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New Year, New Office

Often technology's little problems or hassles are 'put up with', instead of being given the attention needed to resolve or improve them. Let's start the New Year by dealing with a few areas that can be easily and inexpensively solved. Watch out for part 2 of this article next month.

Having trouble finding things? If your collection of electronic files continues to grow, think about archiving any historical information. This will remove old files from being listed amongst files that you currently need, but can be done so they are easy to access again if you ever need to refer to them. Archiving can also be applied to historical emails.

Your current files may benefit from some re-organising too but ensure that all of your team members are aware of the new structure so they don't wonder where everything went. You will also need to check your backup regime – moving files to a new location may cause the backup to think they are new files, which will increase your backup storage requirements. This can be avoided with some careful planning.

Overloaded with emails? Review any mailing lists or offers that you subscribe to. If you find you are too busy to read them and are just deleting them, considering unsubscribing instead. Use 'rules' in your email program to sort incoming messages into folders, moving non-urgent items (like mailing lists) out of your Inbox automatically but still being available to read. If you receive many emails from your team with attachments (e.g. documents for you to review etc), consider using a centralised storage place instead, like a 'network file share/drive letter'. Saving and sharing files from one place reduces the amount of storage needed, compared to multiple copies of the same file in email Sent folders and Inboxes.

Running out of consumables? Why does it also seem that the printer runs out of paper (or ink!) when you are urgently waiting for a document? Has your cordless mouse battery ever died when you've been updating an important PowerPoint presentation? Consider adding a few things to the standard tasks you perform when you open or close your office for the day, such as filling the printer with paper. Placing cordless mice on their charging stands and checking printer ink levels could be done weekly. This reduces the risk of this running out at an inconvenient time.

Could a few extras make life easier? If there is always a queue at the printer, compare the cost of an extra printer to the frustration and the wasted time that you spend waiting. Remember too to invest in components like an extra monitor, keyboard and mouse for staff that use laptops, to reduce the risk of overuse injuries.

Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter about how a few small tweaks to your office technology could make the world of difference.

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**Contact your local Computer
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