And on to Plan C

Last week, my “new” laptop was in the shop. Apparently, the hard drive was failing and I couldn’t start up or use the computer in any way. I had already deployed my Plan B— using my old laptop (which is really ancient by computer standards). Then, on Friday morning, the old laptop spontaneously decided to shut itself off. I turned it back on, and after a couple of minutes, it turned off again. Suddenly, I had no way of sending out a document I had to send or finish the blog post I was writing (it is in the drafts, and will be published soon).

Now what? I hadn’t heard back from the repair people to let me know what was wrong with the new computer, so I didn’t know if it could be fixed or how long it would take.

What could I do until I got a working computer back? Develop a Plan C.

Where could I access a computer? There’s always the computers at the library. In a pinch, that would do. But not as a real solution. First of all, you can’t be there for unlimited hours and there’s no privacy.

Then, I decided to look up computer rentals (using my smartphone). There are several companies that will rent you computers and AV equipment. For a daily/weekly/monthly fee they will ship you a laptop that has Microsoft Office and boom, you are back in business. It’s not cheap, but it is certainly better than losing business because you can’t work.

Knowing the option to rent a laptop was available, I felt more in control. Then I remembered my former Plan B mini-laptop from a few years ago when I had a similar problem. I dusted it off, and started it up. It needed updates, but I was able to at least access the Internet on a bigger screen than my smartphone.

By the end of the day on Friday, the computer repair people called to let me know what was wrong. By Saturday I would have my computer back, with a new hard drive installed.

The moral of the story is simple: you must have backup plans. Not just Plan B, but Plan C and maybe even Plan D. You never know what can happen, especially with technology. A few weeks ago I told you about how Verizon cut off my cable and Internet. Plan B then was the smartphone, and Plan C was the library.

Having two computers be down at the same time has made me re-think my technology needs. Here are my new resolutions:

-Find an IT person to be on call for me. For years, I had a techie friend who would help me out, but that’s not a solid solution.

-Backup files regularly. Always. For the record, I did do this, but not as conscientiously as I could.

-Get another computer. You must always have a secondary option, especially if like me, you work for yourself and your work requires a computer.

It’s going to take some time to get everything back to normal, so if I haven’t written you back, be patient or write me again!