Tips & Tricks for Tech Troubleshooting

Kevin Ruppel, South Brunswick Public Library

Email: kruppel@sbpl.info

When it comes to troubleshooting tech, make sure that everything is **W.I.R.E.D.** !

W – What is the problem?

- Let the patron tell you what the problem that they are having is. Be sure to listen to them carefully and make some notes. Be sure to ask:
    - Which platform are they using? (Mobile or PC, Windows or Mac? Etc.)
    - What were they trying to accomplish?
    - When did this problem first happen?

I – Isolate the issue.

- After the patron finished telling you what was happening, look over your notes to see if there is a core issue. Then make a short mental list of possible issues such as:
    - Was it a single program that is causing all the issues?
    - Does the issue persist across multiple programs?
    - If it is a file that they are trying to open, does it open on a different computer?

R – Reproduce the issue.

- Armed with your mental list, ask the patron to reproduce the error while narrating what they are doing (This will help the patron really focus on what they are trying to do and sometimes helps them solve their own issues.) Watch and listen carefully as they go through the motions.

E – Evaluate possible fixes.

- Once the issue is reproduce, compare your mental list of possible issues with what you have just witness to evaluate exactly where the problem lies. Be sure to ask the patron more questions if you have any.

D – Deploy fixes.

- Explain to them what is the most likely reason or reasons on why this issue is happening. Ask for their permission first before you touch the computer and start with the least invasive fix first as it usually is the simplest thing (such as restarting the computer or running program updates).

Considering technology is at an ever changing pace, be sure to check out technology news websites like **Ars Technica** or a news aggregators like **Hacker News** to stay updated.