

COMPUTER CLOCK WON'T KEEP TIME!

An Omen of Bad Things to Come

**Beginners' Kaffee Klatch
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May 31, 2008**

If your computer clock is no longer keeping time, sometimes losing a few minutes, other times a couple hours, it may mean that your battery is on its last throes. So what's the big deal?

In addition to the clock, the battery powers the CMOS chip (Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor) and BIOS settings (Basic Input/Output System). You'll see a reference to these settings when you boot up. It will say something like, "To enter Setup, press Delete."

The settings tell the computer what equipment is present, and how it interacts. When the battery conks out, the settings are lost and your computer is in trouble.

The battery is located on the motherboard. If you're lucky, it will be about the size of a nickel, and be held in place by a small clip. You can easily replace it. Check your computer manual. If you're unlucky, it will look like a barrel. It will be soldered in. You'll probably want a computer shop to replace it.

Some people advocate changing the battery every few years, just to be safe. (The typical lifespan of a battery is from five to seven years.) That's fine if it's the easy kind; if it's soldered, wait until it dies.

Regardless, to protect yourself, print out the BIOS settings. (Get to your BIOS by tapping either the DELETE key or the F2 key as your computer begins to boot up.) Go into Setup and press Print Screen. The settings have to be reset after a battery change, and you'll need that information.