p-TIPS

Taking care of technology (Using laptops in hot weather)

Laptops and other portable electronic gear are now ubiquitous. Most businesspeople, SME owners, and students wouldn't think of leaving home without at least one portable electronic device. And while many APO member countries experience warm, humid weather throughout the year, all can expect at least a slight rise in the mercury during the next few months. Upcoming school holidays also mean that more people will be traveling but depending on their laptop computers to stay in touch, entertain themselves, or get work done. To avoid decreased productivity due to laptop meltdown or lost data, Catherine Roseberry of mobileoffice.about.com gives this sensible advice:

1) Safe temperature range. Most laptops function well at 10–35°C. Let yours come to room temperature before using if it moves from the hot outdoors into air-conditioning, and vice versa.

2) Hot cars. A laptop left in a closed car in hot weather can damage both the case and internal circuitry.

3) Bright sun. Never expose electronic gear to direct sunlight. If you must work outside in the sunlight, invest in a laptop hood for the computer and a glare screen for your eyes.

4) Humidity. Relative humidity of 10–80% may be safe, but drier is better when it comes to portable computers. Moisture causes damage that may not be apparent until it's too late.

5) Take it out. A removable hard drive to store data is easier to protect from the sunlight, heat, and humidity than the whole laptop. Your data are more secure, too.

6) Weather watching. Hot weather brings more storms and possible power outages. Surge protectors, power inverters, spare batteries, and nonelectric battery chargers can keep your computer productive if you must be working on it during severe conditions.

7) Keep it cool. Laptop stands disperse the heat they generate, some of which have fans, and help mobile computers work better and last longer in hot conditions.

8) Pack it wisely. Buy a well-padded carrying case that fits properly and is waterproof. Make sure that all the necessary mobile gear (batteries, etc.) fits inside too without banging against the laptop when in motion.