You don't need to be an Astronaut to marvel at the achievements of man landing on the moon. Similarly, you don't need to be a "Car enthusiast" to marvel at the achievements of Drag Car Racing.Whether you are a car enthusiast or not, I recommend that at least once in their life time, everyone should experience a Drag Car Race in action.

Yes I'm talking about the long narrow vehicles with large tyres on the back and small tyres in front. These monsters Jump from 0km/hr to 500km/hr in less than 5 seconds! The roar of the engine shakes the ground as if the world is ending!.. Leaving you wondering, what is left of the little man strapped inside this machine.

After witnessing this spectacle, I noticed a peculiar thing. Officials were running down the drag strip picking up nuts and bolts. These parts had become victim to the drag car's violent journey into the distance. I soon learned that this is a common occurrence. The extent of damage is so great that after each pass, a Top Fuel drag car has to have its engine stripped down and rebuilt ready for its next run.

I thought to myself, what fantastic dedication to ensuring maximum performance every time.

Keeping a machine in good running order requires routine maintenance. Be it your lawnmower, your car, or even your body. Neglecting this maintenance always results in reduced performance and eventually death. How much time and money you invest on maintenance depends on how much your asset means to you. Computers are no different, although it is common place to over look the need for computer maintenance. Perhaps you have noticed that your computer seems significantly slower than the day you first bought it?

This article describes some common computer failures and what you can do to prevent them.

There are two major components to a computer – Hardware and Software – and one is useless without the other. Thus, it is important to investigate the failure points in both.

Hardware:

Heat is a computer's worst enemy. The faster a computer becomes the more heat it generates, and the hotter it gets, the higher the risk of failure. The temperature inside your computer is controlled by a combination of heat sinks and cooling fans. Over time, dust build up occurs inside the case, and this can result in computer failure. All computers should be checked for dust build up at least every six (6) months. Computers living in dusty environments should be checked more frequently. Compressed air is the easiest and safest way to remove dust, provided you have access to an air compressor or "air in a can". Alternatively you can use a fine paint brush and a vacuum cleaner to remove dust.

Note - If you would like Rampant Technology to provide this service when next onsite, please click here to make a booking.

On a side note, noisy cooling fans are often a warning sign of imminent failure. So if your computer sounds like a small aeroplane taking off in the morning, do not ignore it. This is especially pertinent when that constantly annoying whirring sound just stops one day, as this often means a cooling fan has failed altogether. Thinking "Oh thank goodness that noise has stopped and all is well" will almost certainly result in far more costly repairs and possible loss of data in the near future.

Non moving components, such as memory and network cards, are less susceptible to failure and as such do not require maintenance. Their breakdowns often stem from lack of quality control from the brand manufacturer, or a power-related incident.

Software:

Microsoft Windows is the most widely used operating platform onto which all other software packages are installed. So it makes sense to ensure that Windows is running at its optimum level, as per recommendations from the manufacturer.

Software maintenance targets 3 main areas:

-   Speed – Regular routine checks should be performed to ensure that only the necessary applications and processes are running in the background. Computers can multitask just like people; however as more tasks are juggled, less brain power is available to focus on the primary task.
-   Compatibility / Security – Every time a security hole or incompatibility issue is identified, fixes are created and should be implemented. Service Packs and system/driver updates are necessary to ensure the continued compatibility and maximum level of security of installed applications.
-   Reliability – Windows contains a component that lets administrators view time and date stamped events which have occurred on a computer. Applications and operating system components can make use of this centralised log service to report events that have taken place, such as a failure to start a component or complete an action.

Sometimes, incidents can occur when adding or removing software/updates will cause conflicts, which can result in a computer's performance deteriorating, rather than improving. So it is important to be sure of what you are doing or seek assistance from a professional.

Note: Rampant targets these and other areas of performance during routine maintenance.

So there you have it, the basic elements of computer maintenance in a nutshell. Not nearly as exciting as being an Astronaut or seeing a Top Fuel drag car in action - but at least computer maintenance is not required after only 5 seconds of performance.

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