



**Getting To Know My Computer  
Part Two  
Looking Outside The Box**

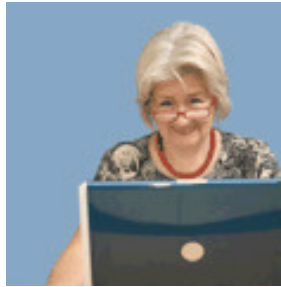


# Introduction

Dear Friend,

Welcome to The Web on Wheels' Getting to Know My Computer, Part Two in this series! In this section, we'll peruse the outside of the box (or the sides and back of the laptop) to familiarise ourselves with the plugs and drives and to gain confidence in knowing what goes where.

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 Two of this series tours the outside of the computer case so we can quickly and cheerily go about connecting the monitor to the box, downloading pictures from our cameras, and so forth. Simple and straightforward, we'll point out the plugs, outlets and drives, explain the symbols related to them, and set you on course for easy, stress-free connecting. Enjoy!

# Part 2

## Outside the Box: Plugs, Drives, and Holes... What Goes Where?

In Part One: Your Computer and the Main Parts, we took a look at the main parts of our computer, the big pieces that come in the new computer parcel. For Part Two, let's take a closer look at that box. There are so many little gadgets and gizmos, and they're very important to know how to use if we really want to take advantage of the best things the computer has to offer.

Here's a helpful hint; whenever you're connecting a device or inserting something into the computer, a lot of the plugs and connectors only fit in one direction, so be sure to line up the parts before forcing the device into the computer. If it doesn't fit at first, try another direction.

If you've got a laptop, some connectors might be in the back whilst others are located on the sides. If it's not on the sides, look behind the laptop.

In Part Two, we're going to cover:

### The Computer Box Up Front

- Power Button
- CD Drive

### The Computer Box In the Back

- Keyboard and Mouse Plugs
- USB Connectors
- Monitor and Printer Connections
- Audio Plugs and the Internet

# Up Front

White, grey, black, or blue, your computer case looks something like our illustration. You'll find at least one CD-ROM Drive, a power button (if not, it's in the back), and perhaps a few empty panels and plugs. We all have a good handle on what the power button does.

The CD Drive is not just for music. We'll talk about other media later; for now, it is helpful to know that video games and some software programs will have a CD with the program information on it. If the CD doesn't download the program completely the first time you use it, you will need to place the CD in the CD Drive every time you want to use the program. If you've only got one CD Drive, you'll have to pull out your favourite music CD before inserting the software to use your program.

When inserting CDs, simply push the eject button and place your CD on the tray (no, it's not a coffee holder) with the picture side up and the blank, shiny side down. If your laptop doesn't have an eject button on the CD Drive, then your keyboard may have one. To insert a CD into a laptop, make sure there isn't one there already, and gently slide the CD, picture side up, straight into the slot.

Take extra care with your CDs as scratches on the blank, shiny side may cause the computer troubles when trying to read the information. If your software program is not working properly, or if you see a program error message, check to see if there are any scratches on your CD; window cleaner and a soft paper towel usually do the trick, so have a go and try inserting the CD again.



# In the Back

As with the old saying, "you can't fit a square peg in a round hole," these plugs and connectors are different shapes, sizes and colours to make sure the right piece of equipment is connected to the right plug. So let's look at the back for the plugs and connections. It's a bit frightening of a sight, but once you become familiar with their roles, it's not so intimidating.

Here you'll find a lot of circles, squares, polygons and everything in between. There are a lot of little symbols next to each plug. We're going to review the ones most pertinent to your use.

**Desktop Computer Back Panel**



**Laptop Side Panel**



Of course, it's looking a bit scary. Let's get to it and learn what's what.

# Keyboard and Mouse Plugs

If your keyboard or mouse plug looks like the picture below, you'll plug it into the connectors pointed out here.



## Keyboard

The first blue circular plug has a symbol below and to the right that looks like a keyboard. Here's where the keyboard connects with the computer.

## Mouse

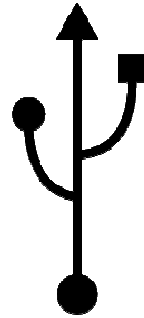
The green circular plug next to the keyboard plug has a symbol below and to the right that looks like a mouse. Here's where the mouse connects with the computer. Should you take out the mouse, the end of the cord, if aligned with the circle patterns, will attach properly here.



If your mouse or keyboard plug looks different, read on; we'll show you where to plug it in straight away.

# USB Connectors

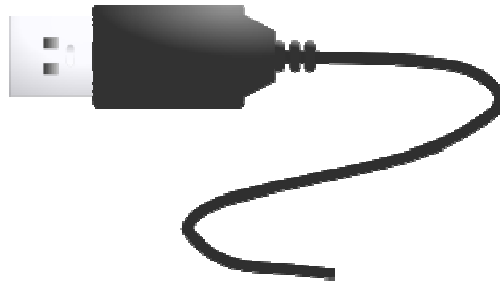
The USB symbol looks sort of funny. Get used to seeing it because the USB plug is one of the most common plugs out there. In fact, your mouse and keyboard may even have USB plugs instead of the ones mentioned previously.



USB plugs look like the images below:



**USB Memory Stick**



**USB Plug from a Device**

If this is the plug you have, look for the USB connections pointed out below.

If you are finding difficulty attaching a USB into the plug, try turning the USB over as the top or bottom end has a thick plate. Match it up, and if it doesn't work, flip it over.



## **Not on the back?**

USB connections are very common these days. Check the bottom or sides of your monitor, an open flap or panel on the front of your computer box, or somewhere close to the power button. All sorts of devices connect to your computer through a USB, so it's only natural that there will be more than one.

# Monitor and Printer Connections

If your plug looks like this,



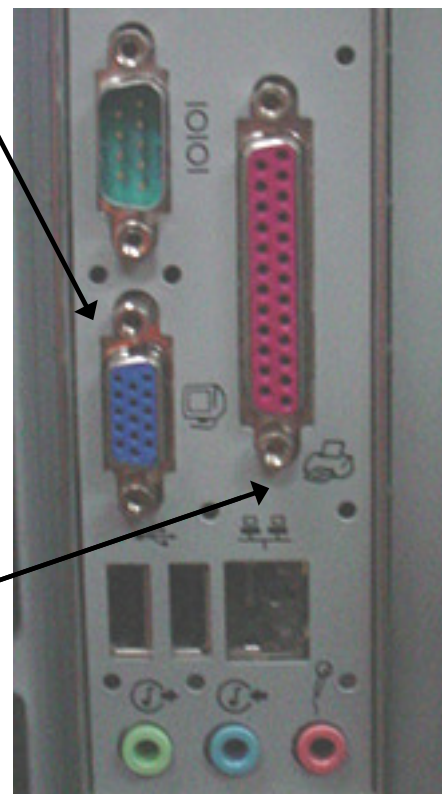
then connecting the device to the computer is a little more hands-on. As you can see, the centre piece fits into the computer plug with a push. The screws, however, must be tightened so the plug remains secure. Always remember to loosen the screws completely before removing the plug.

## Monitor

The small blue slanted square plug has a monitor symbol next to it. Here you may connect the monitor to the computer. Without this plug connected, you won't be able to see what's going on with the computer.

## Printer

The large pink trapezoid-shaped plug has the symbol of a printer down to the right of it. Here you need to align the printer cable properly with this plug. If it doesn't fit, flip it over.



# Audio Plugs and the Internet

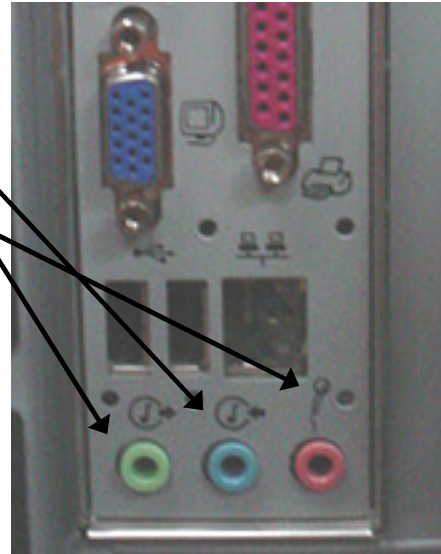
No worries about what these plugs look like; they come from your speakers, they're one small peg that goes into one small hole, and they're colour coded. Put the green peg in the green hole and the blue peg in the blue hole, etc.

## Sound

The small circular holes normally control sound for your computer. The green and blue holes on this computer have symbols that look like arrows coming to and from the musical notes. These two plugs are designated for external speakers so you can hear sound from your computer. The small red hole is for a microphone.

## Headphones?

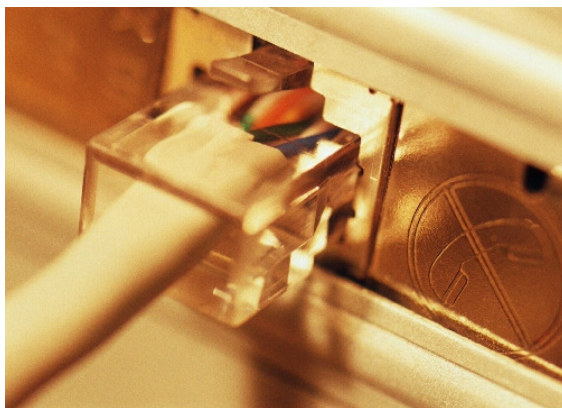
If you need to use headphones, often the symbol in the shape of headphones and its coordinating circular hole can be found somewhere on the monitor, on the speakers, or on the front of the computer case, as headphone cords are not very long.



## Internet

And just a quickie, don't forget the Internet!

These plugs look like telephone jacks, so they're rather friendly looking. Simply look for a connection on the back that's similar to a phone plug, connect the two. Sometimes your computer box will acknowledge the connection is working by flickering or turning on a small green light; this way, when you run into Internet troubles, you'll be able to see if the light is on, telling you the Internet connection is functioning properly.



## Part 2 Summary

You've explored the computer box on the outside. Congratulations! If you're stuck with the task of connecting all the cords to the back of the computer, you are familiar enough with these plugs that the task isn't so daunting any longer.

Now, when you want to connect our camera, and you see a USB plug, just locate an open (empty) USB port and plug it right in. The next time you have a new device to connect to your computer, you're confident and ready to take a close look at the plug and then look for a close match on the box, no sweat.

Now that we're familiar with the outside, let's have a look under the computer's bonnet. In Part Three, we'll tour the inside of the computer box and discover what makes this machine work.

This concludes Part Two 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](mailto:info@thewebonwheels.com.au)