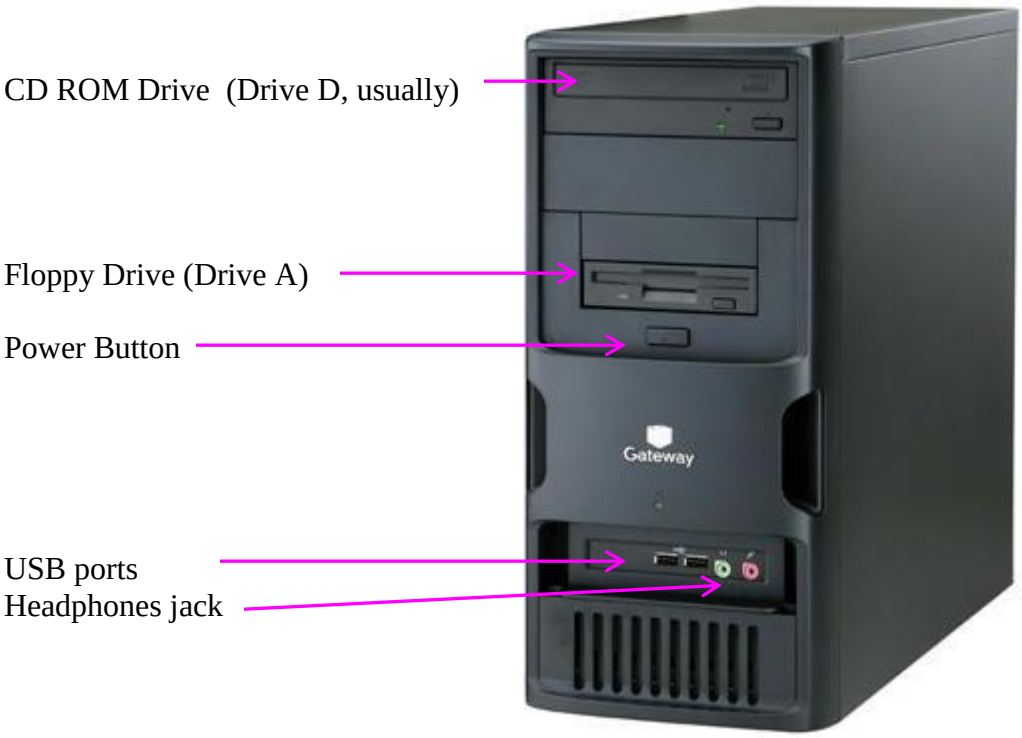
Turning It On/Using a Mouse



This is the computer. It is called a tower. All computers are set up differently, even the ones in the library. But all of them have some of the same features: an on/off button (called a power button), a Floppy disk drive, a CD-ROM drive, USB ports and headphone jacks.

Note: all of our computers are what is called PC (personal computer). They are different from Mac (Macintosh) computers. You may have seen the commercials with the two gentlemen talking about the differences between Mac and PC (picture?). We'll not be going into the difference between them here, except to say that Macs are used mostly by creative people, artists, etc. Whereas PCs are the standard for business.

Our PCs are from Gateway, but they are also available from Dell, Toshiba, and many others…they are all basically the same. All computers come with what is called an operating system. All PCs come with Microsoft Windows installed (except Macs, which are the competitor). Brand new windows computers will come with the Vista operating system. Our computers have the slightly older Windows XP operating system. We won't talk about the difference, mostly because I haven't seen much of Vista, but also because there have been many complaint about the Vista operating system.

The On/Off button is not always in the same place, but it looks like this :
Don't press this in the library!

This is a floppy disk. The floppy drive is for disks that look like this. When you open the computer windows, the floppy drive is almost always Drive A. These disks are for saving files. These disks contain enough memory for most documents (in fact, usually about 40 or 50 documents). However, if you start saving more files, it is worth investing in…

A Flash drive. A flash drive or memory stick (they are also called other names, like thumb drive): saves about 100 times as much information as a floppy disk. They also break down much less often than floppies do. Many computers do not even have floppy drives anymore, although ours do. You insert this into a USB port:

There are USB ports on the front of most machines, and there are usually four more on the back panels (it's much easier to use the ones in front).

With both the floppy drive and the flash drive you can save files and then open them later, make changes, and save them again. ***Note**: Every time you save a file you must give it a unique name. If you give it the same name, it will simply erase the old version… That's fine if you don't need the old version, and most times you don't. However, if you would like to keep the old version too, you must name your new file something different (most of the time you can just add a # to the end of the file name. Example: fileforpaul.doc and fileforpaul2.doc*

A CD ROM is used most often for information that cannot be changed. Many programs and even books come with a CD of information. Files on most CD-ROMs can not be changed. The newer machines in the library can save files to CD. This gives you an affordable and secure method of saving and sharing your files. (Whereas your Flash drive is something you keep with you).

CDs go into the CD Drive (usually labeled as Drive D on your computer)

Types of CD-ROMS:

CD-R is short for CD-Recordable. These are pretty universally recognized. The disadvantage is that you can't reuse a disc… Once something is saved to it, it is done.
CD-RW is short for CD-Rewritable allows you to erase discs and reuse them, but the CD-RW media doesn't work in all players (although it is pretty widely accepted now).

Just to confuse matters there are also DVD-ROMS which will NOT work on CD-ROM burners

DVD-R is a non-rewriteable format and it is compatible with about 93% of all DVD Players and most DVD-ROMs.
DVD-RW is a rewriteable format and it is compatible with about 80% of all DVD Players and most DVD-ROMs.
DVD+R is a non-rewritable format and it is compatible with about 89% of all DVD Players and most DVD-ROMs.
DVD+RW is a rewritable format and is compatible with about 79% of all DVD Players and most DVD-ROMs.

Monitor

The monitor: There are a number of buttons on the monitor. For the most part you don't need to touch them.

There is the Power Button of course which usually looks like this: But the other buttons affect the way the picture looks on the screen either the shape or brightness, much like a television.

Cursor

Your cursor indicates where your action will take place on screen. Most of the time your cursor looks like this:  . When you are able to do an action it looks like this: 

And when you able to type words it looks like this: 

Keyboard basics

The keyboard is what looks like a typewriter. It works much like a typewriter. On the right side are "number" keys, which is like an adding machine. In between the letters and number are directional keys. These arrows show the direction that you can move the cursor if you are in a document.
Note: in order to use the "number keys" as numbers, you must make sure the Num Lock key is pressed (a green light will go on to indicate the numbers can be used.

Function Keys (Fkeys)

Most computer keyboards have a row of Function keys at the top of the keyboard. These keys are marked F1 through F10 or F12. Some programs, including most of Microsoft's products, support use of the function keys. For instance the F1 key will often bring up a help menu. The function keys are frequently used in combination with other keys such as the CTRL key, the ALT key, and the Shift key. This results in a plethora of possible keyboard shortcuts. Look in the help menu of the program that you are using to find a list of the function keys and their uses.

Return or Enter Key

This key is usually marked Return or Enter, but some times it labeled with only a large arrow. This key is used to enter commands or to move the cursor to the beginning of the next line. There is one in the letter section and one in the number section

Escape Key (Esc)

The Escape key, which is marked ESC on most keyboards, is basically used to exit or escape from programs and tasks. In many cases, it will have no effect at all. However, it can sometimes get you out of trouble by making the computer go back or escape to a previous screen.

Tab

In typing programs, the TAB key, is like an indent. It moves the cursor about 7 or 8 spaces. In internet forms, the Tab key is used to move from field to field and is very useful when filling out forms. Pressing the Shift key and the Tab key simultaneously will usually tab you back to the previous field.

Caps Lock

The Caps Lock key is a toggle key. Pressing it once turns it on. Pressing it again turns it off. Some computer keyboards have a light or indicator that shows when the Caps Lock is on and when it is off. When Caps Lock is on, every letter that is typed will be a capital letter. Unlike a typewriter, the Caps Lock key on a computer keyboard affects only letters. It has no effect on the number or symbol keys.

Shift Key

The Shift key in combination with an alphabetical key will type an upper case letter. The Shift key in combination with one of the number keys on the row above the letter keys or one of the symbol keys will type the symbol that is pictured on the upper part of the key.

Control Key (CTRL) & Alt Key

The Ctrl and Alt keys are used in conjunction with another key. Holding it down while pressing another key will initiate a certain action. Ctrl key combinations are defined by the application that is being used. Some, however, have become a standard that most programs follow. For instance in most Windows programs, Ctrl+S will save the current file or document, and Ctrl+P will print the current file or document. **TIP:** In most computer documentation, a plus sign (+) means keys are held down together: Ctrl+F hold down the Control key and press the F key. ALT: Holding down the Alt key while pressing the key corresponding to the underlined letter will open the menu just as though you had clicked your mouse on that menu choice.

Windows Key

The Windows key is marked with a small Microsoft Windows symbol and is usually found on the bottom row of the keyboard. There may be two Windows keys, one on each side of the space bar. Pressing the Windows key will bring up the Start menu. The Window key can also be used in combination with other keys for some very useful shortcuts. One of my favorites is to use the Windows key +D to minimize all the open windows and quickly return to the Windows desktop. Pressing Windows +D again will restore all windows to their previous location.

Application Key

If you have a Windows key on your keyboard, you will also see a key with a design that looks like a list of words on a piece of paper, usually to the left of the space bar. This is called the application key. It is a shortcut for right clicking. It will display an item's shortcut menu.

Space Bar

The Spacebar is used to insert a blank space.

Backspace Key

The Backspace key will remove the character to the left of the cursor. The key is sometimes labeled with only a left-pointing arrow.

Insert Key (Ins)

When the Insert key is on, the new text that you type is inserted at the cursor location and the text already in place is moved to the right. When the Insert key is off, new text overwrites the text that is on the screen to the right of the cursor. Most programs turn the Insert key off, and there is usually little reason for the average user to turn it on. There is usually no visual indication of whether the Insert key is on or off, but if you start typing over letters or words, then you know it has been pressed down.

Delete Key (Del)

Whereas the Backspace key will remove the character to the left of the cursor, the Delete key will remove the key to the right of the cursor. The Delete key can also be used in Windows to remove a highlighted or chosen file or shortcut.

Print Screen (PrtScrn)

The Print Screen key sends an image of the screen to the Windows Clipboard instead of the printer. You can then paste that image in the Clipboard into a program, like a paint program, and print the screen from that program.

Pause/Break and Scroll Lock

These keys were previously used in programming and debugging. In most current programs, they are non-functioning.

Home/Page Up/Page Down/End

Likewise the keys marked PgUp and Pg Down will move the cursor a page up or down on the screen. The Home and End keys will move the cursor to the beginning or end of a line or document, respectively.

Arrow Keys

Whenever you are in a typing situation, these move your cursor up down left or right

Num Lock & Numeric Keypad

The numeric pad is controlled by a toggle key marked Num Lock. When the Num Lock key is on, this pad can be used to enter numbers. When the Num Lock key is off, the functions listed below the number will be activated. These functions include arrow keys, Home, Page Up, Page Down, End, Insert, Delete, as well as mathematical functions: + (addition), - (subtraction), * (multiplication) and / (division).

Mouse

The last thing we have is the mouse: It's a strange little box with buttons on it, and if you want to use a computer at all, I'm afraid you'll have to learn how to use it. It's not too hard, it just takes practice to get comfortable.

The first things to know about using a mouse:
Don't panic!
Don't be intimidated!
You can't break the mouse!

What you see in front of you:
A mouse.
A mouse pad.

Holding the mouse:
Rest your hand on the back of the mouse. And the ball of your hand (near the wrist) on the mouse pad.
There are two buttons on the top of the mouse, and a small wheel in between them. Place your index finger on the left button and your middle finger on the right button.
This should leave your thumb on the left side of the mouse and your ring finger on the right side. You can pick up the mouse using you thumb and ring finger.

Pick up the mouse!
Place it down somewhere else on the mouse pad (don't worry, you won't break it!)
Frequently, you will be leaving the ball of your hand on the mouse pad, and picking up the mouse to move to somewhere else on the mouse pad.

Moving the mouse on the mouse pad.
A mouse pad is not essential; however, it feels nice under your hand and provides a continuous surface for the mouse. You want the mouse to glide on the mouse pad. A smooth and gentle hand motion is all you need.

Imagine that the mouse pad is your computer screen. The way you move the mouse on the mouse pad will move the cursor on the screen: up, down, left, right. The faster your move your hand, the faster the cursor will move on the screen. (Don't worry, you can't break it!)

You can also pick up the mouse and place it down elsewhere on the mouse without losing your place on the screen. So, if you are moving your mouse to the left of the screen and you get to the edge of the mouse pad, simply pick up the mouse and place it down in the center of the mouse pad again. (You can't break it!) When you move the mouse to the left again, the cursor will continue from where you last had it.

Clicking:
Virtually everything that you do on the computer involves clicking.
The most important thing to remember about clicking is that you MUST hold your mouse still over the icon or text that you want to click on. This is especially true for double-clicking. If you move the mouse while you are clicking, the computer will think you are trying to move the icon instead of clicking on it. So, when you click the mouse, be sure to use only your finger and press down! Don't "push" the mouse or the mouse "button" up the pad, just press down on the button, keeping the rest of your hand still.
It's important to get familiar with clicking and with the terms used:

Single-click. Using your index finger, press down on the left button once.
Double-click. This is an important step when using the computer. Using your index finger click on the left button twice, as fast as you can. Most mice are programmed to accept clicks that are not as fast as you can click, but faster is better…it lets the machine know that the two clicks are connected, not two separate activities.
Right-click. Using your middle finger, click on the right button once. This is typically an advanced move, and not used very frequently. You won't need to do this today, but you can if you like.
Click and drag or Drag and drop. With your index finger on the left button Click on an icon and hold your finger down. This means you have "grabbed" the icon and can move it around the screen. This is useful if you want to "grab" the box on the right side of the screen to "scroll" up or down a document or web page. This is also the technique you would use for "highlighting" text when you want to cut and paste (which we'll practice later).

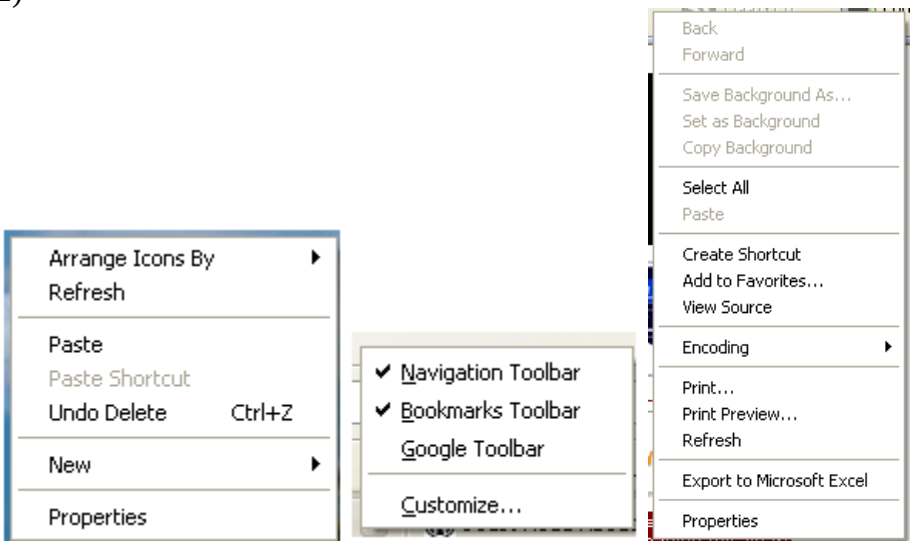
The cursor:
On your computer screen, your cursor is the representation of the mouse.

The cursor looks like this: 

When the cursor looks like this:  it means that if you click your mouse, something will happen (99% of the time, it means, you can click on a link and go to a web page).

Things that you may see and what they mean:

1)



Boxes like this, which pop up inexplicably, usually mean that you pressed the right button on your mouse. They offer advanced options that you don't need to worry about right now, but if you look at the options you can get a sense of what you can do with them. Simply single-click the left mouse button to get them to go away.

2)This means that you pressed the wheel in between the buttons. This is also an advanced feature. Essentially, it allows you to quickly move throughthe page you are on by moving the mouse in the direction you wish to go. It is only really useful on very large pages.

What is that wheel anyway?
The wheel between the two buttons allows you to move up and down a very long page (this is useful when writing documents in word, or looking at certain web pages). As you roll the wheel top to bottom you will see the page "scroll" up or down.

Clicking takes practice!

When to click:

If you want to "open" an item, either a file, or a folder, or a program, you must double click on the "icon." Usually, an hourglass will show up on the screen to indicate that the item is opening. If you single click, nothing will happen. So, if nothing happened, try double clicking again. If you see that the icon has moved at all, then most probably, you clicked and moved your mouse. You essentially clicked and dragged the icon rather than double clicking it.

Once you have opened a program, if you want to "do" anything or "go" anywhere, you just single click. When you're on the internet, if you want to go to another web page, or click on any kind of "link" you must single-click the left arrow button. You don't need to double click, but if you do, that's okay.

Most of time, if your cursor turns into a finger  you can single click the item.

Blinking cursor

If you are using any kind of program where you will be typing text (Microsoft Word, or a form on the internet or even a web site address, you must single click your mouse into the area where you want to type. When you click once in that "text box" your mouse will turn into a solid line and will begin blinking. Once the cursor is blinking, you can begin typing, or you can delete text from where the cursor is blinking with the delete and backspace keys on your keyboard.

When you want to type in a web address:
1. Click once to highlight the whole address (press Backspace to delete the whole thing)
2. If you click once again, the cursor will appear so you can type and erase the address
3. If you double click, a word will highlight
4. If you triple click (!) it will highlight the entire address like in example 1.

Websites for mouse practice:

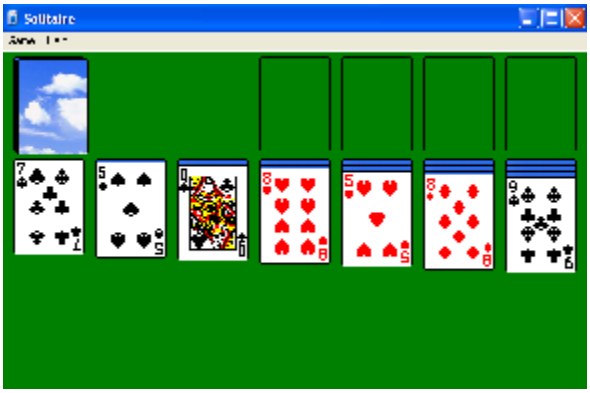
Senior Net: http://www.seniornet.org/howto/mouseexercises/mousepractice.html
Mouse Practice: http://www.beenleigss.qld.edu.au/requested_sites/mousepractice/
(this site is designed for kids, but the exercises are still good!) I recommend 14, 16 and 18.
Mousercise: http://www.somd.lib.md.us/mouse/page1.htm

Another good source for mouse practice is, believe it or not, the free solitaire game that comes with every computer.

To access Solitaire:

Click the Start menu in the bottom left of the screen. Move your mouse to All Programs (at the bottom of the window that just opened). When the big window opens, move your mouse up to Games (about ¾ of the way up the list). A smaller window will open. Move your mouse to Solitaire and click once.

Online solitaire is very good for practicing clicking and dragging, as well as dragging and releasing an item.



On the Screen

When the machines are turned on, what you will see is called a "Desktop." Imagine, if you will, that you are looking down on a desk. All of the things you see on the screen are items on your desktop. These things are called "icons" or "shortcuts"

On our machines, there are several icons on the desktop.
These are what we have on most of these machines:

My Computer


Internet Explorer


Firefox


Google Earth


Word


Excel


PowerPoint

Recycle Bin


Adobe Acrobat

I'll explain each of these in order of ease of use.

Recycle Bin: This is your garbage. Whenever you delete something, it gets loaded into the Recycle Bin. From time to time it is important to empty the recycle bin, otherwise things just build up in there.

Adobe Acrobat: This means that you can open PDF files on this computer. There are many forms online that come in this format, including tax forms and legal documents.

Microsoft Word (.doc) is used for typing documents. Basically, anytime you need to type anything, you would use this program. It allows for all kinds of formatting styles, like bold, italics, as well as columns and other features.

Microsoft Excel (.xls) is used for making spreadsheets. These are used primarily for business works, although it does have practical applications for every day use. It is a fairly complicated program to learn to use, and we offer a separate class in it.

Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt) is used for creating slideshow presentations. There's no real practical use for this program unless you are giving a presentation, but it is fairly easy to use.

Internet Explorer. This is the program that allows you access to the internet

Firefox is a competing program with Internet Explore. It works basically the same, it's just some people like to use it instead.

Google Earth is a program that lets you see satellite images of any place in the world.

My Computer is the icon that lets you delve deeper into your computer. We'll talk about this in a later class, but, in a nutshell, when you open it, you will see icons for the various drives, as well as folders which contain all kinds of documents and more folders. The amount of things that are in the computer are mind boggling, and really no one knows everything that's in there. But we'll cover a lot of the most basic and most important stuff that you'll need to know.

Common File extensions

.doc Microsoft Word Text file
.xls Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet
.ppt Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
.htm or .html Web site page
.exe Executable file (will open a program...be careful if you don't know where it's from!)

.mp3 a music file
.avi a music file
.wav a music file
.mpg a movie file
.jpg or jpeg a picture file
.gif a picture file

At the bottom left of the screen you will see a green Start button. You can access the disc drives and programs from this Start button.

To the right of the Start button is what is called the task bar. Whenever you open a program, an icon will appear in that bar indicating that it is currently opened and in operation.

At the bottom right of the computer is the current time and if you place your mouse over the time, it will show you the date.

To turn off the machine, Click the Start button 

and click Turn Off Computer. A new window will open. Click Turn Off. If for some reason, your computer crashes, or freezes, you can hold in the On button on your tower until the machine shuts off.
Don't do this in the library!

What to do when you come to the library's computers.

When you sit down at the library's computers you will see a gray screen with two boxes. Type the numbers on the back of your library card (that start with 2930…) into the Library Card Number box and your PIN number (if you don't know or remember it, ask the reference librarian) into the PIN box. Your session lasts one hour. If you need more time, the reference librarian can give you another session. Printing costs five cents per page for black and white and 25 cents per page for color. You can print from any program or the internet. Simply bring your library card and money to the reference desk.