

My Troubleshooting Checklist for Common IT Issues

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Purpose

When a user is blocked, speed matters, but consistency matters more. This checklist helps me troubleshoot common issues in a repeatable way, communicate clearly, and leave clean ticket notes that make handoffs easy.

What I optimize for

- Restore service quickly without skipping fundamentals
- Isolate the root cause by testing one variable at a time
- Document clearly so the next technician can continue without starting over

1) Login and Access Issues

Examples: password reset, account lockout, MFA problems, permission denied, application access

Triage questions

- Which system or app are you logging into
- What is the exact error message
- Does it fail on one device or multiple devices

Checklist

- ☐ Confirm identity and verify the correct username format
- ☐ Check account status: enabled, not locked, password not expired
- ☐ If MFA is involved, confirm the method and confirm time sync on the device
- ☐ Try a clean sign in: private browser window for web apps, sign out then sign in again
- ☐ Clear cached credentials when symptoms point to stored passwords
- ☐ Validate access: group membership, license assignment, and role permissions
- ☐ If remote access is required, confirm VPN status and policy requirements

Escalate when

- Lockouts repeat after a reset
- Signs of account compromise
- Multiple users report the same login failure

2) WiFi and Connectivity Issues

Examples: no internet, can reach public sites but not internal resources, VPN drops, slow connection

Triage questions

- WiFi only or also Ethernet
- One location or everywhere
- Can the user access public sites, internal sites, or neither

Checklist

- [] Confirm basics: WiFi enabled, airplane mode off, correct network selected
- [] Forget the network and reconnect, confirm credentials, check captive portal
- [] Restart the device, then disable and re enable the network adapter
- [] Verify IP settings: IP address, gateway, DNS, and signal strength
- [] Test on an alternate network to isolate device vs network
- [] If VPN is used, test with VPN on and off to confirm routing behavior
- [] Check driver and recent updates if the issue started suddenly

Escalate when

- Multiple users affected in the same area
- Access point outage, ISP outage, or network authentication failure

3) Printing Issues

Examples: printer offline, stuck queue, cannot add printer, poor print quality

Triage questions

- Printer name and location, or home model
- Is the issue offline, cannot find printer, or prints incorrectly

Checklist

- [] Confirm power, cables, network connection, and correct default printer
- [] Test print from a different app and print a test page
- [] Clear the print queue and restart the Print Spooler if needed
- [] Re add printer and confirm the correct driver and correct port
- [] For network printers, confirm the user is on the correct network or VPN
- [] For quality issues, check paper type, tray, toner, jams, and settings

Escalate when

- Hardware failure suspected
- Print server issues
- Multiple users cannot print to the same device

4) Slow Device and Performance Issues

Examples: slow boot, freezing, application lag, storage full, high CPU usage

Triage questions

- When did it start and what changed
- Is it slow at login, opening apps, browsing, or everything

Checklist

- ☐ Check system resources: CPU, memory, disk, and network utilization
- ☐ Review startup items and background processes
- ☐ Verify available storage and run cleanup if space is low
- ☐ Confirm updates and pending restarts, then reboot and retest
- ☐ Run a security scan if symptoms are unusual
- ☐ Check hardware health indicators when available: disk health, overheating, battery health
- ☐ If managed device, consider endpoint tools or policy changes as a cause

Escalate when

- Disk errors or signs of failing hardware
- Repeated crashes or blue screens
- Malware is confirmed or strongly suspected

What I always document in the ticket

User and impact

- User name, department, device name or asset tag, location
- Business impact and urgency, what the user cannot do

Problem details

- Exact error message and where it appears
- When it started and what changed recently
- Scope: one user, one team, or multiple users

Troubleshooting actions

- Steps taken in order and the result of each step
- Tests used to isolate the cause, such as alternate device or alternate network

Resolution and verification

- Fix applied, settings changed, access updated, or replacement completed
- User confirmation that the issue is resolved
- Any prevention tips shared with the user

Closing note: My goal is not just to fix the issue. It is to restore confidence. Clear communication, steady troubleshooting, and clean documentation help support feel reliable, even when the problem is frustrating.