

Tech trouble causing Computer Stress Syndrome: study

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Library patrons surf the Internet at the Harold Washington Library in Chicago, Illinois. Crashing machines, slow boot times, and agony dealing with technical support have Digital Age people suffering from Computer Stress Syndrome, a study available online Tuesday found.

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"Today's digitally-dependent consumers are increasingly overwhelmed and upset with technical glitches and problems in their daily lives," a

communications industry think tank said in a report entitled "Combating Computer Stress Syndrome."

The report identified sources of peoples' pain as "frustrating, complex computers and devices, technical failures, [viral infections](#), and long waits to resolve support issues."

Findings were based on a survey of more than 1,000 people in North America by a Customer Experience Board created by the Chief Marketing Officer Council to look into how to keep customers happy in the highly competitive communications sector.

"The reality is that numerous, persistent problems are troubling most [computer users](#), creating unnecessary anguish and anxiety as a result," the study found.

"Digitally dependent users are getting fed up and frustrated with the current state of computer related stress, and clearly looking for a better way to address and reduce it."

Ninety-four percent of those surveyed said they depend on computers in their personal lives.

Nearly two-thirds of computer users have needed to contact technical support or have experienced Computer Stress Syndrome (CSS) in the past year, according to the study.

"Users face a continuous state of technical anxiety and challenge such as setting up new computer products, keeping up with software upgrades and migrating to new applications and operating systems, as well as dealing with malware infections, web threats, identity theft and more," the study said.

Forty percent of computer users have experienced system failures in the past year and more than half have had to reach out for help fixing technical problems, according to Pew Center Research cited in the report.

"Because they are so important to us, computers are a two-edged sword," said Murray Feingold, a US physician credited in the study with giving CSS its label.

"When they are functioning properly, they're great. But when something goes wrong, we immediately go into panic -- This is what I call the Computer Stress Syndrome."

The study highlights the importance of making it less vexing to use modern-day gadgets, according to board spokeswoman Liz Miller.

"We think it is about time that a lot of these technology companies really start to pay attention to where consumer stress and pain points are to create better experiences," Miller told AFP.

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