / Maintenance and repair
* iMac (Computer) / Maintenance and repair

**Selected Library Books**

1. Troubleshooting & maintaining your PC all-in-one for dummies (call # 621.391 I11G6ta1)

This book is a guide to PC maintenance and repair, covering such topics as hardware, software, laptops, the Internet, networking, and Microsoft Windows 7, Vista, and XP.

1. Mac Upgrade and Repair Bible (call # 621.391 M15S7m)

The book provides upgrade and repair manual for Mac users and the author is a respected Mac expert. It includes information on MP3 players, iPod and iTunes, DVD-R, CD-R backup solutions, CD-RW, and much more.

1. Fixing your Computer: Absolute Beginner's Guide (Call # 621.391 I11M1f)

This beginner's guide to fixing your own computer teaches simple troubleshooting techniques for identifying problems and gives simple instructions and crystal-clear pictures that show you exactly how to fix problems yourself.

**Electronic Resources**

**Books 24x7** isa collection of thousands of web-based eBooks on various computer and technical topics. eBooks are simple to browse, keyword searchable and require no downloads. To access Books 24x7 go to [www.vpl.ca](http://www.vpl.ca), click on **Online Articles, Encyclopedias & More**; use the A-Z list to click on “B”, then scroll down to:

 Books 24x7

Login in to the database by using your library card, then either browse for books using the right navigation bar or search using the search box near the top.

**Recommended Websites**

### [Microsoft Fix it Solution Center](http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=12&cad=rja&ved=0CEgQFjABOAo&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsupport.microsoft.com%2Ffixit%2F&ei=AFr9UpipBIHCywG-uoGwBA&usg=AFQjCNHIKSKg4W-I-aIKsaRTSSRd9AOf3A&bvm=bv.61190604,d.aWc) <http://support.microsoft.com/fixit>

Diagnose and repair common software problems in Windows, Internet Explorer or other Microsoft products.

### Apple Support <http://www.apple.com/support>

The Apple support homepage contains information on Apple hardware and software products, featuring user forums and device manuals.

* **Computers and Software - For Dummies** <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/computers-software.html>

Computer help and technical support from Dummies.com

* **Computer Hope** <http://www.computerhope.com/>

Free computer help and support. Find tips on common computer issues and forums to ask questions and receive support.

* **PC Help Forum** <http://www.pchelpforum.com> /

Search for your problem or post a question in a forum to receive responses from computer experts.

**Computer Repair Shops in Vancouver**

To find a computer repair shop, look under *Computer Services, Repair & Cleaning* in the Vancouver Yellow Pages. Before choosing a repair shop it is a good idea to look for referrals from previous customers. Look at company reviews online or ask friends & family for recommendations.