**What is Routine Maintenance?**

Routine maintenance refers to simple activities associated with the general upkeep of a computer which take only a few minutes, and should be part of the routine of computer usage. Routine computer maintenance consists of tasks that you should perform on your computer daily, weekly or monthly in order to keep the computer running efficiently, fast and for a long time. If you are able to take your computer apart, you can clean the different parts and remove dust build-up. Other maintenance may include cleaning up files or your desktop so it is neat and organized. Routine maintenance is important as maintenance is a vital step in keeping your system running smoothly and efficiently and can effectively result in a longer computer life.

**How does it benefit a user/ computer?**

**Faster speed**

Defragmenting your hard drive, running spyware and virus removal programs as well as installing the latest drivers and software updates are all computer maintenance tasks that help keep your computer running at top speed.

**Reduced Likelihood of Lost Files**

Backing up your computer files is a regular part of routine maintenance. In addition to making your own backups with CDs, an external hard drive or other devices, there are online services that you can use to automatically back-up your files. This means if your computer crashes, you will be able to recover your files and photos you lost.

**Protects against threats**

Keeping your spyware and anti-virus programs updated and running on a regular basis is essential to preventing a pc being attacked by viruses (program designed to erase data and corrupt files), worms (can forward virus through email to all contacts) and Trojans (hides by presenting itself as a harmless file). You may never realize you have any spyware or viruses on your computer, but they could be there in the background stealing your personal information, destroying your files and even make your computer unusable. Most spyware and anti-virus programs can be set up on a schedule so that they run automatically on your chosen day and time.

**Longer computer life**

You can protect your computer against the changes of electricity supply by plugging it into the electrical surge protector. If your surge protector is not adequately working, your computer's motherboard or hard drive could be destroyed from even the most minor electrical surge. The simple test to check electricity supply can prolong your computer's life by months or years.   
  
**Disadvantages**   
Routine maintenance can be very time consuming and in some cases has to be performed often, for instance daily virus scan of memory or weekly defragmentation and physically cleaning components. Virus scans and updates also can slow the system down while they are running in the background.

**Create and organise folders and files**

File management is important else you might not be able to find your documents. Microsoft offers some standard folders to encourage users to be organized when saving files. For example pictures, music, documents and videos are the folders that aren’t user created but formed by windows. It is also encourage that the user should create additional folders, perhaps according to the subject or the date and name of the documents something suitable so the files are easily found and you don’t have to go through every single picture for instance to find it.

**Back-up procedures online and offline**

Hard drives rarely give a warning when they are about to crash, and a sudden hard drive failure could result in the loss of years' worth of irreplaceable data. From family photos to bank and business records, many people keep their entire lives on their PCs. With so much at stake, it is important to keep that data safe and sound.

One of the simplest ways to keep your backed up is to invest in an external hard drive. The external hard drive should automatically appear under a new drive letter, and moving files is as easy as opening Windows Explorer and copying files from one drive letter to another. Online backups provide another level of protection for computer users, and in many ways an online backup is even more secure. That way, if your computer crashes, you won't lose any data you've saved on the computer's hard drive.

**Scheduling data deletion**

There is a limit to how much you can store on one computer. To prevent running out of space it is important to schedule data deletion. A lot of documents saved on your computer may not be needed and in that case there is no point in keeping them as the needless files are just taking up space. When files are first deleted, they go to the Recycle Bin so it is important to empty the Recycle Bin so space is freed for other files.

**Defragmenting**

A procedure which should be carried out roughly every 4 weeks is disk defragmenting. As you use more and more files and add files to the hard drive, they get split into fragments and are spread to different locations on the hard drive. Defragmenting will pull those fragments into one location, making it easier and quicker for the computer to find the full file.

**Cleaning hardware**

You should also do regular physical cleaning in addition to software maintenance. If you have a desktop computer, open up the case and blow out the dust inside. For laptops, use canned air to blow in and around the keys to get rid of the dirt, dust and other debris that has accumulated there. The more that collects, the more of a chance your computer can overheat, requiring a shutdown. This is because dust and debris can create heat, which can affect your computer's motherboard performance.

**Replacing consumables**

Consumables are products that require regular replacement because they are used up or in their use, for instance paper, ink or toner cartridges. These are examples of things that require replacement and without doing so the computer system cannot output data via the printer and the printer will not be fit for purpose.

**Replacing damaged components**

Wear and tear or accidental damage will result in the need to replace damaged components for safety reasons and for functionality. For instance a damaged keyboard through spilling liquids will make the keyboard unusable and the computer difficult to use, it is therefore difficult to replace the damage component.

**Updating**

Updating computer software fixes bugs and security issues as well as provides the latest versions of software that typically run better. Most software programs allow you to set automatic updating for certain times, which ensures regular updating. Updates can enhance the security and performance of your computer so are very important to keep on top of.