How to Turn Your PC Off to Minimize File Corruption

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By Alexandria

During the course of working with clients, I notice that a great many will turn their computer off (clicking on the Windows Start> Shutdown/Restart) while applications such as Microsoft Outlook and Word, as well as Dragon NaturallySpeaking (Medical, Legal, Professional) are still running (open).

While Windows is theoretically supposed to account for these scenarios and prevent anything untoward from occurring to the data or applications themselves, this cannot be relied upon. Computers are far from perfect, and Windows is frequently cranky.

Since my first foray into computers I realized that there was an advantage in removing any potential roadblocks that Windows might cling to, and thereby disrupt my computing experience. In other words, I set about a regimen for myself with respect to various computer functions, particularly shutting down or restarting my PC. I like to think it's served me well.

Data file and application corruption can happen far easier than I'm comfortable with. One sure-fire method to test this theory is to shut down or restart your PC with applications and data open or loaded. Sooner or later, one or the other will corrupt. And when that happens, it's always at the least opportune moment (i.e. you need to get that brief or consult done yesterday!). The relationship between Murphy and PCs is a very tightly interwoven one and seldom shows mercy.

Sometimes your computer crashes (although these days, regular restarts should prevent this), and there is little you can do but watch it shut down amidst Dragon mid-transcribing in an email. Admittedly, I take a few deep breaths before starting my PC again and hoping that my Dragon user profile survived the crash (but this is also what backups are for).

Unexpected shut downs, and even planned ones, that occur while programs are loaded is tempting fate. Such a scenario simply increases the chance of file corruption, which ultimately renders an application, file or Dragon user profile unusable. As I mentioned, this will happen on your busiest day of the month.

So please spend the time to close all your applications **BEFORE** you shut down or restart your PC. A few moments invested each day will minimize the potential for lost hours later on.

If you are using Dragon Medical (or Professional, Legal) version 10.1, please remember my three step shut down rule.

Keep <u>Murphy </u>out of your computer; close all applications before you shut down your PC. Cheers!