

# General Troubleshooting Guide



## Step 1 Gather Information and Replicate the Problem

→ **Goal:** Understand the full scope of the issue. Do not skip this step.

→ **Action:** Ask yourself or the user:

- **What** exactly is happening? What error message appears?
- **When** did the problem start?
- **Where** does it occur (e.g., on one computer or all computers)?
- **Can you replicate the issue?** Does it happen every time you perform a specific action?

**Success:** You can clearly describe the problem and make it happen again on command.

## Step 2 Check the Obvious (Quick Wins)

→ **Goal:** Rule out simple solutions before diving deep.

→ **Action:**

- **Restart** the device or application. This fixes a surprising number of issues.
- **Check physical connections:** Are all cables (power, network, etc.) securely plugged in?
- **Verify power:** Is the device turned on and charged?
- **Check for access:** Are you logged in? Do you have the correct permissions?
- **Confirm basic settings:** Is the volume muted? Is the monitor on?

**Success:** The problem is resolved with a simple fix.

**If not resolved:** Proceed to step 3.

## Step 3 Identify the Root Cause (Isolate the Issue)

→ **Goal:** Narrow down where the problem might lie.

→ **Action:** Try to isolate the component:

- **Software vs. Hardware:** Does the problem occur in multiple applications or just one? If just one, the issue is likely with that specific software.
- **User-Specific:** Does the problem happen for only one user or for everyone? If for just one user, the issue may be with their profile or settings.
- **Network-Related:** Can you access other websites or network resources? If not, the issue may be with your internet or network connection.
- **Test in a new environment:** Try a different user account, browser, cable, or port.

✓ **Success:** You have a better idea of what subsystem is causing the problem (e.g., the network is fine; the issue is with this specific software).

## Step 4 Research and Diagnose

→ **Goal:** Find a known solution or deeper understanding.

→ **Action:**

- **Search for the error message:** Copy the exact error message into a search engine.
- **Check knowledge bases:** Search official support forums, documentation, or your company's internal knowledge base.
- **Review recent changes:** Did anything change just before the problem began? (e.g., new software, updates, changed settings).

✓ **Success:** You find a solution or a specific diagnosis (e.g., "This is a known bug with the latest update").

## Step 5 Apply a Fix

→ **Goal:** Resolve the problem methodically.

→ **Action:**

- **Start with the simplest solution** first, based on your research.
- **Make one change at a time.** This is crucial! If you make five changes and it works, you won't know which one resolved it.
- **Test after each change** to see if the problem has been resolved.
- **Document what you did.** This will help you and others in the future.

✓ **Success:** The problem is resolved.

## Step 6 Escalate if Needed

→ **Goal:** Know when to ask for help.

→ **Action:** If you're unable to resolve the issue after thorough troubleshooting, escalate it.

**Provide your escalation contact with all the information you gathered:**

- The problem description (from Step 1).
- The steps you've already taken (Steps 2-5).
- The results of your tests.

**This shows you are competent and saves the expert from having to repeat your steps.**

## Step 7 Document and Share the Solution

→ **Goal:** Turn the problem into a learning opportunity for everyone.

→ **Action:**

- **Record the final solution** in your team's knowledge base or ticket system.
- **Note the root cause** and the steps required to fix it.

**This creates a resource that will save time the next time this issue occurs.**

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