

PARTS OF THE PC

I always feel a great deal of empathy for the new computer user. I have been working with computers since 1978 and specifically with PCs since 1988, but I still have to learn a pile of new things every day. What an uphill battle the new user must face! That is why there are no such things as stupid questions in my shop; it is more important to understand where we are really at than to put on pretence of false knowledge. If you ask us a question that we don't know the answer to, we will say, "I don't know", but then we will go and do the research to find out. It's a sense of humility that most computer nerds don't have, because for them it is more important to put on a show of knowledge.

Which is also why we do not indulge in the "used car salesman" mentality to sell computers, we are not interested in a quick sale. We are interested in solving your particular problem. If we speak too quickly, or give out too many technical terms, just ask us to slow down, we're there to help you understand.

A common problem for users is the identification of the various parts and pieces that make up your computer system. We frequently run into miscommunication issues over the phone because people do not know the names of the parts of their system. Here is a glossary:

The PC – The Personal Computer is the main box that most of the wires and cables plug into. It is also where the CD-ROM and floppy drive are, the power button, and sometimes the front USB ports. This thing can be called the **case**, the **tower**, the **computer**, but it should not be called the CPU or the Hard Drive.

The Monitor – This is the screen that you see your Windows on. It will have a power button to turn it on, and usually some screen controls, which control where and how the picture on the screen is located. It will have a power cord that goes to your power bar or the wall and a data cord, which connects to the back of the PC, usually with two little knobs to retain it.

Keyboard and Mouse – These are fairly straightforward, particularly since they are colour-coded, pink for keyboard and green for mouse. Be careful plugging these in, we get many clients folding over the pins by being a little too forceful.

Network – If you are on the internet, you are on a network, even if you only have the one PC. The Ethernet connection looks like a phone jack, but is about twice as big. It usually runs from your PC to the internet modem, though it can run to other devices, depending on what kind of network setup you have. If you are on dialup, then you will have a dialup modem with a telephone cable running from the back of your PC to the wall jack.

If you have question or comments, I can always be reached via email sean@intrex.ca or join our forums at <http://intrex.ca> for more in-depth conversations.