Computer OFF or ON

Q. A friend leaves his computer and broadband modem on 24/7 and he's always having difficulty with his internet. Should one leave it on or turn it off periodically?

A. Your friend shares this opinion with thousands of others. However, there are just as many who do not share this opinion.

Here are some pros and cons:

1. When the computer is left on all the time, heat is generated which is the greatest detriment to the computer, especially if the insides of that computer is not cleaned regularly to get rid of the dust buildup or if it is in a 'closed' space.
2. Power is being used. The hard drive is running....some say a restart is just as hard on the hard drive. I doubt that.
3. When left on, the internet is immediately accessible if the modem is also left ON. However, you are also leaving your computer exposed to hackers unless you are using WPA encryption on the router, if using a router. WEP is no longer safe enough as there are gadgets that can be purchased to give them the WEP code if they are within range to your wireless network. If not using a computer powerup password, an experienced hacker can access a computer and use it. Many "bad" companies do just this to send out spam and porn using an IP Address that is not their own. Others use this method so they don't have to buy many computers. If your's is just sitting there not being used and they can gain access, they save many $$$$. I don't know how widespread such illegal access is being used, but it is being done. Sometimes from prisons.
4. I am told by sophisticated, experienced IT professionals that the computer should be restarted at least once a day.

As for me:
1. I leave my computer on all day....but if I'm going to be away from it to play golf or do several hours of work,etc. I press the off button on my modem. This limits outside access and makes me feel more comfortable even though I do use WPA encrpytion...
2. I shut my computer down at night to give that hard drive a rest, my electric meter a rest but most of all to stops those fans that are pulling in dust, spiderwebs(I'm not high on cleaning the corners) and dog hair (I have a pooch).
3. Having immediate access to the internet saves maybe 1 min if my computer is running but modem is off...I can wait.

Hope this helps...but I wouldn't push anyone wanting to leave their computer on all the time...the problems your friend is having is most likely due to OTHER user problems and not to leaving the computer and modem on 24/7.

One little thing that may help is for him to learn to reset the modem if he's sometimes not able to get online.   Who knows why it loses these occasionally, but it happens to me about 3 times a year and takes about 10 min to fix (I'm slow).

Reset the broadband's modem:
1. Shutdown computer. Turn off the modem and unplug the power to the router, if using a router. DO this in the order named.
2. Wait 1 min.
3. Now, turn on the modem and wait for all lights (won't be an activity light yet). Next plug in the router (if using one) wait for lights.
Then power up the computer. Be patient, wait until it's fully loaded.
4. Click the big E to bring up Internet Explorer. The home page should appear indicating the correct IP Address has again been assigned and you're reset and ready to go.
Note: Do not push the RESET button as this deletes all the info set by your broadband at time of setup but doesn't put it back.