

Should I turn off my computer every night or should I leave it on?

Many people turn off their computers every night, mostly to conserve energy. I recommend you not do this and here are the reasons why:

1. Microsoft updates should be downloaded and installed automatically every night to both keep your computer protected on a security level and to be sure you are using all the latest drivers and other enhancements that are made available to you by the hardware manufacturers. They frequently submit these enhancements to Microsoft so they can be included in the automatic updates offered by Microsoft for free.
2. If you are using a software program to protect your computer from viruses and malware, as everyone should be, it needs to be updated at least daily and it should be scheduled to automatically perform a thorough scan of your entire hard drive at least weekly. The virus definition updates should automatically be downloaded before the scan is begun to be sure you have the very latest protection. The scan could easily take 6 or 7 hours if not longer and you don't want it running while you are using your computer since it will slow your system significantly. Leaving it on at night gives the program a chance to complete the scan while you sleep.
3. Connecting to networked drives and printers is not a complicated process, but disconnecting and reconnecting every day will eventually cause network connectivity problems. And that is what must be done if you turn your computer off each night.
4. As your computer ages, it will suffer from "system degradation" and the startup process will begin to take longer and longer to complete. After several years of everyday use, you might find that your computer takes 15 minutes or even longer to boot up. I have seen computers that take as much as 30 minutes to boot up! For the employee, its annoying to have to wait that long for their computer to boot up so they can start work. For the employer, it's a tremendous waste of money to pay an employee to take a 30 minute coffee break as soon as they get to work and wait for their computer to boot up! If you don't turn it off when you leave, you don't have to boot it up when you return in the morning!

None of my computers are ever turned off except to reboot them to clear memory cache and help speed things up about once a week. You should consider doing the same.