

# Computer Tips

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## Michael's Computer Services

### Is Your PC Dusty?

Your computer is a complex machine, made up of electronic parts all working together.

The most obvious part of your computer is the case, also known as 'the tower'. The case, which is almost always metal, protects all the fragile parts inside, and also provides a secure structure to screw them to.

Apart from providing a structure, another very important function of your PC's case is to provide regulated ventilation. The case is specially designed to give the right airflow across the internal parts. It is often thought that leaving the sides of the case off during use will improve the ventilation, but this is not true. The internal fans, which keep the airflow moving, must pull the air across the internal parts to give them proper cooling. Removing the sides of the case interrupts this airflow, and prevents the internal parts from cooling down efficiently.

Along with ventilation, the case also provides some protection from dust, water, and other foreign particles. Dust is a major enemy of computers, because when present in any quantity, interrupts the flow of electricity to the different parts of your PC. It also causes heat to build up, and significantly shortens the life of your PC. Smoke, especially tobacco smoke, will do a similar thing.

Here in the workshop, we quite often see computers come in which no longer work because of dust and other foreign particles. We recommend to our customers to get their PC's dusted out at least once a month. This way they will lengthen the life of their PC.

If you own an air compressor, or have access to one, you can dust out your PC yourself. To do this, remove the PC from its usual position, and take it outside, as there is usually a surprising amount of fine dust inside it. Once outside, remove the side panel of your PC's case, and using your air compressor, blow out all the dust and foreign matter that is in there.

While doing this however, be very careful to hold onto the fans, to keep them from spinning. The force of the compressed air will spin the fans much faster than what they are designed to do, and if spun this fast, they will wear out almost immediately. When you are satisfied all the dust is removed, replace the side of the PC case, and return your PC to its position.

While you have your air compressor out, you might also like to dust out your keyboard. As many of us work, socialize or relax in front of our PC's, particles of hair, food, dust and other foreign bits fall in between the keys, eventually causing problems. While dusting your keyboard however, make sure the air pressure is turned down quite low, like 50 psi or so. This way you won't blow out the keys along with the dust.

If you find that your PC is regularly very dusty, try placing the computer tower on the desk, rather than the floor. If the floor is the only option, then place a couple of bricks or blocks of wood under the tower, to keep it above the traffic area past the desk. This is especially helpful if the tower is sitting on carpet.



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85 Chester Street, Nanango (cnr Deakin Crescent)