

The Windows 95 System Clock on PC or Notebook Shows Inaccurate or Cumulative Loss of Time

There are two system clocks on a PC. One clock is hardware and the other is software. (If your computer is connected to a network, the problem may be network related. You should contact your network administrator in that case.)

In many cases incorrect time settings are the result of running software applications which affect the Windows 95 system (software) clock. Shutting down and restarting the computer will reset the Windows 95 clock to the correct time from the hardware clock chip mounted on the computer's motherboard.

The Windows 95 system (software) clock was not designed for precise time measurement. If you require exact, correct time displays you should use third-party software designed for that purpose. See Timekeeping Note below.

If the time is not being reset correctly when restarting your computer, the problem may be hardware related. To verify that the time error is hardware related:

1. Set the system time in Windows 95 correctly.
2. Shut the computer off for a long period of time (overnight, for example.)
3. If the Windows 95 system time is incorrect when the system is restarted then the problem may be related to the system's real-time hardware clock. You will often receive an error message on start-up requesting you to reset date and time if the hardware clock is not working.

Timekeeping Note: While your computer's hardware clock is more accurate than the Windows 95 system clock, if you require precise, accurate timekeeping from your computer you will need a third-party solution. Refer to the following websites for information on timekeeping and your computer:

US Naval Observatory:

<http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/time.html>

The Time Service Department, U.S. Naval Observatory is the official source of time used in the United States. This site gives some background in the various ways time is measured and used. It provides a very accurate clock reference.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST):

<http://www.bldrdoc.gov/timefreq/pubs/hownist/hownis.htm>

Excellent source of information on your computer's clocks. Explains the difference between hardware and software clocks.

<http://www.bldrdoc.gov/timefreq/javaclck.htm>

If your PC supports Java, this site shows a window which compares the your local clock with NIST clock. You can download the Internet sync program mentioned below or a different program that connects to the NIST directly via modem.

<http://www.bldrdoc.gov/timefreq/service/nts.htm>

This site provides a free time sync program that can automatically update your PC to match the NIST clock. The update can be manual or can be set to update automatically as often as hourly. It is designed to be used over the Internet.