



Bug-Bytes

THE MONTHLY ONLINE NEWSLETTER OF *COMPUTER BUGS*

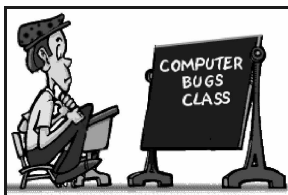
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BACK TO THE BASICS

DID YOU SKIP SOME OF THESE BASICS?

Whether you are a newbie, a very advanced computer user, or somewhere in between, we all have one thing in common. We all started with zero knowledge of how to use a computer.



Did you skip learning some of the basic steps along the way? I'll review computer basics in this and in later articles. You may pick up some tips and may even say "I didn't know that!"

SOME BASIC COMPUTER TERMS



The following are some of the more common computer terms that you need to understand. However, you can go to <http://www.webopedia.com/> for ready access to information related to any computer term. You may want to add the web site to your browser Favorites (book-

marks). That way, you are only a click away when some term comes up that stumps you.

ANSI and ASCII text is text that is unformatted and not written in "garbage character" (like #*%) computer language. You can directly view documents written in ASCII text without a special program to interpret the characters.

Most documents, including this newsletter, are written using a proportionally spaced font (non ANSI or ASCII text) to enhance the readability of text. This is in contrast to a monospaced font, such as Courier, that uses the same spacing between characters for an "I" and a "O," or a "W" as it does for a lowercase "a" and an uppercase "A."

Compare the last sentence in the paragraph above using a proportionally spaced *Times New Roman* with the sentence at top right using *Courier New* as the typeface (font).

This is in contrast to a monospaced font, such as Courier, that uses the same spacing between characters for an "I" and a "O," and a lowercase "a" and an uppercase "A."

The alt key in combination with one or more other keys acts like the shift key on steroids. That is alt-key combinations are powerful shortcuts that perform special acts for an application. **For example**, you can assign an unused key combination to open a particular application. To do that, right-click on an application's icon and select Properties, Shortcut, Shortcut key. Press the key combination you want to use to open that application.

Applications, specialized computer programs that perform the work you want to do on your computer. Examples include word processing, antivirus and antispyware program, file viewers, graphics programs, e-mail, browser, and photo editing and managing programs among many others.

Boot, what you do when you start your computer is called *booting* the computer. The boot sequence runs a series of processes designed to get your computer ready to work by loading the operating system and doing some checking.

Browser, what you use to surf the web, to read news, and to interact with web sites around the world. Thus, to reach the World Wide Web. Internet Explorer and Firefox are the two most popular browsers, but Google Chrome, Opera, Safari, and Avant are other good examples.

Bytes: A sequence of adjacent bits, usually eight, operated on as a unit by a computer. Eight bits can be used to form characters, numbers, and other items.

Bloatware is a term that refers to paid advertisements that computer vendors install on new computers. For instance, you might see a bunch of links for different internet service providers, links to trial versions of software, etcetera. Monies from these advertisers enable the vendors to quote lower prices for their hardware. You see, bloatware is not all bad. You can go to www.pcdecrapifier.com to remove bloatware from your computer. **CD/DVD drives** are mechanical devices that read and write CD, DVD, and Blu Ray disks to store and read data, music, video, and movies.

Such devices write to media using a laser. The media comes in write-once or rewriteable disks and in various capacities. Blu Ray disks hold the most data and CDs the least.

Clipboard, a place in your computer's memory that stores images captured by the *Prt Scr* (Print Screen) key. When you press the *Prt Scr* key, your computer captures a picture of everything shown on your screen and saves it in a file.

CPU stands for **C**entral **P**rocess-**ing** **U**nit. It is a major computer chip that is the brains of your computer. Sometimes people refer mistakenly to the whole computer, as in a tower computer, as the CPU. An Intel Core I7 CPU chip is shown above at the right.



Cursor, the graphical pointer that moves around on your screen as you move your mouse. The shape, color, and style of the cursor symbol can be customized from the Control Panel, Mouse, Properties, Pointers.

Cursor blink rate, is a feature of the keyboard's settings available from the Control Panel. (Start, Control Panel, Keyboard). Choose how fast or slow the cursor blinks.

Defragment, is the process of consolidating all of the pieces of a file so that they are contiguous. This speeds up reading files. Windows comes with its own disk defragmenter, and in Windows 7, you can set it to run automatically on the schedule that you select. You may prefer a third party defragmenter that gives you more control over the defragmenting process. Defragmenters are available in free and paid versions.

Right-click on a drive, Properties, Tools, and Defragment Now to manually defragment your drive or drives.

Ethernet, uses cable with a telephone style connector at each end to connect wired devices together. For example, an Ethernet cable might connect two computers together that are in close proximity to share one internet connection.



Esc, is the keyboard abbreviation for the Escape Key. Press the Esc key to undo the last few steps. The Esc key can also serve as a shortcut for Abort, Exit, No, Quit, or Cancel.

Function keys, F1 through F12, are arranged in three sets of four keys along the top of your keyboard. These are another set of special keys. See Help from Start, Help,

General Keyboard Shortcuts. Or, press the F1 key. F1 calls up Help information. F5 is used to refresh the information on your screen. The function keys may be used singly or in combination with other keys. For example, Alt-F4 closes an open program, such as your word processor.

Hard drives, are mechanical or solid state devices, that store data on computers. They come in internal and external configurations.

Home page, is the starting page every time you open your personal browser. You can choose from a number of different web sites to be your homepage. The most popular and usual homepages include Yahoo, MSN, and Google. However, you can use your ISPs homepage, the home page of your computer maker, or any other web page of your choice. Most users choose an all-in-one home page that offers them the current news.

ISP, stands for Internet Service Provider. You pay for access to the internet from someone such as AOL, Charter, Verizon, or Quest.

Malware, comes from the Spanish word mal for bad, and the French word, mal, for illness. It is a catchall term for malicious software. Such software may include viruses, Trojan horses, so call spyware, adware (call home), worm,s ransomware (asks for payment to remove programs that they installed without your permission), scareware (scares you to get you to buy products you do not need), and root kits (software designed to alter files and to conceal their traces).

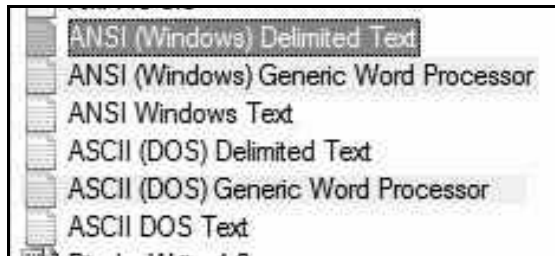


Each of these exploits is aimed at mischief on your computer. Some are hostile, some compromise your personal data leading to privacy issues, some are intrusive, some are meant to damage your computer by deleting programs or by interfering with legitimate programs such as your internet security program.

Notepad, is a stripped down word processor that comes with Windows. It saves its files in plain-text files. Such files have a filename followed by the three-letter extension **txt** to indicate that it is a text file. You can view **txt** files by just clicking on the text file. Whereas with Microsoft Word files, you need either Word, a special viewer, or a competitive product that recognizes Word type files. Try it!

Microsoft Word, stores its files in document format indicated by DOC or DOCX as the filename extension. You have to have Word or a similar program to be able to read those files.

In word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect for that matter, these are the **text** file variations you can choose from the *File, Save As* sub menu. These text choices are in addition to the long list of proprietary formatted file formats.



Prt Scr, is the **Print Screen** key on your keyboard. See Clipboard in this newsletter.



Router Back and Front

Router refers to a switch that automatically routes signals between computers connected to the router. The router can connect to computers via ethernet cable, or if it is a wireless router, it can connect wirelessly to computers on your personal network.

Ribbon cable, is a wide, flat, cable that connects old style hard drives (IDE.ATA) to the motherboard. See the screen shot at the right. Each ribbon cable can handle two hard drives. One hard drive operates as the primary (master) drive and the other as the secondary (slave) drive.



Ribbon Cable



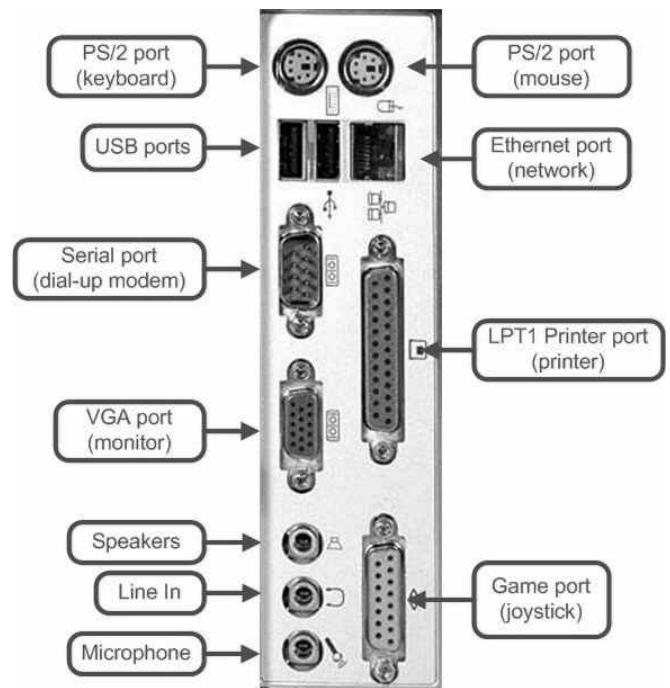
SATA, (Serial ATA) is the hard drive standard. It uses a very narrow and relatively thin cable between the motherboard and each hard drive. The thinner cables provide better cooling because they do not restrict airflow inside a computer's case. SATA 1 can handle data transfers

in both directions (sending and receiving) of 1.5Gbit/second (Gigabits). SATA 2.0 can handle up to 3.Gb/s and SATA 3 up to 6Gb/s. Currently, most computers use SATA 2, but SATA 3 will probably dominate in all new computers..

Hard disk performance is an important factor in the Windows Experience Index.

Ports, connections on the back or front of a computer, such as a USB port for a printer or keyboard, or an Ethernet port for a network cable. There are ports for the keyboard and mouse, December 17, 2011 ports for speakers, and ports for the monitor. They are different shapes to make it easy to match the port with the connector that will fit that port.

Power button is an alternate way you turn off your



Sample computer ports

computer, but normally, only if clicking on Start, Shut-down, does not completely shutdown your computer. Then, hold the power button in for five or six seconds until the computer completely shuts down (emergency only) The button is also used to turn on your computer. Not properly shutting down your computer can result in lost or corrupted data.

Right-click your mouse. That is, click the right button on your mouse. On a standard mouse, that brings up a context sensitive list of the things you can do in relation to the item

you selected with your mouse – with a single left-click. Note, if you are left-handed, you can program your mouse to reverse how the left and right buttons work. That is, you can program which are the primary and secondary buttons on your mouse.

Search Engines, are software that are designed to search for data either on your computer, or on the internet. *Windows Search* comes with the operating system. However, you may choose to use third-party products such as Agent Ransack, Copernic, Search Everything, or Google Desktop Search to search your hard drive, and something like Yahoo or Google as your search engine for general web searches. You can use your favorite search See this site for a list of possibilities. <http://www.virtualfreesites.com/search.html>.

Be aware that specialized search engines exist that enable you to search for a narrow segment of data such as music, industry specific, country or area, religion, movies, business and finance, sports, and medicine.

Scroll, or scrolling, the process of moving rolling text up, down, or sideways so that you can read from the top to bottom, or sideways from one edge of the screen to another edge.

Shift, (key) on your keyboard functions like the shift key on a typewriter. You press the shift key plus another key to gain access to the character shown on the top of that particular key. For instance, Shift-5 will type the % sign.

Tab, on your computer keyboard is like the tab key on a typewriter. It moves the cursor one tab stop to the right. Normally, a tab moves eight spaces. However, you can customize how far each tab moves on your computer from the Control Panel, Keyboard settings.



Toggle, is to switch back and forth between two states. For instance pressing Windows logo key repeatedly toggles the **start menu open and closed**.

UPS, is an Uninterruptible Power Supply (battery backup). When your computer is plugged into a UPS it is protected from power surges and blackouts. Laptops with a battery automatically switch to battery in milliseconds if a power outage occurs.



USB, stands for Universal Serial Bus. It is a means of transferring data via a narrow cable that transmits data in

two directions. Digital cameras, external hard drives, keyboards, mice, hubs, wireless adapters, and speakers, are just some of the devices that connect to a computer via USB cables and connections. USB comes in three speeds, 1.0 is the slowest and 3.0 the fastest. USB 3.0 is called *Super USB*.

USB Hub, (with power supply) is a means to connect up to 128 USB peripheral devices. However, the most popular hubs provide from four to seven USB connections.

Web cam, refers to a small camera that sits on or near a camera. It can send movies or pictures in real time using a Voice Over Internet Protocol Camera service such as *Vonage* or *Skype*. That is, two users of Skype, or a similar service, who see and talk to each other on their computer.



Wi-Fi, refers to Wireless a wireless network. Wi-Fi products converse wirelessly with one or more computers, such as a laptop and a desktop. Examples of wireless equipment includes printers, keyboards, and network adapters used to connect to the internet, among other products. Wi-Fi products can communicate securely with the internet using security protocols such as WEP, WAP, and WAP2. WEP was the first encrypted protocol and is the least secure. WEP stands for Wireless Equivalency Protocol. WAP stands for Web Application Protocol. WAP2 is the latest security protocol.



Windows Keyboard shortcuts. Consult Windows Help from the Start button for a list of the many shortcuts that are available. There are too many to list here. Keyboard shortcuts are available for the Windows Operating System as well as for a variety of applications (WordPad, NotePad, Word, WordPerfect, Windows Explorer, etc.).



Windows Logo Key, (Win Key) is a key on the lower left row of your keyboard with the Windows flag logo. The Windows Key provides shortcuts when used singly or in conjunction with other keys.

For instance, just pressing that key brings up the Start menu. Windows Key-D displays the desktop. Press Win Key-D again and you are right back where you started with your application showing. Press

Win Key-Tab to cycle through the applications that are open on your desktop using Windows 7 aero feature. Keep pressing that key combination to cycle through the open applications.

WordPad, is a very basic, no-nonsense word processor. It comes with Windows and can be found from the Start logo button, in the Accessories folder under All Programs. WordPad includes some formatting options. It is meant for the user who wants a simple to use word processor and does not need all of the features provided by Microsoft Word. I encourage you to open WordPad to see what is there. Perhaps that is all that you need to fill your particular word processing needs. WordPad does not have a spell checker. Is that a deal breaker for you?

In this issue I cover the following basic topics:

- Where can you find help about Windows?
- How do you personalize your mouse and keyboard for the way you work?
- What is the difference between single- and double-clicking a mouse?
- What is the purpose of the left and right mouse buttons, and the scroll wheel (if your mouse has one)
- What can you do with your computer?

WHERE CAN YOU FIND COMPUTER HELP?

Help is just a click or two away at any time. You can use any of these sources:

- ✓ Click on the Start button and click on Help and Support from the start menu. Use Windows Help and Support to find the answers to common questions, or to run Troubleshooting Tools that come with Windows to solve common problems. This is a good place to start.
- ✓ Use your search engine (Google, Yahoo, Ask) and ask for information in plain English. For example, What is error 404, or how to clear a paper jam in an HP (model number) printer? You will be surprised at how often this works. You may need to refine your search term to get the best results.
- ✓ Subscribe to the Computerbugs list service. It is a free service to our members. Post your question to

the list server and one of our members will get back to you in short order. However, carefully describe the problem with enough information so they can visualize the problem. Include which operating system you are using. That way the person responding can tell you the keystrokes you need to use for your operating system. A plaintive “HELP” and no other information doesn’t contain information that others need to respond to your request.

- ✓ Contact a local computer repair service. Sometimes, you have to let the professionals tackle problems. That is, your “problem” may well be a whole series of issues that add up to one horrendous problem.
- ✓ Ask your questions at Computerbugs meetings.
- ✓ Subscribe to computer publications to increase your background knowledge. You will pick up tips that may help you prevent problems in the first place.



HOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR MOUSE

Your mouse software offers many ways to customize how it works for you. Click on Start, Control Panel, Mouse, and review the settings. Here are some of the options that are available for my mouse. You will see similar options.

BUTTONS

Switch primary and secondary buttons (if you are left handed)

Set the double-click speed. Test by double-clicking the test folder in the dialog box. If the folder doesn’t open or close, try using a slower setting.

POINTERS

Select the pointer scheme that best suits you. Schemes are sets of pointers and symbols (such as the hourglass). Some are plain, others are fancy. Some are easier to see against a busy background. Experiment until you find the scheme that you prefer.

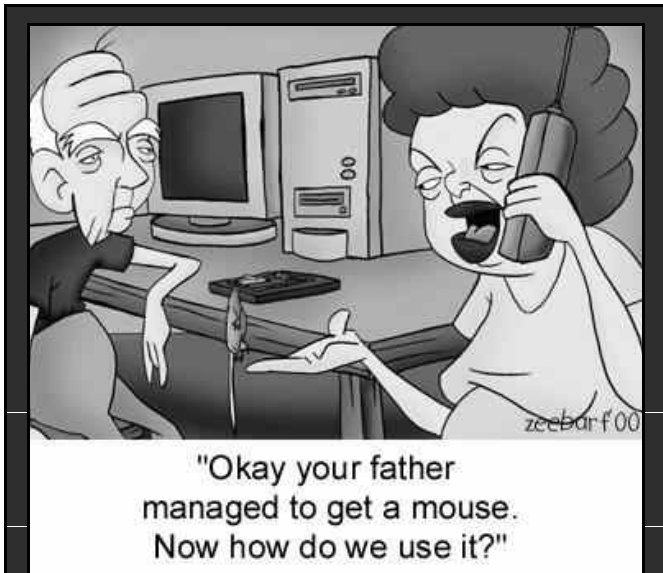


POINTER OPTIONS

Select a pointer speed by moving the slider, whether your cursor snaps to a default button in a dialog box, and from several visibility options.

WHEEL (if you have one)

Set how many lines your mouse scrolls with each notch of the scroll wheel for both vertical and horizontal scrolling. You can alternatively select to move one page at a time.



SINGLE-CLICKING VERSUS DOUBLE-CLICKING

Single-clicking involves quickly pressing a mouse button just once on an icon or menu item. A single-click selects the icon or menu item. By default some programs require that you double-click on an icon to open the program. Double-clicking involves pressing the primary button quickly twice in a row.

The primary mouse button (normally the left mouse button) is used to open a program or to select actions from a drop down menu. The right mouse button is used to display a menu of available options for the program that you just opened. You may be surprised at how much information is available to you when click the right mouse button.

SCROLL WHEEL

If your mouse has a scroll wheel it is used to aid you as you read screens of text. You roll the wheel backward

and forward to move through your text. You will find that this is easier and takes less effort than moving your mouse to the scroll bar at the right of your screen and then dragging it up or down. Your scroll wheel may have extra options as well. For instance, the wheel can be tilted right or left to scroll horizontally.

MOUSE BATTERIES

If your wireless mouse has batteries, and the mouse becomes sluggish, replace the batteries. They are probably exhausted. If you have a wireless keyboard, you may want to check the batteries in your keyboard at the same time. Wireless mice and keyboards have a small removable doors on the bottom of those devices.

Observe the correct position of the batteries. As a general rule, the bottom of batteries (negative pole) go against the coiled springs and the positive nipple of the batteries goes against the flat polished contacts. Often there is a diagram inside the cover or battery compartment that shows you how to put in the batteries.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A COMPUTER?

Perhaps I should say, "What can't you do with a computer?" A computer is like a *Swiss Army Knife*, and like the famous knife, it offers many different tools. Here are just some of the many things that you can do with your computer:

Burn CD/DVDs	Do your taxes
Catalog Info	Draw
Communicate	Edit movies & videos
Convert data	Edit photos
Copy material	E-mail
Create databases	Fill Forms
Create inventories	Greeting Cards
Create/edit movies	Keep calendar
Create music library	Keep Addresses
Create photo albums	Lookup info
Create Post-It Notes	Maintain contacts
Create slide shows	Etcetera