

6 Basic Tech Skills Anyone Should Have (Even If you're Not a Geek)

By Yaara Lancet

Let's face it: in today's world, technology is no longer just for geeks. While some people may take pleasure in hacking into their Android device or using a rare Linux build, most of us are just normal users, who simply want to get along. If merely using a computer used to be "only for geeks" in the 70s, it's nothing like that today, and even my 90-year-old grandmother has her own PC and writes e-mails on a daily basis.

If you consider yourself a geek, and have good control over your computer and other devices, this post might not be for you. If, however, you're still finding your way in the computer world, or know someone who is, these basic skills are absolute must-haves. While computers and phones will work for you even without these basic tech skills, having them will ensure your privacy, your security, and will make your day-to-day experience as smooth as it can be.



Secure Your Wireless Network with a Password

The screenshot shows the configuration interface for a Sweex wireless router. The top navigation bar includes 'Basic', 'Security', 'Filter List', 'WDS', 'Advanced', and 'Association Table'. The 'Security' tab is selected, and the 'Security Configuration' section is active. The 'Authentication Type' is set to 'WPA Personal'. The 'Accessorial Authentication & Encryption' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'None', 'WEP', 'WPA Personal' (selected), 'WPA2 Personal', and 'WPA&WPA2 Personal'. The 'Pre-Shared Key' section has a 'Key Format' of 'Please input 8-63 characters', a 'KEY' field with a masked password, and a 'Rekey Time (sec)' of '86400'. An 'Apply' button is at the bottom right.

Security Configuration	
Authentication Type	WPA Personal
Accessorial Authentication & Encryption	None WEP WPA Personal WPA2 Personal WPA&WPA2 Personal
Pre-Shared Key	
Key Format	Please input 8-63 characters
KEY	[Masked Password]
Rekey Time (sec)	86400
Apply	

While creating a password for your home wireless network is not complicated, I'm always surprised at the amount of unsecure networks I find every time I look for one to connect to. A true geek might say that a simple password protection is not *that* secure, and any real hacker can break it easily, but these passwords work in most cases, and I haven't had mine hacked in all the years I've been using it. Aside from security issues, you don't want all your cheap neighbours to be using your Internet and downloading movies at your expense.

So what do you do?

First, read how to secure your wireless connection (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/secure-your->

[wireless-network-here-is-why-and-how/](#)), as explained by Aibek quite a while ago. While these screenshots are taken on Windows XP, the way things look depend mostly on your brand of router, so you should have no problem no matter what OS you use. If you need to set up a wireless network from scratch, take a look at “how to set up your own secured Wi-Fi hotspot” (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/how-to-set-up-and-secure-your-own-wi-fi-hotspot/>). Think someone’s using your wireless network? Here’s how to tell (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/catch-snoop-logging-wireless-network/>)!

Backup You’re Stuff

No matter how you use your computer, phone, or tablet, you *must* have a good, solid backup solution, at least for the really important things. We tend to postpone backup for “later”, thinking “it won’t happen to me”, but losing your data once is quite enough. And there’s no reason to be lazy, as backup is pretty easy to set up.

So what do you do?

If you’re the kind of person who likes to read, learn, and pick the best solution, download our free backup & restore guide (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/download-stuff-backup-restore-guide/>), which will teach you all you need to know. In a nutshell, your backup solution can consist of one or more of the following options (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/what-is-the-best-backup-solution-geeks-weigh-in/>):

- An external hard drive
- A network-attached hard drive
- Cloud storage
- CDs, DVDs, Blu-Rays, etc.

After deciding on the best solution for you, you can find a list of 10 excellent backup apps right here (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/top-10-backup-software-for-pc/>). Also, read this (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/read-choosing-online-backup-provider/>) before choosing an online backup provider. If you don’t feel like reading or deciding, simple head over to Dropbox.com, create an account, and move all your important folders to Dropbox. While this might not be the most secure way to do things, it will make sure your files are there, even if something happens to your computer.

Touch Typing



I have a confession to make: I only use 3 fingers when I type. There, I said it! But you know what? I still don’t have to look at my keyboard while typing, and I type faster than many people who type

the right way. Don't take an example from me, though. One of the best skills you can have for a smoother computer experience is touch typing.

So what do you do?

The best way to improve your typing is, of course, practice, but if typing is a really slow and cumbersome process for you, you might avoid it as much as you can. There are many apps and even games that can help. You'll find an excellent list of such apps [right here](#), which includes apps for different languages, speed tests, typing lessons, and much more.

Protect Your Devices From Malware

Don't have an updated anti-virus program installed? Get one *right now*. Viruses and malware are getting ever sneakier (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/beware-trojan-disguised-facebook-e-mail-loose-updates/>), and you don't want to remain unprotected. Especially when good protection is available for free, and is very easy to set up.

So what do you do?

Choose one of the free apps from this list (<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/best-windows-software#antivirus>), install it, and you're done. If you want to be really secure, check that your program is running a system scan about once a week, and configure it to update automatically. You can then forget about it, and know you're protected.

Learn How To Use E-mail



Do you know what to do when you send a mass e-mail? Do you know how to recognize spam? Can you use links and attachments comfortably? If you answered yes to all of the above, you're probably alright. If you didn't, these are things you should know how to do.

So what do you do?

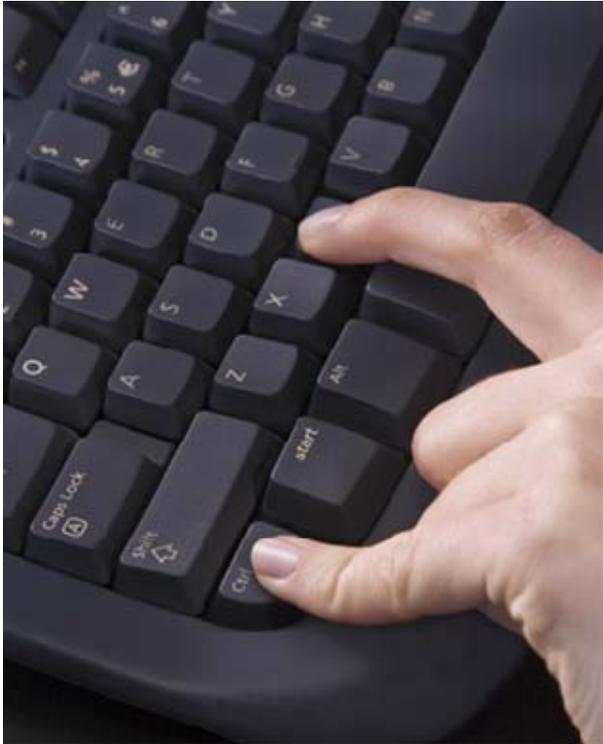
In a nutshell, follows these guidelines:

- When e-mailing a group of people, enter *all* the addresses in the BCC field, unless you know for sure these people don't mind if others in the group see their address. This way, everyone will receive the e-mail, but no one will be able to see anyone's address but yours.
- When you get an e-mail with a link or an attachment, and that's *any* e-mail, read it carefully to make sure you really know where it came from. Even if you recognize the name and address, you want to be %100 sure the content makes sense to you. Not sure? Don't open!

- If you want to include links in your e-mail, the best way to do it is to highlight some text, find the “insert hyperlink” option, and paste the address there. This way, the e-mail is much easier read and the links easier to follow.

Want more? Check out this nice video series on eHow (http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_9436_basic-internet-e_mail-skills.html).

Know Your Keyboard Shortcuts



You don't really need keyboard shortcuts in order to get by, but once you learn just a handful of them, you won't understand how you ever made do without them. Assuming you already use Ctrl - C for copy and Ctrl - V for paste, what other basic shortcuts should you know about?

- **Ctrl - X** – for cut (copy and delete).
- **Ctrl - Z** – for undo.
- **Ctrl - Y** – for redo (brings back what you undid by mistake).
- **Ctrl - backspace** – deletes and entire word instead of letter by letter.
- **J and K** – are used on many interfaces, such as e-mail, for browsing up and down a list.
- **Win - L** – locks your PC (make sure you know your password before doing this!).

Bottom Line

There is, of course, an endless amount of skills one can acquire. Even for basic skills, this is not all. But master these 6 basic tech skills, and I assure you, using your computer will become a much safer and more enjoyable experience.

Source: http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-basic-tech-skills-geek/?utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_source=2012-09-11, 10 September 2012