**THING EVERY NEW COMPUTER USER SHOULD KNOW**

**By David korokok**

It’s normal to be the first time you sit front of a computer. You commit the same mistakes all beginners make, and you also worry about committing fatal error. Your palms perspire when you reach for the keyboard. You’re convin ced you’ll never get it right.

Learning to operate a personal computer or PC is a little like driving a car. It seems hard at first

But you soon gain confidence at controls. Before you know it, you’re flying down the road (or

through the document) at 60 miles per hour!

TO gain that kind of confidence, you must first need to learn some basic “do’s” and “don’ts”. Here is a list of the top things every computer user should know.

**SAVE YOUR WORK FREQUENTLY**  Make it a practice to save your document whenever you have typed enough information that you couldn’t confidentially duplicate. For example, the night before the term ended, I was typing paper. “The Political Shakespeare”, on my PC when my roommate bounced off the keyboard and my paper vanished. I vowed to never again type more than a few lines without saving. As my father-in-law says, “Never risk something you can’t afford to lose”

**BACK UP YOUR WORK** My uncle was typing his family history is carefully annotated chapters. After 278 pages he was almost finished. As he was saving the last chapter to his hard drive, a message appeared on his screen: FATAL DISK ERROR IN DRIVE C. He paled and sank back on his chair. Backing up your data leaves nothing to chance. Never trust your hard disk to always be there for you. Make it a weekly habit to always back up your files to floppy disk, move often it the files are really important.

**ORGANIZE YOUR HARD DISK.**  Computer files can become very cluttered. Organizing your files in directories can remind you where certain files are located. To do this, you need to be familiar with the following DOS commands: MD means make directory, CD means change directory and RD means remove directory. Using descriptive names when crating directories (such as memos and docs) can prove to be very helpful in organizing your hard disk. Devote some time to these humble commands and sooner or later, you’ll be thankful that you did.

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| **EXIT APPLICATION PROPERLY.** Most applications create two types of temporary files when you use them. One file is stored on the hard drive and the other is stored in random access memory (RAM). If you turn off the computer without exiting properly, the program or application does not have a chance to delete those temporary files stored on the hard disk. Most temporary files take very little or no space on your hard disk but they will remain on your hard disk until you delete them manually. |

**HANDLE YOUR FLOPPY DISKS PROPERLY.** Floppy disks are sensitive. When your computer reads a disk, it’s like reading Braille on a roller coaster, one bump and you’re off the track. Here are a few rules when handling disks:

1. Don’t expose disks to the sun or any extreme temperature
2. Don’t bend the disks; folds and wrinkles can damage data.
3. Keep magnets away from them. Data is stored on disks magnetically; a magnet can easily corrupt it.
4. Keep disks snug and dry when not in use. Moisture can damage disks as well as disk drives.
5. Keep disks in a clean, dust-free environment. Treat disk with care and they’ll store data faithfully.

**KNOW HOW TO RECOVER A DELETED FILE.** Accidentally deleted file? If you have DOS 5.0 or higher, immediate help is available. When DOS deletes a file, it isn’t automatically erased. Rather, it’s tagged so that the space it takes up can be reused. In order to recover the deleted file, you will have to do it before it’s actually overwritten by new data. In other words, do it immediately! The longer you wait, the greater the risk of losing the file forever. Using the UNDELETE command which comes with DOS 5.0 or higher, you may recover the deleted file, you will be required to supply the first letter of the file. Users of older versions of DOS will have to rely the file recovery programs like the Norton Utilities and PC Tools.

**PROTECT YOUR COMPUTER FROM THE WEATHER.** Powerful as they are, computers are not invincible. It’s amazing what a single drop of water can do to a disk drive. Here are the few tips to keep your computer safe from the elements:

1. After storing your computer in cold temperature, wait until it’s had the chance to return to room temperature before tuning it on.
2. Keep windows closed whenever the computer is stored to keep dust and dirt of your computer’s delicate inner components.
3. Unplug your computer during lightning storms to avoid power surges. A power surge can damage more than just your data! Using an uninterruptible power system or UPS can protect your system from electrical storms and power outages.

**KNOW HOW TO REBOOT AFTER A COMPUTER LOCKUP.**  My

former roommate called me one day and frantically explained that his computer had locked up.

I told him to try a “warm boot” first, since it was the quickest method. To warm boot your

computer, press CTRL+ALT+DEL or use the RESET button if you have one. A warm boot will

only work if the processor isn’t locked up. Otherwise, “cold booting” is necessary. To cold boot,

turn off your computer and wait for at least 20 seconds before turning it back on.

**DON’T REMOVE FLOPPY DISK.** You wouldn’t step out of the car while it’s moving very

Fast. Likewise, you shouldn’t snatch a floppy disk out of the disk drive when it’s spinning at

3600 rpm. If the drive light is on, it means that the drive as well as halt any valuable transfer of

information. Do remove them only when you will no longer use your computer.

**BE NICE TO YOUR HARD DISK.** Whenever the computer is switched on, the hard disk is

spinning. When you turn off the computer, wait until comes to a complete stop (usually 20

seconds) before turning it back on.