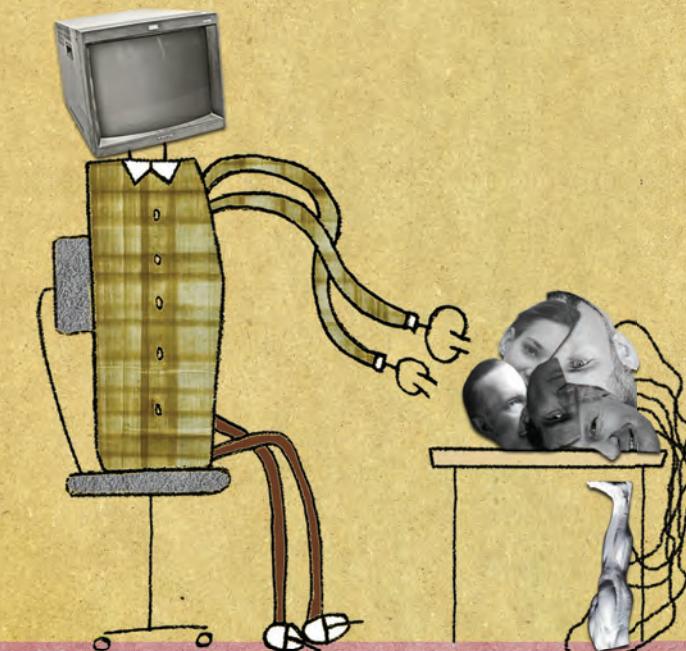
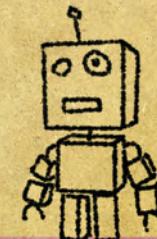
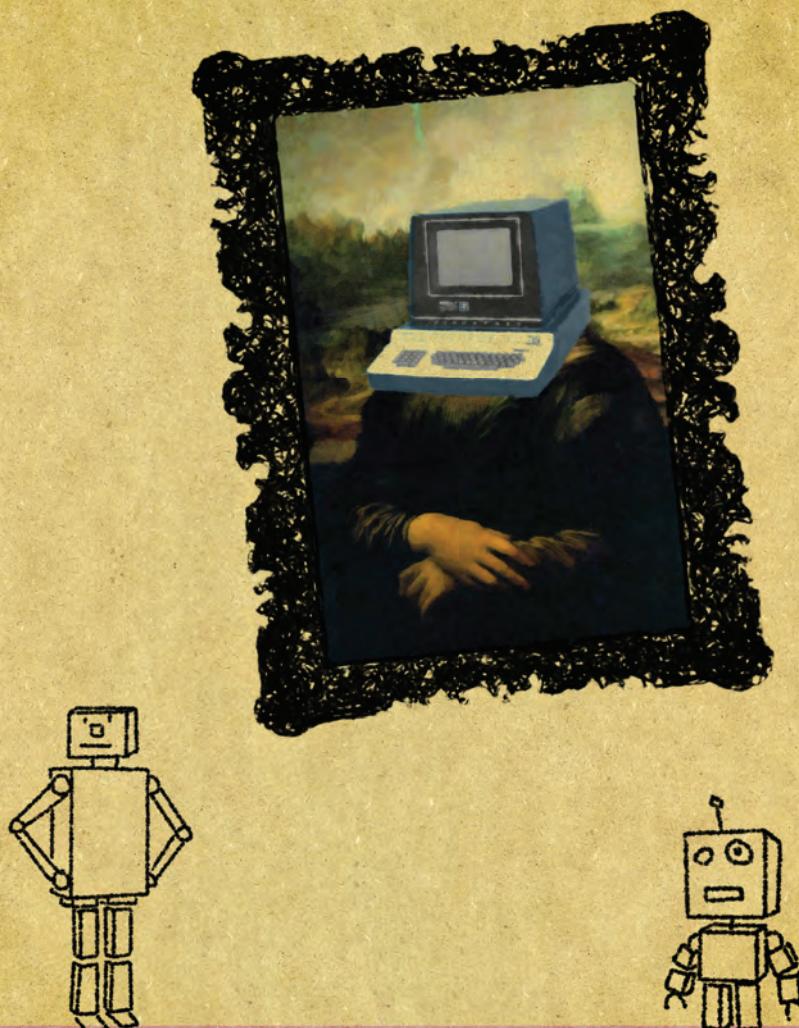


Computer You

your guide to
a high-tech
relationship



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/>

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So, you are interested in using a computer. Maybe you have friends or family with personal computers and want to communicate to them via the virtual world; perhaps you have doubts about using computers and would like a little more information; or computers are completely new to you and are just exploring new things.

Whatever your reasons are, the aim of this guide is to take you from knowing nothing about computers to accessing and using a computer on the internet so that you can then go on to learn through experience; by far the best way of improving your skills in the digital world.



The guide is organised into 4 primary sections with an extra section containing a computer-glossary and information on where to go when you have finished this short introduction on computers.

We will be looking at...

WHY would you want to use a computer?

WHERE can you access a computer?

WHAT is a computer?

HOW do you use a computer?

INTERNET how to get connected.

GLOSSARY basic computer terms.

Do not worry with the pressures of actually obtaining access to a computer just yet, the purpose of the following pages is to inform so that you can make your own decisions on whether a computer is right for you.



WHY?

Before we tackle the concept of using, or even identifying a computer, we will look at the possible reasons why you might be interested in computers and the many benefits they present.

Communication

Today, one of the most common reasons people use computers is to communicate instantly or by correspondence. A computer has the potential to be a telephone, a written letter and much more. This can all be done easily with the most basic of computers and an internet connection.

Information

Another way in which people use computers is to store, organise and access information. A computer can record important documents, photographs and many other things. The internet opens up a global society for you to engage and share with, from the smallest niche subcultures to the largest online communities and a wealth of easily accessible information.

Recreation

Radio, television and games experienced on a computer is similar to the everyday equivalents without the burden of having to purchase and manage a large array of equipment. With the advantage that a laptop computer can be completely portable, you can enjoy your favourite film or song anywhere. The internet can also provide you with on demand viewing of many shows you might watch on TV as well as content unique to the internet.

Today, computers are an accepted way of life and their constant development is making them more and more accessible to users. Even if you have no intention to use a computer or the internet, knowing of their potential can give you more options in the future.



WHERE?

Now that you are aware what computers are for, we will discuss how you might go about obtaining access to a computer.

There are generally two methods for accessing a computer; buying a computer to use where and when you want, or going to a library or internet café to use or rent a computer.

Rent

You might have access to a computer at your local library, usually free of charge. If not, there are a number of 'internet cafés' placed around town centres. Both forms of access will grant you many of the basic functions you would need, such as word processing and internet browsing. However, a public computer will limit what you can store and give you little privacy.

Buy

Purchasing a computer isn't as complicated as some people might think. Yes, there are plenty of options out there and some are better than others, but because of the rate that technology has developed, even the most basic model will satisfy the average user's needs. It really is up to how much you want to spend when considering buying a computer. Another common misconception of computers is the running cost; software and general maintenance can cost you nothing as there is an abundant amount of free resources on the internet.

The best way of finding a computer right for you is to try them in a library or at a computer shop. Today, the most import items to consider are the screen size and whether or not you want something portable or static. We will discuss more about what makes up a computer in the next section.



WHAT?

I'm sure that before you spend any time or money on a computer you want to know a little about what it actually is; the bits and pieces that make up both the actual computer and experience.

There are typically two types of computer:

Desktop

A desktop computer will sit under or on top of a desk and be plugged into a range of peripherals, like printers, mice, monitors, etc. A basic setup will include the following:

COMPUTER A 'box' that computes and relays the information to a monitor.

MONITOR Essentially a television that displays visuals generated by the computer

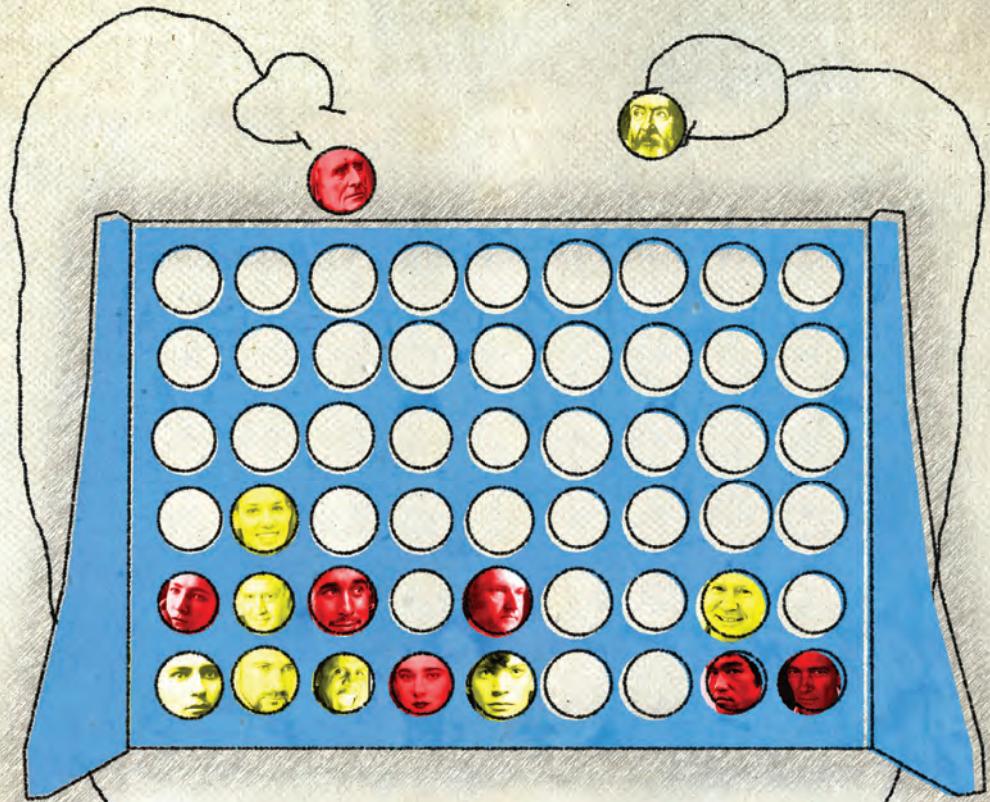
KEYBOARD One of the two objects a user will interact with to control the computer

MOUSE Another object a user will use to control a computer

Laptop

A laptop combines all of the elements of a desktop computer with the advantage that it can be completely portable and run off of a rechargeable battery.

The type of computer you buy will normally be dictated by personal preference. As a beginner user either type will allow you to explore their potential and fulfil your needs.



HOW?

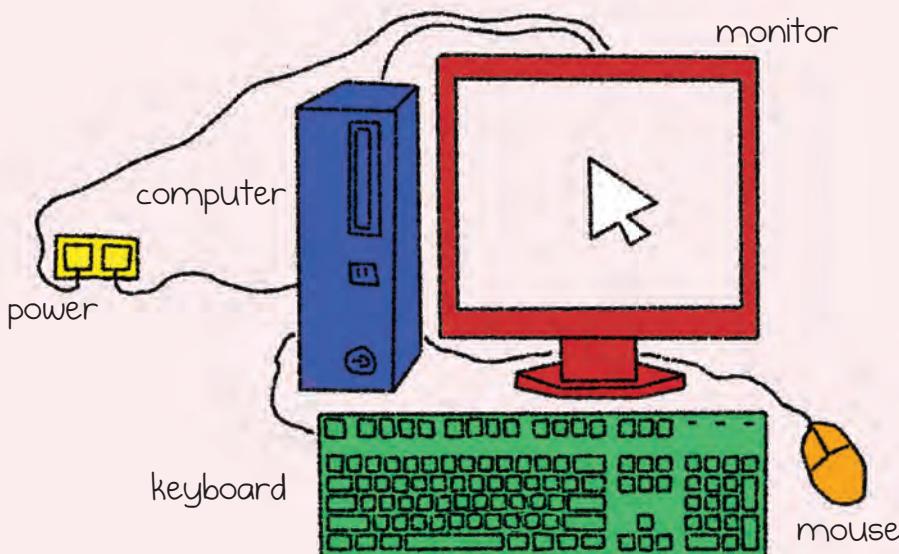
In this section we will cover the basic principles of using a computer; laptop or desktop. We will cover, step by step, the process of setting up a computer for the first time and navigating the internet.

1. SETUP

To set up a laptop computer you will need to do little more than connect the power cable to the laptop. This can differ between models, but the concept remains the same.

However, to set up a desktop you must ensure you have the parts we identified in the previous section at hand. Do not worry about other peripherals you might have (speakers, printers), you can plug those in later if you wish.

This diagram shows what should be connected to what.





2. Power On

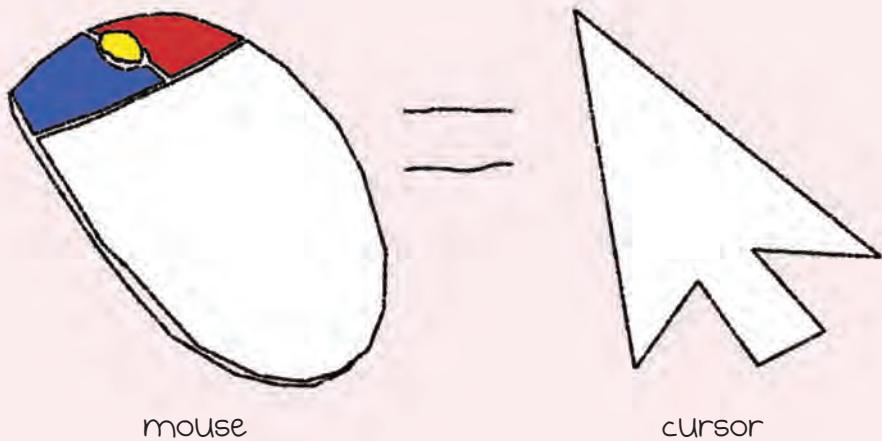
Both a laptop and desktop will have a power on button. Press it to turn on your computer. Lights will flash and it will start to display things on the screen. Once on, the computer may have the tendency to go to 'sleep', this is to save power and usually involves the screen turning off. If this happens, move your mouse or press the keys on your keyboard.

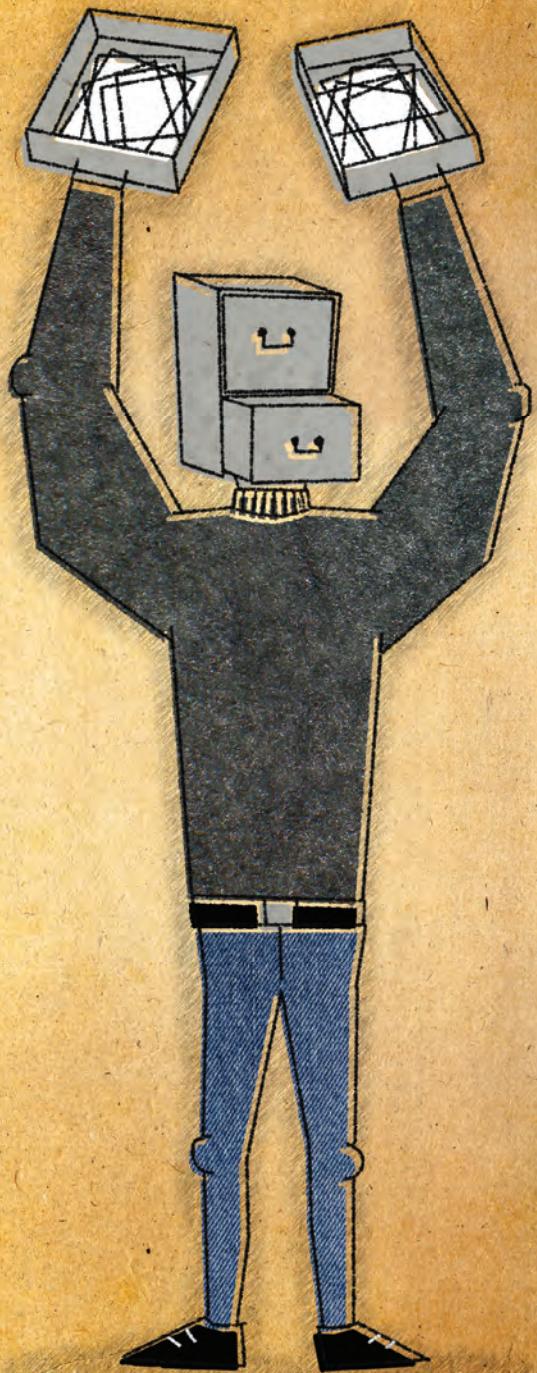
3. Display

The computer will take a minute or so to 'boot' up. Once this process has finished the monitor will display various things depending on whether the computer is new or not. If the computer is brand new and this is the first time you have used it, you will be prompted to fill in some details and create a 'user name' and 'password'. Otherwise you will be taken straight to the 'desktop' or a 'login' page.

4. Interact

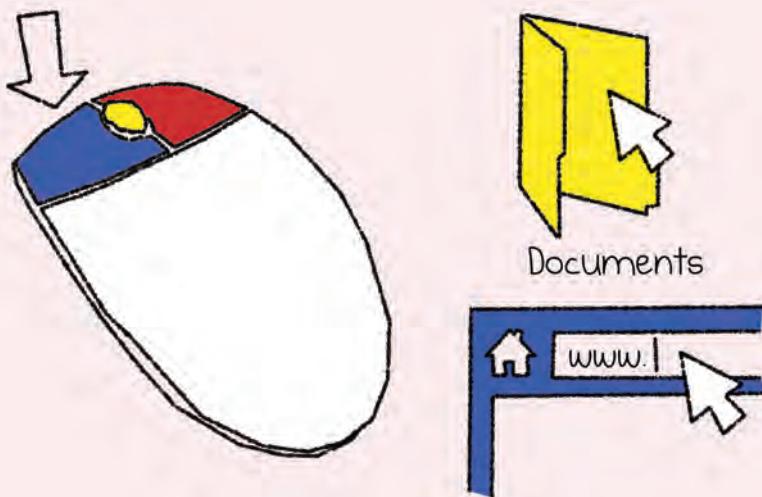
To interact with your computer you will use both the keyboard and mouse (track pad on a laptop). The mouse will be your primary tool for navigating the computer. The physical mouse will directly control the mouse on the monitor (or 'cursor').





5. Commands

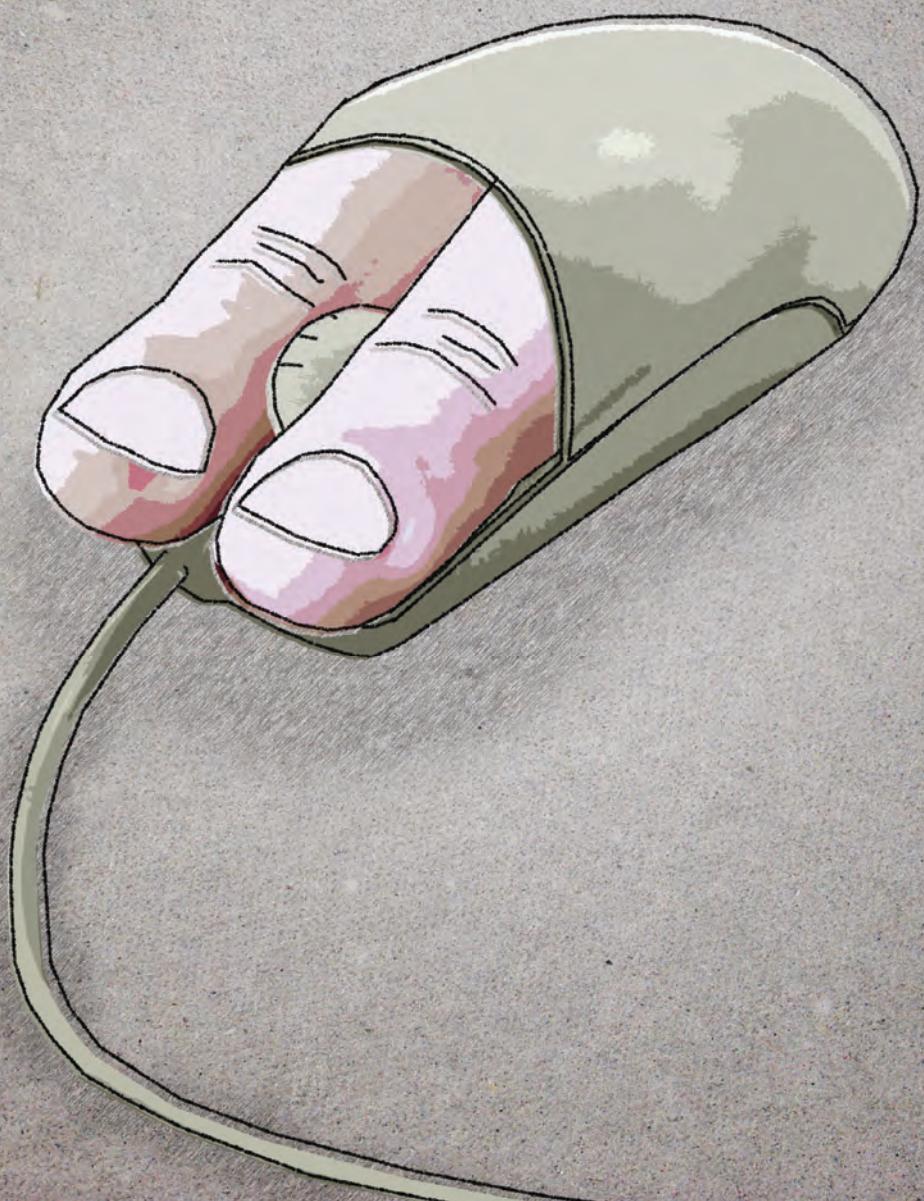
Moving, pointing, clicking and dragging are all actions you can perform with a mouse to issue commands to the computer. Move the mouse up and the cursor will move up on the monitor. The aim is to move the cursor over the objects you want to interact with on the display, like ‘text boxes’, ‘icons’, ‘task bars’, ‘buttons’, etc.



Using the keyboard will rely a little more on the context of the action you are trying to perform on the computer. For example, you will use a keyboard to type words in ‘text boxes’ or ‘programs’, but not necessarily use it to navigate the computer.

6. Software

‘Software’, or ‘programs’, or ‘applications’ are what you will be interacting with on the computer. The system which you use to navigate ‘files and ‘folders’ is a piece of software that is generally referred to as the ‘desktop’. The piece of software you use to access the ‘internet’ and ‘email’ is called a ‘browser’. They all work in a similar way but do different things. All you need to remember is that each piece of software operates in its own ‘window’.



INTERNET!

A computer really reaches its potential when it is connected to the internet. You can communicate with billions of people and engage with a wealth of material, so it is worth knowing a little on how to get connected.

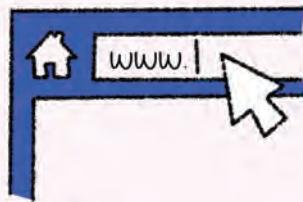
The first thing you will need is an internet connection. Usually your phone service provider can supply you with a 'broadband' connection and set you up at home. Once your computer is connected via a cable or 'wireless' connection you are ready.

Browser

Your browser is what you will use to navigate the internet. It can be activated by clicking on an 'e' icon either on your 'desktop', 'Start menu' or 'task bar'.

Address Bar

Once the browser is open you should see an 'address bar' at the top of the 'window'. You can enter web addresses into this box by clicking into it and typing the address with your keyboard.



Search Box

Sometimes you will be able to type the kind of thing you are looking for into your address bar and a 'search engine' will show you the most relevant results. If the address bar does not do this you might have to type your query into a 'search box' which is similar to an address bar and operates the same.

To learn more about how to use a computer and the internet type into your address bar: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/>

GLOSSARY

active program or window The application or window at the front (foreground) on the monitor

application A program in which you do your work

backup A copy of a file or disk you make for archiving purposes

boot To start up or turn on a computer

bug A programming error that causes a program to behave in an unexpected way

clipboard A portion of memory where applications hold information which is to be moved, as in word processing where text is “copied” and then “pasted”

context menu In most applications, right clicking will bring this up. It is a command menu unique to the program you are in

copy Temporarily record a piece of highlighted data to be ‘pasted’ later

CPU Central Processing Unit. The processing chip that is the “brains” of a computer

crash A system malfunction in which the computer stops working and has to be restarted

cursor The pointer, usually arrow or cross shaped, which is controlled by the mouse

data (the plural of datum) information processed by a computer.

desktop the default window that holds the task bar and important desktop shortcuts

document A file you create, as opposed to the application which created it

download To download data from the internet or a database

drag and drop To move the mouse while its button is being pressed and then to depress the button 'letting go' of whatever the mouse was holding

driver A file on a computer which tells it how to communicate with an add-on piece of equipment (like a printer)

file The generic word for an application, document, control panel or other computer data

folder An electronic subdirectory which contains files

font A typeface that contains the characters of an alphabet or some other letter forms

freeze A system error which causes the cursor to lock in place

gig A gigabyte or 1024 megabytes

hard drive A large capacity storage device made of multiple disks housed in a rigid case

highlight To select by clicking once on an icon or by highlighting text in a document

icon A graphic symbol for an application, file or folder.

IT Information Technology

installer Software used to install a program on your hard drive

keyboard shortcut A combination of keystrokes that performs some function otherwise found in a pulldown menu

kilobyte 1024 bytes

launch Start an application

meg A megabyte or 1024 kilobytes

memory The amount of RAM a computer has installed

menu A list of program commands listed by topic

menu bar The horizontal bar across the top a window that lists the menus

multitasking Running more than one application in memory at the same time

operating system The system software that controls the computer

optical disk A high-capacity storage medium that is read by a laser light

paste To insert text, or other material, from the clipboard or copy buffer

PC Personal Computer

peripheral An add-on component to your computer, such as a printer or scanner

resize box The small square at the lower right corner of a window which, when dragged, resizes the window

save To write a file onto a disk

save as (a File menu item) to save a previously saved file in a new location and/or with a new name

scroll To shift the contents of a window to bring hidden items into view

scroll bar A bar at the bottom or right side of a window that allows scrolling

shut down To turn off the computer safely.

software Files on disk that contain instructions for a computer

tool bar A bar containing commands and tools

upload To send a file from one computer to another computer or database through a network or the internet