

Getting To Know My Computer

Part Four

Things I Can Do with My Computer

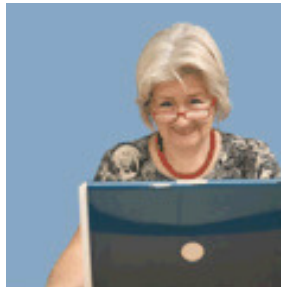


Introduction

Dear Friend,

Welcome to The Web on Wheels' Getting to Know My Computer, Part Four in this series! In this section, we'll view what sorts of things you can do with your computer from writing letters and keeping address records to browsing and communicating on the Internet.

Our main goal in this series is help you to gain confidence with your computer, and make it into a useful everyday tool, rather than thinking of it as something rather frightening. Believe it or not, if you go through these Guides slowly and carefully, you will become competent at using your computer, and firm in understanding what it is and how it can help you do what you need.



Part Four of this series involves looking at the software and Internet capabilities of a computer and how they can benefit you most. Simple and straightforward, we'll lead you through what useful software programs are available and give you a quickie look at how the Internet works, how to browse, and how to e-mail. By the end of this chapter, you'll begin to see some of the fun things to do with your computer. Enjoy!

Part 4

Things I Can Do with My Computer

In Part Three: A Look Under the Bonnet, we became acquainted with the inner workings of the computer. For Part Four, it's high time we actually turned the machine on and began to use the machine and use it for what it's worth.

Software is another name for a computer program. Each program has a main purpose and is designed to help you accomplish a particular task. Some programs may allow you to do many of the same things that others do, but it helps to know which software is specifically intended for keeping your books, storing your pictures, or writing letters. As the Internet has easily become a huge reason most people have computers nowadays, we also need to briefly point out the basics of browsing and communicating via e-mail.

In Part 4:

1. Write a Letter to Dear Aunt Shirley: Word Processing Software
2. Keeping Photos of Friends and Family: Graphics Software
3. Bookkeeping, Address Book, and Recipes: Data Organising Software
4. Keeping in Touch with the World: E-mail
5. Surfing the Web: Internet Browsing

1. Word Processing Software

Write a Letter to Dear Aunt Shirley

So you want to write a letter, but longhand with pen and paper is not your preference as you've got a lot to say. Here is the perfect scenario for using **word processing** software. Word processing software does just what it says: processes words.



In comparison to other devices, word processing took the place of typewriters, but it can do a whole lot more than typewriters ever dreamed possible. The best part is, if you want to delete, you don't need a white-out tape to insert into the typewriter; you just press backspace or delete, and "voila", it's gone! If you want to type the same letter to ten friends, word processing can take your address book, and when you press "Print," it'll automatically print one letter per name, inserting each name from your address book. We'll cover some of

these awesome abilities of word processing in future Web On Wheels publications.

The most popular word processing programs are Microsoft Word and Corel WordPerfect. If your computer doesn't have a word processing program built in, there are alternatives. There are plenty of free programs on the Internet that can be downloaded onto your computer so you don't have to spend hundreds of dollars to purchase Word or WordPerfect.

Or, you can use the free program that comes with almost every Windows computer. Look in your Programs for WordPad. Whilst it doesn't do everything that the paid programs do, for basic letter writing, it's more than adequate.

If you're not sure, contact your Web on Wheels coach, or email Viv – info@thewebonwheels.com.au.

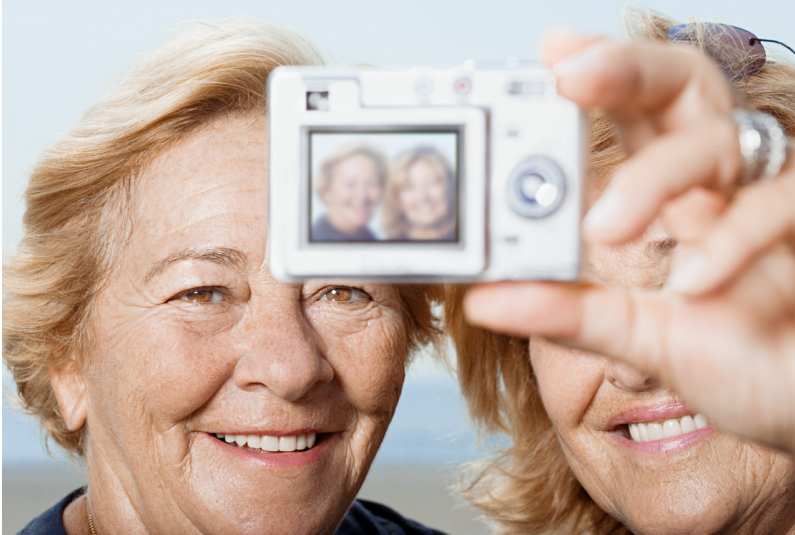


2. Graphics Software

Keeping Photos of Friends and Family

One of the greatest benefits of computers is the ability to view, store, alter, and share your photos and to receive photos from friends and family.

Perhaps you've just come back from a visit with the grandkids: adorable, I know.



Well, the first thing you're going to want to do is brag about those sweet little smiles with all your friends.

NOTE: Standard film cameras will not be able to transfer directly to your computer – you've got to ask the developing shop to put them on a CD if you want to do that. OR

you can purchase a special device that transfers the negatives straight to your computer.

Got a digital camera or mobile phone? All you need then is a data cable to connect your camera to a USB port on your computer. When connected to your computer, the cable and camera may look similar to our photo. Connect the two, turn on the camera in the photo reviewing mode, and instead of the camera's screen turning on as usual, you will probably see some sort of display indicating the pictures are being copied from your camera onto your computer. (downloading).



(You might even be able to do this by just putting the little memory card into a special slot in your computer.)

In addition to simply downloading photos you've taken, you can alter the look of your photos with **graphics software**. Whether you want to make the photo black-and-white, blur out the noisy background, crop the photo to just include one person, or any number of alterations, graphics software helps you do this. Sometimes digital cameras come with a simple graphics software CD. Otherwise, you may purchase any variety of graphics software from the store; the choices range from simple to complex.

Also, if you don't want to bother with a complex graphics program, there are many free photo editing programs online. The most convenient part is that you can store your photos online on that particular company's website. Then you simply e-mail a link to your friends so that they can click the link to view your photos. That online photo storage site often has simple editing options built in. Try www.kodakgallery.com or www.snapfish.com, or go to your favourite search engine and search for "photos online". You don't have to purchase photos if you don't want to, and your friends can view the photos at their leisure. If, someday you want to arrange an album, you may have the photos printed through your online site or download them onto your USB drive or a CD and take them to a store that prints digital photos instantly. .

In future publishings, The Web on Wheels will cover in-depth how to go about storing, altering, sharing, and receiving photos on your computer.

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3. Data Organising Software

Address Book, Recipes, Bookkeeping

u recipes in a box or tagged in various cookbooks, and the bookkeeping in your chequebook. All of these can be easily managed on your computer and possibly end up saving you time.

Organise Your Address Book

When writing letters, normally you look up your friend's name and transfer the information onto your envelope. Data organising software can keep addresses, and you can tell your word processing program to pull all or some of the addresses from that data organising file and address the letter and each envelope respectively. Most printers will allow you to print on standard sized envelopes! This is a fantastic way to save time and writer's cramp when it's time to send your Christmas cards.

Organise Your Recipes

So the recipes may be in among various books and boxes or strewn about in a drawer. Whether you like to plan out the week's meals or would just enjoy sharing all your favourite dishes with friends, keeping recipes on data storing software makes the recipes searchable and easy to share.

Keep Your Books in Order

From tracking the balance to budgeting to eliminating debt, templates are readily available for you to plug in the bookkeeping numbers and streamline all your accounts. It's far less prone to error in numbers and, as long as you continually save your work, the records remain up to date. And the best part – the computer adds up the totals for you!

Many of our banks already offer online chequing, and perhaps you've already got a great handle on it. In addition, some online banking includes budgeting, debt calculating, and financial planning software.

4. E-mail

Keeping in Touch with the World

As we'll cover more in future Web on Wheels series, the Internet is, simply put, many computers connected to one another so that they may share information instantly no matter where in the world they are located. The word "Internet" comes from the fact that computers are **inter**connected through a **net**work. E-mail is perhaps the greatest capability the Internet has to offer; you can type and send messages instantly to keep in touch with friends, send jokes, share photos, etc.

The Web on Wheels series will have more detailed information for connecting to the Internet and for setting up an e-mail account. For now, let's assume you've already got an e-mail account and you have an e-mail address, example: julie@thewebonwheels.com.au.

So what is e-mail? It's "electronic mail" as simple as that. Think of the post without the postal worker needed to deliver parcels. Much like sending letters, you have a "To:" field, a "From:" field, optional business-like "CC:" (carbon copy) and "BCC:" (blind carbon copy) fields, and, for organising and reference purposes, a subject field to courteously let your recipient know the nature of your correspondence.

Most people who are connected to the Internet have an e-mail address. To send an e-mail, you need to know your friend's address, and you need to type that into the "To:" field. From here, you type a quick, informative subject, type out the content of your e-mail, sign your name at the end, and click "send." Instantly, the Internet carries your message over the electronic circuits to your recipient's e-mail account, and you haven't paid a cent for the speedy service.

- The place in your e-mail where you send and receive e-mail messages is called your *mailbox*.
- The *inbox* is for perusing your newly received messages, where your messages are stored if you don't file them away.
- The *outbox* is where the message stays for a while waiting to be sent.
- The Sent folder is where a record is kept of every message that has been sent.
- The drafts folder is where messages you're not quite finished are kept.

In brief, e-mail software takes all the time constraints out of sending *communiqué*, and lets you get right down to writing what you want, no postage or envelopes necessary.

5. Internet Browser Software

Surfing the Web

There's a massive information highway out there and it's a blast to explore if you're ready for it. When we talk about "surfing the web" or "browsing the Internet," we're talking about looking for information and searching for it throughout the interconnected network of computers around the world. The way computers are able to connect with one another is through browser software programs, or "browsers" for short. Most computers already have browsing software installed; the most common browser is Internet Explorer. When you begin Internet Explorer, or any other web browser, you begin either with a blank page or your home page.

Typing an Internet Address

Perhaps you're familiar with many website addresses:

www.thewebonwheels.com.au , www.google.com, www.weather.com, etc. In order to view the information a particular company or person has on the Internet, you simply type in the correct Internet address into the appropriate space on your browser, press enter, and you'll be shown all the information available on that page.

Searching

If you're not sure where to find the information you want, the best place to begin is from an Internet search engine. Popular search engines include www.google.com, www.yahoo.com, www.bing.com, though there are many other search engines out there. Accessing these websites will show you a field in which you may type the terms, words, or phrases you want to find. To some, searching is an art, but most folks using the Internet can easily type in a simple word or phrase and the search engine will return trustworthy, satisfactory results.

As long as you've got an Internet browser program and an active Internet connection, there is no end to the types of things you can discover on the information highway. Enjoy!

Part 4 Summary

You've just been given a pinch of valuable information about what you can do on the computer. What you choose to do with your computer and how you do it is entirely up to you in the end. We certainly hope that our information gives you a solid idea of what's possible and starts the gears turning for ways you'd like to take full advantage of this machine.

Programs being the primary means of communicating with a computer and completing various tasks, the software you have installed on your computer allows you to do what you need.

We covered how word processing programs make letter writing simple, graphics software helps organise photos, data organising software allows you to keep many pieces of information in one place, e-mail software gives you instant correspondence capabilities to nearly anyone in the world, and browser software brings the information highway, the amazing Internet, to your screen.

This concludes Part Four of the 'Getting to Know My Computer' series.

If you would like more help, or one-on-one coaching, please call Viv on: (03) 9787 7500 or email: info@thewebonwheels.com.au