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13th Edition

PCs

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- Configure your PC, hook up a printer, and connect to the Internet
- Find your way around Windows® 10
- Play movies and music, view photos, and have fun

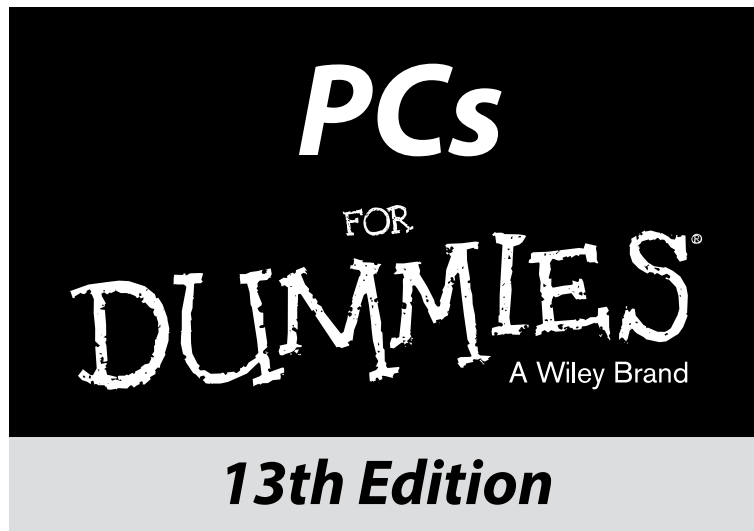
Dan Gookin

Bestselling author of Laptops For Dummies



PCs
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DUMMIES®
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13th Edition



by Dan Gookin

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PCs For Dummies®, 13th Edition

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Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Part I: Hello, PC!.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Chapter 1: What Is This Thing, This PC?	9
Chapter 2: The PC Knobs, Buttons, and Doodads Tour	19
Chapter 3: PC Setup.....	29
Chapter 4: Both On and Off	41
<i>Part II: The Nerd's-Eye View.....</i>	<i>51</i>
Chapter 5: Deep Inside the Console	53
Chapter 6: PC Memory	63
Chapter 7: The Mass Storage System.....	73
Chapter 8: Merry Monitor Mayhem.....	87
Chapter 9: Input This!.....	99
Chapter 10: System Expansion.....	115
Chapter 11: P Is for Printer	127
Chapter 12: PC Audio Abilities	139
<i>Part III: Basic Computing.....</i>	<i>151</i>
Chapter 13: Relevant Parts of Windows.....	153
Chapter 14: Programs On Your PC	165
Chapter 15: Fun with Files and Folders.....	177
Chapter 16: Life On the Cloud	195
Chapter 17: The Weird World of Networking.....	205
<i>Part IV: Your Digital Life</i>	<i>223</i>
Chapter 18: An Internet Refresher	225
Chapter 19: Hello, Other Gizmo	235
Chapter 20: Images Digital	243
Chapter 21: Electronic Entertainment.....	255
<i>Part V: Security and Maintenance.....</i>	<i>265</i>
Chapter 22: System Security.....	267
Chapter 23: That All-Important Safety Copy	279
Chapter 24: Maintenance Chores.....	289

<i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i>	301
Chapter 25: Ten PC Commandments	303
Chapter 26: Ten Things Worth Buying for Your PC	307
Chapter 27: Ten Tips from a PC Guru	313
<i>Index</i>	319

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
What's New in This Edition?	1
Where to Start	2
Conventions Used in This Book	3
Foolish Assumptions	4
Icons Used in This Book	4
Where to Go from Here	5
 <i>Part I: Hello, PC!</i>	 7
 Chapter 1: What Is This Thing, This PC?	 9
Some Quick Questions to Get Out of the Way	9
“What is a PC?”	9
“Why not just use a tablet or smartphone instead of a PC?”	11
“Should I buy a Dell?”	11
“Will my computer explode?”	11
Basic Computer Concepts in Easily Digestible Chunks	12
What a computer does	12
Hardware and software	13
Buy Yourself a PC!	14
Step 1. What do you want the PC to do?	15
Step 2. Find software	15
Step 3. Match hardware to the software	15
Step 4. Locate service and support	16
Step 5. Buy it!	16
What To Do With An Old Computer	16
A Final Thing to Remember	17
 Chapter 2: The PC Knobs, Buttons, and Doodads Tour	 19
The Big Picture	19
All Around the Console	21
There is no typical console	21
Major points of interest on the console, front	23
Stuff found on the console's rump	25
The I/O panel	26
Helpful hints, hieroglyphics, and hues	28

Chapter 3: PC Setup 29

Computer Assembly	29
Unpacking the boxes	29
Setting up the console	30
Plugging in and connecting	31
The Plugging-Things-In Guide	31
Attaching the keyboard and mouse	32
Setting up the monitor	33
Connecting to the network	33
Adding a printer	33
Hooking up the speakers	34
It Must Have Power	35
Plugging everything into a power strip	35
Taking advantage of a UPS	37
Using the UPS (a short play)	38

Chapter 4: Both On and Off 41

Turn On Your PC	41
Windows, Ahoy!	43
Turn Off the Computer	44
Shutting down Windows	44
Putting Windows to sleep	45
Restarting the PC	47
Signing out	47
Reviewing other shutdown options	49
Should You Leave Mr. PC On All the Time?	49
“I want to leave my computer off all the time”	50
“I want to leave my computer on all the time”	50

Part II: The Nerd’s-Eye View 51**Chapter 5: Deep Inside the Console 53**

Computer Guts	53
Looking under the hood	54
Powering Mr. Computer	55
Lurking on the motherboard	56
Corralling all the mass storage devices	56
King Processor	57
Understanding the processor’s role	58
Naming PC processors	58
Measuring processor speed	59
Discovering your PC’s processor	59
Your Computer Is Also a Timepiece	60
Viewing the date and time	61
Using the Internet to set the clock	61

Chapter 6: PC Memory	63
What Is Computer Memory?	63
Tasty Chocolate Memory Chips	64
Memory, One Byte at a Time	66
Memory Q&A	68
“How much memory is in my PC right now?”	68
“Do I have enough memory?”	69
“Does my PC have enough memory?”	69
“Can I test whether my PC has enough memory?”	69
“Can I add memory to my PC?”	70
“Will the computer ever run out of memory?”	70
“What is virtual memory?”	70
“What is video memory?”	71
“What about shared video memory?”	71
Chapter 7: The Mass Storage System	73
The PC’s Mass Storage System	73
Surveying the mass storage landscape	74
Identifying the primary storage device	75
Finding mass storage devices	76
Inserting a media card or thumb drive	78
Inserting an optical disc	78
Ejecting media	79
Adding more storage	80
The Mass Storage Alphabet	81
Handing out drive letters	81
Exploring drive icons and names	83
Checking drive capacity	84
Using mass storage	86
Accessing removable media	86
Chapter 8: Merry Monitor Mayhem	87
The PC’s Graphics System	87
Minding the monitor	89
Discovering the display adapter	90
Show Me What Ya Got	91
Measuring a monitor	91
Connecting the monitor to the PC	92
Reading monitor messages	93
Working the monitor’s controls	93
Windows Controls What You See	94
Setting resolution	94
Adding a second monitor	95
Orienting the monitor	97



Chapter 9: Input This!99

Meet Mr. Keyboard.....	99
Attaching a keyboard	100
Examining the typical PC keyboard.....	100
Using modifier keys	102
Changing keyboard behavior keys	103
Touring some useful keys	104
Understanding strange keys.....	104
Understanding keys for math.....	105
Controlling the keyboard in Windows	106
Say “Eeek!” to the Mouse.....	107
Connecting the mouse.....	107
Reviewing basic mouse parts.....	108
Exploring mouse species	109
Moving the mouse	109
Changing mouse settings	110
Touchscreen Input	112
Using basic touchscreen techniques	112
Typing on a touchscreen	113

Chapter 10: System Expansion.115

It’s a Port.....	115
The Versatile USB Port	116
Understanding USB cables.....	116
Connecting a USB device	118
Working with USB-powered gizmos.....	118
Removing a USB device.....	119
Using hubs to expand the USB universe.....	120
Expansion Slots.....	121
Shopping for expansion cards.....	121
Adding an expansion card	122
The Bluetooth Thing	123
Checking for Bluetooth	123
Controlling Bluetooth in Windows	124
Pairing a Bluetooth peripheral.....	124
Reviewing paired devices	126
Unpairing a Bluetooth device.....	126

Chapter 11: P Is for Printer127

The Printer, the Paper, the Document Maker	127
Surveying the printer landscape.....	127
Touring the typical printer	128
Using the printer’s control panel.....	129
Drinking ink.....	130
Eating paper.....	131
Choosing the proper paper	132

Where the Printer Meets the PC	132
Connecting the printer	132
Finding printers in Windows	133
Setting the default printer	134
Printer Operation	135
Printing something	135
Stopping a printer run amok	137

Chapter 12: PC Audio Abilities.....139

The Noisy PC	139
Setting up speakers	140
Using headphones	142
Exploring microphone options	142
Sound Control in Windows	143
Configuring the speakers	144
Configuring the microphone	144
Enabling the microphone	145
Adjusting the volume	145
Windows Goes Bleep	146
It Listens	148
Recording your own sounds	148
Dictating to the PC	149

Part III: Basic Computing 151

Chapter 13: Relevant Parts of Windows.....153

What's an Operating System?	153
Windows and Its Goopy, Glorious Graphical Interface	154
Starting at the desktop	154
Working the taskbar	156
Accessing the Start menu	157
Looking at the notifications area	158
Summoning the Action Center	159
Settings and Controls	160
Using the Settings app	161
Visiting the Control Panel	162

Chapter 14: Programs On Your PC.....165

Software Nomenclature	165
Run That Program	166
Hunting down programs in Windows	166
Starting an app from Tablet mode	168
Finding a program when you know its name	169
Pinning a program	169

Install and Remove Programs	170
Obtaining software from the Internet	171
Installing a program from external media	172
Uninstalling a program.....	174
Chapter 15: Fun with Files and Folders	177
Behold the File!	177
Describing a file.....	178
Creating a new file.....	179
Understanding the filename extension	181
Folder Folderol.....	182
Understanding subfolders and parent folders.....	182
Finding a place for your stuff	183
Making a new folder.....	185
Working with folders in the Open and Save As dialog boxes.....	186
Manage Files Because They Can't Manage Themselves	187
Selecting files.....	187
Manipulating files.....	190
Finding files lost, missing, or dead	193
Chapter 16: Life On the Cloud	195
The Cloud Thing	195
Cloud Storage.....	196
Adding a cloud storage service.....	196
Copying a file to cloud storage.....	197
Accessing cloud storage from another device.....	199
Online Media	200
Keeping your pictures on cloud storage.....	200
Accessing cloud storage pictures.....	201
Sharing a picture from cloud storage.....	201
Listening to your cloud music.....	203
Chapter 17: The Weird World of Networking	205
Why Network?	205
Network Hardware	207
Reviewing the network configuration	207
Setting up a gateway.....	209
The Network Connection.....	211
Connecting to a wired network.....	211
Connecting to a wireless network	211
Connecting to a hidden Wi-Fi network.....	213
Checking the network type.....	214
Resetting the network type	215
Disconnecting from a network.....	216
Forgetting a Wi-Fi connection	216

On the Network.....	217
Accessing a network folder	218
Mapping a network drive	219
Sharing a folder	220
Accessing shared media	221
Activating media sharing on your PC.....	221

***Part IV: Your Digital Life* 223**

Chapter 18: An Internet Refresher 225

What Is the Internet?	225
Internet Access	226
It's a World Wide Web We Weave	226
Finding another web browser	226
Locating the web browser commands	227
Going undercover on the web	228
Browsing tips.....	229
Printing web pages	230
Searching-the-web tips	230
Get Stuff from a Web Page.....	231
Saving an image from a web page.....	231
Copying text from a web page.....	231
Sharing a web page.....	232
Email Messages	232
Understanding email acronyms	232
Finding an email program	233

Chapter 19: Hello, Other Gizmo 235

AutoPlay.....	235
Dealing with another device.....	235
Manually summoning AutoPlay	237
Setting AutoPlay options	237
Connect Something to Your PC	239
Importing images	239
Getting video into your PC	240
Ripping music from a CD	241

Chapter 20: Images Digital 243

Image Resolution	243
Understanding resolution	244
Setting resolution.....	245
Digital Camera Tips	245
The Scanner.....	246
Introducing the scanner.....	246
Scanning an image	247

Picture Files.....	249
Storing pictures in Windows	250
Viewing pictures in Windows	250
Printing your digital photos	251
Changing picture file formats	254
Chapter 21: Electronic Entertainment.....	255
PC Movies	255
Storing video in Windows	256
Viewing a video	257
Uploading a video to YouTube.....	258
Sharing your videos.....	259
Your PC Is a TV	260
Getting a TV tuner.....	260
Watching Internet TV	261
Your TV Is a PC	261
Your PC Is Your Stereo	262
Enjoying music from the stream	263
Running Windows Media Player	264
 Part V: Security and Maintenance	 265
Chapter 22: System Security.....	267
Tools to Fight the Bad Guys.....	267
Take Action Against the Barbarian Hoard.....	269
Finding the Action Center	269
Setting up the Windows Firewall	270
Protecting the PC with Windows Defender	272
Paying attention to the UAC warnings	273
System Privacy Settings.....	274
Setting the screen saver lock	274
Reviewing Windows 10 privacy options	275
The Latest Version	276
Updating and upgrading	276
Updating Windows.....	277
 Chapter 23: That All-Important Safety Copy	 279
The File You Had Yesterday.....	279
Obtaining an external backup device.....	280
Configuring Windows 10 File History	280
Setting up Windows 7 Backup	281
Recovering a previous version of a file.....	282
Restoring files from a backup.....	283
Exploring Internet backup utilities	284

Compressed Folder Archives.....	285
Compressing files.....	286
Working with a compressed folder	287
Installing software from a compressed folder	288
Chapter 24: Maintenance Chores	289
Storage Utilities.....	289
Freeing storage space.....	290
Checking for errors.....	292
Running defrag	293
Network Troubleshooting	295
Manage the PC's Power	296
Setting power options in Windows 10.....	296
Configuring a power management plan	297
Adding the Hibernate option.....	298
The Windows 10 Do-Over	299
 Part VI: The Part of Tens.....	 301
Chapter 25: Ten PC Commandments	303
I. Thou Shalt Not Fear Thy PC.....	303
II. Thou Shalt Save Thy Work.....	304
III. Thou Shalt Back Up Thy Files	304
IV. That Shalt Not Open or Delete Things Unknownst.....	304
V. Thou Shalt Not Be a Sucker	304
VI. Thou Shalt Use Antivirus Software, Yea Verily, and Keepeth It Up-to-Date.....	305
VII. Thou Shalt Upgrade Wisely	305
VIII. Thou Shalt Compute at a Proper Posture.....	306
IX. Thou Shalt Keepeth Windows Up-to-Date.....	306
X. Thou Shalt Properly Shut Down Windows.....	306
 Chapter 26: Ten Things Worth Buying for Your PC.	 307
Mouse Pad and Wrist Pad.....	307
External Mass Storage.....	308
Cleaning Materials	308
Internal Expansion.....	309
USB Hub and Cables	310
Better Keyboard and Mouse	310
An Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)	310
Headset	311
Scanner	311
Thumb Drives and Media Cards	312

Chapter 27: Ten Tips from a PC Guru313

Remember That You're in Charge	313
Mind Who "Helps" You	314
Give Yourself Time to Learn	314
Create Separate Accounts	314
Mind What You Download.....	315
Organize Your Files	315
Don't Reinstall Windows.....	316
Shun the Hype.....	316
Keep on Learning.....	317
Remember Not to Take This Computer Stuff Too Seriously.....	317

***Index* 319**

Introduction

It may have been more than 30 years since that first IBM PC rolled off the assembly line, but that timespan doesn't make the entire realm of computers easier to understand. For all the advances, the graphics, the fun, and the availability of computers for sale in the same place you buy your booze, a PC remains a daunting, intimidating piece of technology. That can make you feel like a dummy.

This book's job is to convince you that you're not a dummy. Computers are intimidating only when you believe them to be. Peel back that sleek case and you find a timid, frightened beast that wants only to help you. This book takes you on a journey that makes that task easy, fun, and enjoyable.

Oh, and don't peel back the skin on your computer. It doesn't hurt the computer if you do so, but you can better get in touch with your PC's emotional core in ways that don't require tin snips and a blow torch.

What's New in This Edition?

Hey! Thanks for continuing to read this Introduction. Most people don't bother, so you're special! I mean, why read all this nonsense when you could open the book to some random page, stroke your chin, and say, "Wow! This is really appealing." Anyone watching would be impressed. But no, you're reading the very front of the book. The best you can hope for is that any onlooker believes you can't find the price or are trying to look up a relative on the details page. Sorry about that.

This is the 14th edition of *PCs For Dummies*, which begs the question, "What the hell happened to the 13th edition?" That's right, the publisher just skipped over 13 as if it would belie the fact that only 16 percent of Americans bothered to visit a bookstore last year and most people steal this book online. Still, if you want to be specific, this book's 12th edition was titled *Windows 7 Edition*. Then when the 13th edition came out, the publisher called it the 12th edition. So now you're all caught up.

Beyond updating many of this book's less important parts to reflect the Windows 10 operating system, I've invigorated the text with all the new whiz-bang technology introduced since the last edition. Here I address some new topics that have arisen, including

- ✓ Updates on new PC features that have become standards, such as USB 3.0, media cards, and solid-state drives (SSDs)
- ✓ Details on cloud storage and how it's used to synchronize your files across multiple devices
- ✓ Sharing media on the cloud
- ✓ Connecting your PC to another gizmo, such as a smartphone, camera, or tablet
- ✓ Updates on security and the ever-looming threats on the Internet
- ✓ A new, sassy attitude that didn't involve heavy drinking

As in years past, I present all the information in this book in a sane, soothing, and gentle tone that calms even the most panicked computerphobe.

Where to Start

This book is a reference. You can start reading at any point. Use the index or table of contents to see what interests you. After you read the information, feel free to close the book and perform whatever task you need; there's no need to read any further. Well, unless you just enjoy my pithy writing style.

Each of this book's 27 chapters covers a specific aspect of the computer: turning it on, using a printer, using software, or heaving the computer out a window without incurring back injury. Each chapter is divided into self-contained sections, which are nuggets of knowledge all relating to the major theme of the chapter. Sample sections you may find include

- ✓ Restarting the PC
- ✓ Using the Internet to set the clock
- ✓ Ejecting media
- ✓ Stopping a printer run amok
- ✓ Obtaining software from the Internet
- ✓ Connecting to a wireless network
- ✓ Accessing cloud storage pictures

You don't have to memorize anything in this book. Nothing about a computer is memorable. Each section is designed so that you can read the information quickly, digest what you have read, and then put down the book and get on with using the computer. If anything technical crops up, you're alerted to its presence so that you can cleanly avoid it.

Conventions Used in This Book

Menu items, links, and other controls on the screen are written using initial-cap text. So if the option is named "Turn off the computer," you see the text Turn Off the Computer (without quotes or commas) shown in this book, whether it appears that way onscreen or not.

If you have to type something, it looks like this:

Type me

You type the text *Type me* as shown. You're told when and whether to press the Enter key. You're also told whether to type a period; periods end sentences written in English, but not always when you type text on a computer.

Windows menu commands are shown like this:

Choose File⇨Exit.

This line directs you to choose the File menu and then choose the Exit command.

Key combinations you may have to press are shown like this:

Ctrl+S

This line says to press and hold down the Ctrl (Control) key, type an *S*, and then release the Ctrl key. It works the same as pressing Shift+S on the keyboard to produce an uppercase *S*. Same deal, different shift key.

Foolish Assumptions

You have a PC, which is an acronym for Personal Computer and describes all computers that run the Windows operating system. You do not have a Macintosh. And you are not a superintelligent gerbil desiring to program an Arduino in FORTRAN.

This book was updated to coincide with the release of Windows 10, a deadline I missed by two months. The book primarily covers Windows 10, although I pay homage to Windows 7, which is the most popular version of Windows as this book goes to press. I do not cover the horrid atrocity that was Windows 8, nor will you find material here on Windows XP or other primitive operating systems.

When this book refers to Windows without a specific edition or version, the information applies generically to both Windows 10 and Windows 7.

Icons Used in This Book



This icon alerts you to needless technical information — drivel I added because I can't help but unleash my inner nerd. Feel free to skip over anything tagged with this little picture.



This icon indicates helpful advice or an insight that makes using the computer interesting. For example, when you're dunking the computer into liquid nitrogen, be sure to wear protective goggles.



This icon indicates something to remember, like wearing pants.



This icon is a reminder for you not to do something, like trying to use a leaf blower to dry your hair.

Where to Go from Here

This book features an online support page, which you can find here:

`www.dummies.com/extras/pcs`

This book's online cheat sheet, which was once included with the book before the publisher got all cheap, can be located at this web page:

`www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/pcs`

And bonus material is located on this page:

`www.dummies.com/extras/pcs`

My email address is listed here, in case you want to send me a note:

`dgookin@wambooli.com`.

Yes, that's my email address, and I respond to every email message. Expect a fast answer when you write a short, to-the-point message directly related to this book. Longer messages take me longer to read — sometimes weeks — but I will get back to you. Also, please understand that I cannot troubleshoot or fix your PC.

You can also visit my website, which is chock-full of helpful support pages, bonus information, games, and fun. Go to `www.wambooli.com`.

With this book in hand, you're now ready to go out and conquer your PC. Start by looking through the table of contents or the index. Find a topic and turn to the page indicated, and you're ready to go. Also, feel free to write in this book, fill in the blanks, dog-ear the pages, and do anything else that would make a librarian blanch. Enjoy.

Part I
Hello, PC!

getting started
with

PCs



Visit www.dummies.com for exciting online content.

In this part . . .

- ✓ Discover what a PC is and what it can do
- ✓ Explore the various parts of a computer
- ✓ Set up and configure a PC
- ✓ Cope with turning a computer on or off

Chapter 1

What Is This Thing, This PC?

In This Chapter

- ▶ Answering some common PC questions
 - ▶ Understanding basic computer concepts
 - ▶ Knowing about hardware and software
 - ▶ Buying a computer
 - ▶ Realizing that your PC is quite dumb
-

I wish that computers were evil. It would be easier to understand the computer if it were upfront about being evil and expressed its malevolent desire to get you. Minus that negative assurance, you end up operating the PC under a constant suspicion. That's not healthy. So instead of fearing, try understanding. Maybe Mr. PC isn't so bad after all?

Some Quick Questions to Get Out of the Way

Doubtless, your mind is abuzz with various questions about computers. I ask myself computer questions often, so don't think that your curiosity is unusual. Trust me: Few people over the age of 26 are comfortable when first encountering anything high-tech.

"What is a PC?"

A *PC* is a computer — specifically, an acronym for *personal computer*.

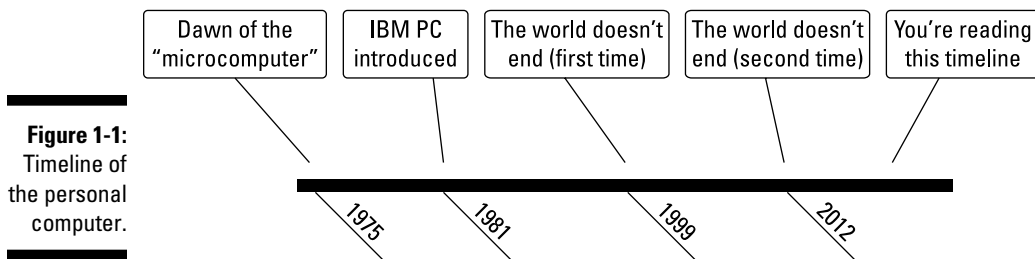
Historically, the beast was known as a *microcomputer*. That's because back in the 1970s, computers were huge, room-sized things that required legions of bespectacled scientists to operate. Individuals didn't own such

computers — well, unless you were eccentric or enjoyed printing your own phone bill. So mere mortals were sold a smaller version, which the Computer Professionals Union insisted be called a *micro*computer.

Micro means teensy. The term is preferred by computer scientists because you can't wear a white lab coat and be taken seriously when you use the word "teensy."

Actually, the term *micro* comes from *microprocessor*, the main computer chip inside the early personal computers.

When IBM unveiled its first business microcomputer back in 1982, they called it the IBM Personal Computer — or PC, for short. All of today's personal computers are descended from that original model, so they've inherited the term *PC*. Figure 1-1 displays a timeline of the PC's history, in case you're curious.



The only PC that's not called "PC" is Apple's Macintosh computer. Mac users refer to their computers as *Macs*. That's based on an old IBM–Apple rivalry that no one cares about any more. Still, many Mac users get all huffy when you call their computers PCs. So it's fine by me to tease those crybabies by referring to their expensive toys as PCs.

- ✓ The term *PC* generically refers to any computer that can run the Windows operating system.
- ✓ Although your car or sewing machine or the machine that goes "boop" at the hospital may contain computer electronics, those devices are not PCs.
- ✓ Curiously, IBM got out of the PC manufacturing business in the early 2000s.
- ✓ The success of the PC is based on its use of off-the-shelf parts that are easily replaced. The PC can also be configured and upgraded with ease, which is the main reason that it's so popular.



“Why not just use a tablet or smartphone instead of a PC?”

Sure, you can get by in today’s well-connected, digital world by getting yourself a tablet or smartphone. To hell with computers!

Smartphones and tablets can send and receive email, browse the web, play games, and do all sorts of interesting things. They have several downfalls when compared with PCs:

- ✓ Mobile devices are designed for data consumption, not data production. If you’re merely passing through this digital life, you can get by with a phone or tablet and never own a PC. If you need to create something, you need a computer.
- ✓ PCs offer several input devices — specifically, the keyboard and the mouse. You can even add a touchscreen to a PC, if you’re into that touchy-tappy-swipecy stuff.
- ✓ Mobile devices lack the expandability of a PC. You can upgrade a PC, adding more storage, memory, a better monitor, a mouse with 20,000 buttons, and so on.
- ✓ The typical computer lasts for years. A mobile device is usually replaced every other year.



Now, if you’ve changed your mind about getting a PC, remember that you cannot return this book once you’ve started reading this material.

“Should I buy a Dell?”

I get this question all the time, though “Dell” might be replaced by some other brand name. See the later section “Buy Yourself a PC!”

“Will my computer explode?”

This question is important, so please skip all the other questions I’ve placed before this question and read this question first!

If you’re a fan of science fiction television or film, you’re probably familiar with the concept of the exploding computer. Sparks, smoke, flying debris — it all appears to be a common function of computers in the future. Sure, they

could just beep and display error messages when they die, but that's not visually exciting.

The answer is no, your computer will not explode. At least, not spontaneously. If you pour fruit punch into the computer or lightning strikes or the power supply unexplainably fails, the most you may see is a puff of blue smoke, but no explosions.

Basic Computer Concepts in Easily Digestible Chunks

You either use or are about to purchase one of the most advanced pieces of technology ever made available to humans. Why not be a sport about it and take a few moments to not avoid some of the more technical mumbo jumbo surrounding that technology? Don't fret: I'll be gentle.

What a computer does

Computers can do anything and try to do just about everything. At their core, however, computers are simple gizmos. Their advantage is that computers have oodles of potential.

A computer takes input, processes it, and then generates output. That's kind of how a baby works, though to keep you from being utterly befuddled, you can refer to Figure 1-2, which completely illustrates that basic computer concept.

Figure 1-2:
What a
computer
does at its
simplest
level.

