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**From our series of 8 business and computing how to books and discussions.**

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"An Introduction to computers and computing,"  
by John Davin

"Just what is a computer, and why do I need one?"

Your computer and the Internet will be the most powerful and useful device ever invented. It will change the way you work and play, if it has not already.

That said, we are happy to say this book will focus more on what you can do with a computer than a review about the latest, greatest video card for games or telling how large of a hard drive you need. Most of that information changes daily, and it can be found in the latest magazine or at a local computer vendor. We want to focus on making the computer the most fun and useful device you've ever used, period.

If you would like a report on the latest, greatest computers and specifically what computer to buy, just send me e-mail and I'll send you a current list of things to look for. Send it to [jddavin@mynewoffice.com](mailto:jddavin@mynewoffice.com), with the subject, "newcomputertips".

We are willing to help because we understand that this is a big undertaking for anyone. It is a big responsibility for you, whether you are purchasing a computer for home and especially if you are accountable to someone else to update the computer equipment for a business.

The reason the pressure is to high is again that the computer is arguably the most exciting and life changing tool ever invented, IF you have the right software and know how to use it. Sadly, there is so much to learn about computers, that many people who own a computer do not even use it because they do not know how to use it! Our goal is to take away those fears with an easy to use guide to successful computing.

Now, here are the basics of what you need to know about computing!

### **Tip of the day:**

Always buy your computer systems based on the specific programs you need to run on your computer, and the support you will receive from whoever you buy it from. Remember that you are purchasing a computer to accomplish specific tasks. These tasks range from typing term papers to marketing on the Internet to playing games. Whatever the need, the

software is the program or programs you use to accomplish your tasks. Software is the set of instructions you give to the computer to complete tasks.

Be sure to depend on more than once source for your information.

- \* Internet sites/reviews
- \*Computer magazines
- \*Local computer stores
- \*The local computer guru
- \*The office computer guru
- \*Relatives (even brother-in-laws)

Then just go for it!

**Start by outlining what you want to do with your computer.**

**Examining your needs:**

Your most important decision about purchasing a new computer is the software you plan to purchase with and for your computer:

In other words, what do you wish to do with your computer? Please take a minute to write down what you think you want to do with your computer before you turn the page. I believe you will be shocked one year from today when you look back to this section, and see how many more ways you now use and depend on your computer!

What I would do with a new computer:

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**See if any of your goals change after you have read the entire book!**

Let's move on, keeping in mind that you will want to b sure to outline what you expect to do with your computer and purchase the software as a bundle with your new computer to save money, time and frustration. Your computer is of no value if it has no software to use, or if it is broken down or being repaired.

Which brings up the support issue again. The term support covers many issues beyond basic warranties, including setup, training, telephone support, loaners and may even include shipping costs in case of needed repairs. Use our checklist to compare vendors and remember, bottom dollar is not your only criteria for purchasing a computer.

### **Now, what are you looking for when you shop?**

For your home computer, you probably know about the basics you would like in a computer; for the kids (or even you) to play a few games, write term papers for school, keep track of recipes, personal finances and perhaps your home inventory. But your home computer use does not need to end there!

Today you can also watch TV on your computer, listen to a music on CD-Rom, access an encyclopedia via your CD-Rom player or Internet, or contact a relative or friend thousands of miles away via e-mail and the Internet! Quite an accomplishment for a tool that did not exist in the home less than a quarter of a century ago!

Next, what about your computer for your business? When we talk about business computers, you probably already realize that computer systems are a true paradox; no other tool for business has the potential to standardize business operations and earn more profits for a business, or to use up valuable business resources!

Employee training, hardware upgrades, network and data security and even regular backups can all put a strain on any business unless the company has a plan for the computer systems that allow him or her to fully utilize the real power, time and money savings of a computer system.

You probably already have overlooked these issues and are already plan to implement the huge value and time savings of a well thought out, computerized office or computerized department. Good for you. The benefits are so many, we could never list them all here, but here are a few:

#### **Sales:**

The computer can generate sales materials, distribute sales information via e-mail or fax or the web, provide after the sale support, and even generating additional sales in the future by keeping in touch with customer years into the future with automated e-zines and newsletters.

#### **Forecasting business growth:**

This requires timely financial reports for your business, from checkbook balancing and accounts payable and receivable reports for in-house operations to balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the banker or the board of directors!

#### **Desktop Publishing:**

Design and print your own newsletter, business cards, letterhead, calendars, , advertising fliers, greeting cards, birthday cards, banners, maps and more! Desktop publishing is a booming business today, and one that you may want to get into for a side line business.

#### **Communications:**

Computers allow you to communicate with other computer users around the world, through e-mail, fax by Internet, and now even VOIP (Voice-over Internet Prototocol) where many people can enter a conference room on the Internet and talk over the Internet via a microphone and speakers, push (share) web pages and Power Point presentations. And they

can even record the entire session for archival or training purposes.

## Training:

Traditional classroom settings are great, but traveling to contemporary classes takes up valuable time and for people in a busy society. With the aforementioned Voice-Over Internet Protocol technology, the classroom is available to anyone, anywhere, as long as the students have access to the Internet.

You can see that computers perform a variety of functions. They can help you be creative with desktop publishing or take mundane, repetitious tasks and make them automatic, reducing time and cost associated with doing business, and increasing your bottom line. Networked computers can help share information and ideas to increase efficiency with e-mail and decrease costs of computerizing an office with shared devices such as printers, modems, hard disk drives, computer faxes, and more, saving time as and money. Now that's what we like to hear!

## **Where to buy your new computer:**

So it is an exciting time but still a confusing time for many. People talking about gigabytes and hard drives or floppy drives, what does it all mean? Add the aforementioned scenario to the fact that in the eyes of many, computer equipment and computer systems have almost become a commodity and the waters become even more muddled.

You can buy a computer almost anywhere, including the grocery store, with a vast variety of add-ons and software programs to run on the computer, but, with all these options, how do you make an educated decision on what type of hardware and software to purchase, and who do you purchase it from?

Much of the decision depends on you, your skills and goals. Do you understand hardware and software? Do you need technical support? Is local service worth a bit more expense up front? Can you survive without your computer system if it sent out for repairs for 3 weeks, or do you need Onsite service? Next, how can you decrease downtime in the future by preventive maintenance today? How often should you optimize your hard disk drive, or clean your floppy disk drive? When is the right time to upgrade your computer system?

These are questions you are probably asking today, and as you probably already know, it is difficult to find a complete instruction manual or book for today's complex computer systems. Yet it becomes more apparent each day that everyone needs to learn how to use computers in their work place, and increasingly even at home!

So the importance of understanding how to buy and maintain the right computer becomes more and more important every day. Starting with how to initially purchase a computer, to how to turn it on, to how to install and use software, to making sure to secure the data via back up the computer's hard disk drive, upgrading your software and protecting the computer from viruses, you need good, sound advice.

Your best option is to contact a computer professional in your community who can help you each step of the way. That person may or may not actually sell hardware, but it s usually best to find someone who will sell the hardware and software together as bundled solution, so there are no chances that both the hardware and software vendors blame each other if there are problems.

These people are usually called VARS (value added resellers) and they are similar to the old FULL SERVICE gas stations. The ones where they actually check your tires, belts and oil levels. Sure, they cost a bit more, but can save you a ton of headaches down the road because they know what they are doing and they offer maintenance contracts. It may be worth the cost of you are a business that depends on your computers.

## **Now what type of computer should you purchase?**

Well, when I started my retail computer store in 1981, there were three types of computers to purchase. The Macintosh, a true IBM PC or XT, or a clone.

Today, most people will purchase an IBM clone (a copy of the original IBM) as IBM is no longer the predominant player in the personal computer market. As for Macintosh, although the Macintosh is still a great computer, its sales are still less than 10% of the market. For these reasons, we will mostly talk about IBM clones in this book.

So you now have one type of computer to choose from, but you now have hundreds if not thousands of different vendors and the same number of computer configurations you can purchase. IBM, Hand Technology, Compaq, Dell, HP, are some of the better known systems but there are now thousands of clone makers all building excellent computers, so the average person may be intimidated by all the options.

### **In purchasing a computer today, I would simply advise you to focus on these factors.**

- Choose the right software to complete the your tasks.
- Choose hardware that will run the software you choose.
- Look for integration of software and hardware by vendor.
- Be sure to buy from a company that offers system training.
- Ask about the options for upgrading the computer in the future.
- Ask about the warranty on the computer and if it is onsite or not.

This can sound daunting to a new computer user. Buying the right computer can be a difficult task. In fact, you may not know if you've made the right decisions until years after the purchase. Unfortunately, if one of the above items listed above the fails as the weak link in the package, the entire purchase may be a problematic purchase and cost you a lot of money or at least headaches.

However, the good news is that even though purchasing your new computer system is a very big project, it is getting less difficult each year. If you remember to explore your needs for software first, then search until you find the right service agreements, finding the computer with the right components will be the easy part.

You'll also need to decide if you want to purchase a throw away computer or one that will be upgraded for years into the future as new software is developed that requires more capacity to operate the new software programs. We'll help you decide

We'll help you decide which computer you need and what software you need as well.

But before we get started, I'd like to share one rule of technology with you. This is one of the best lessons I can provide about technology. The rule is simple. Once you have and use new technology, there is no going back! The story is an interesting one about my parents and their experiences with technology. Even though I love computers, my parents are have never been excited about technology. But because they are brokers of their real estate office, I have always felt they should be using computer technology to be more competitive in their industry.

My parents did not share my enthusiasm and I felt they were not up on current office technology, so one day in 1981 I took a fax machine to my parents' real estate office. I told my mom that she needed the fax machine to keep up with the other real estate offices in the city. She said that she nor Dad would never use it, they did not need it, and that I should

just take it back. Well, I knew better than to quit that easily. I made a deal with my Mom at that point. I told her I would do her a favor down the road later on if she would just try this machine for a month. I said I would leave it there for 30 days, and I wanted her to tell the other offices and customers that she now had a fax machine. I would come back in thirty days, and if she did not want to buy it then, I would be glad to take it back and sell it.

At that time, fax machines cost \$400-\$600, so I wanted to make sure we agreed she would have to pay for it when she was used to having it! Of course thirty days later she would NOT let me to take the fax machine back, and she almost got angry when I teased her that I needed it back and she'd have to go buy her own. This is one of the best lessons I can provide about technology. Once you have and use new technology, there is no going back!

A few months later, I did the same thing with a computer. I told her she absolutely needed a computer, and I would loan her an old 8088 computer to write letters and track her clients. I also wanted her to use the BBS (bulletin board system like the Internet) we had set up for her office. She never did use the BBS much, but again, she did NOT let me take the computer back after the 30 days.

Today, Dad still refuses to use those "Darn" computers, but Mom just installed 4 new computers, complete with scanners, 17 monitors, cable modem and a network to share e-mail, files, printers and the Internet. Even though she has her days, she knows it in a necessary tool to be successful in her business. I saw the future way back in 1981 and tried to be ahead of the curve with our bbs ( the precursor to the Internet) real estate network via modem, as I knew that even though it took 4 hours to transmit a picture with 300 baud modems, the technology would change and everyone would one day use computers to buy and sell homes, cars, shoes and everything else.

My point is this. If you re in business today, look back about what made you purchase your first fax machine, and think about how you might have fared in business without that fax machine. Were you trying to be ahead of the curve in using technology, or did you buy the fax machine because everyone else was upset with you that you did not have one yet?

The fact is, faxing soon will be old technology as many people now use faster and better (color) scanners and e-mail to communicate. That is one technology that is going away, but I think we both know that the Internet, or some form of it will always be with us.

Today is the day to see the future and build your business on the Internet. Remember, if you don t look at the past, how will you be prepared for the future? And if you don t accept the technology, learn it and use (exploit) it, you will be left behind. My goal is to help people see the future, embrace the technology of the future, and move forward!

But let s get back to the software and what we specifically want to do with the computer. Then you can decide what type of computer you want to buy and where you will buy it.

### **Software: What is it and what programs do you need?**

When buying your computer, remember that you are purchasing a computer to accomplish specific tasks. From typing term papers to tracking sales in the accounting package at the office, to playing games. Whatever the need, the software is the program or programs you use to accomplish your tasks. Software is the set of instructions you give to the computer to complete tasks.

### **Examples of the types of software we use:**

Word processing, spreadsheets, databases, accounting packages, desktop publishing, etc.

## Examples of companies who make software:

Microsoft, Lotus, Corel, Intuit, Peachtree, etc.

## Examples of software titles are:

Microsoft Office, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft Access, Lotus 123, Corel Word Perfect, etc.

There are many options, and we'll cover them below, but just remember, you always choose the software you want to use on your computer, then purchase the hardware from the vendor who gives you the best integration of hardware, software and support. Period.

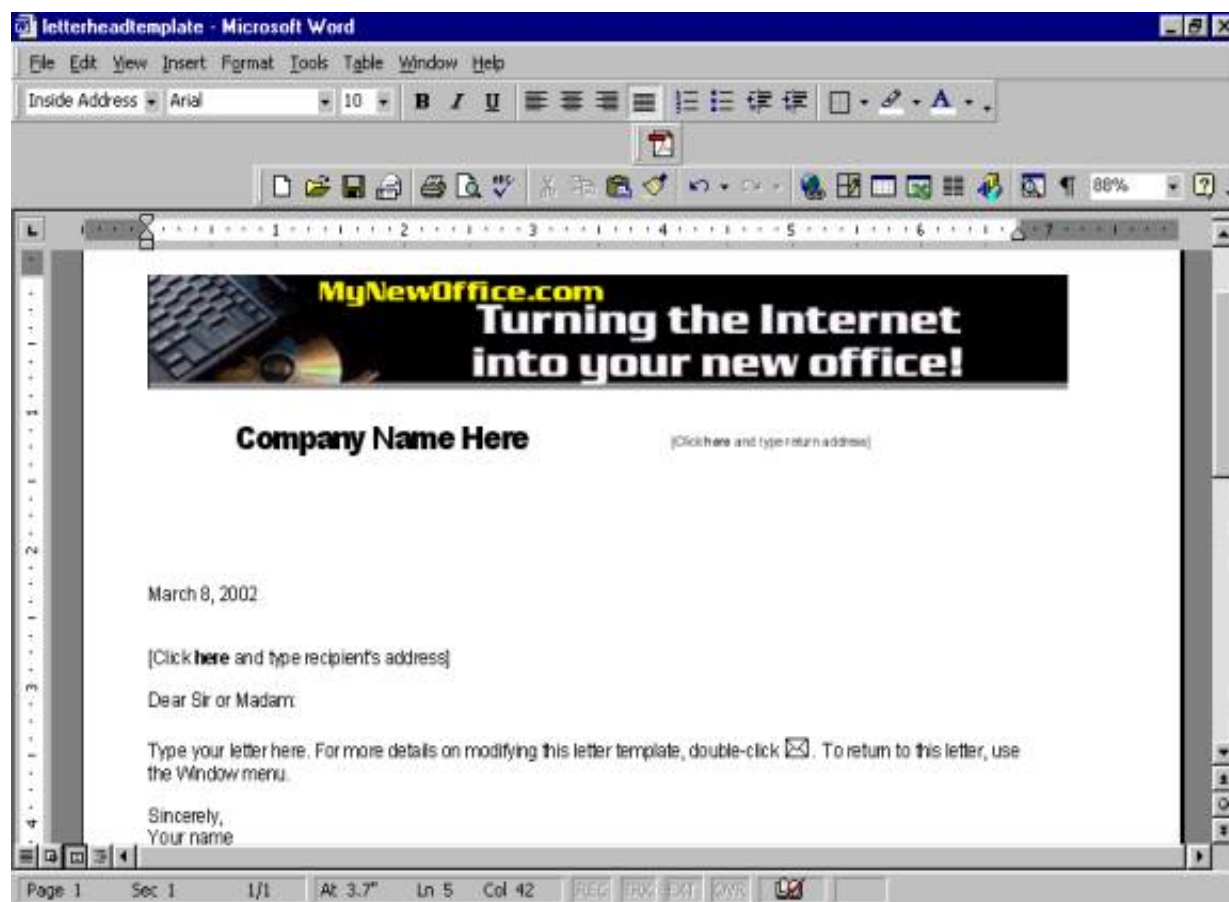
Now, we'll throw out suggestions and options for computer software and programs you may want to purchase. You check the ones you think you need and use the checklist as a guide!

Note: Many of the accessories such as digital cameras and scanners are listed in the chapter on tools you need for developing a website, along with special software packages for developing your website, e-mail responders, fax on demand, search engine submittals, and more!

Now, place a check by the programs you think you need, then go get them!

## [ ] Word Processing

Uses: Writing business or personal letters, school papers, manuals, memos and more.



NOTE 1: If you'd like to learn more about creating and printing your own letterhead and letters on your computer, [click here](#).

NOTE 2: In today's computer world, anything you create on your computer can be sent directly from your computer via fax or e-mail! Consider e-mail and a fax in your computer as a prerequisite of your computer plan.

Functions: Any good word processing program will have the following:

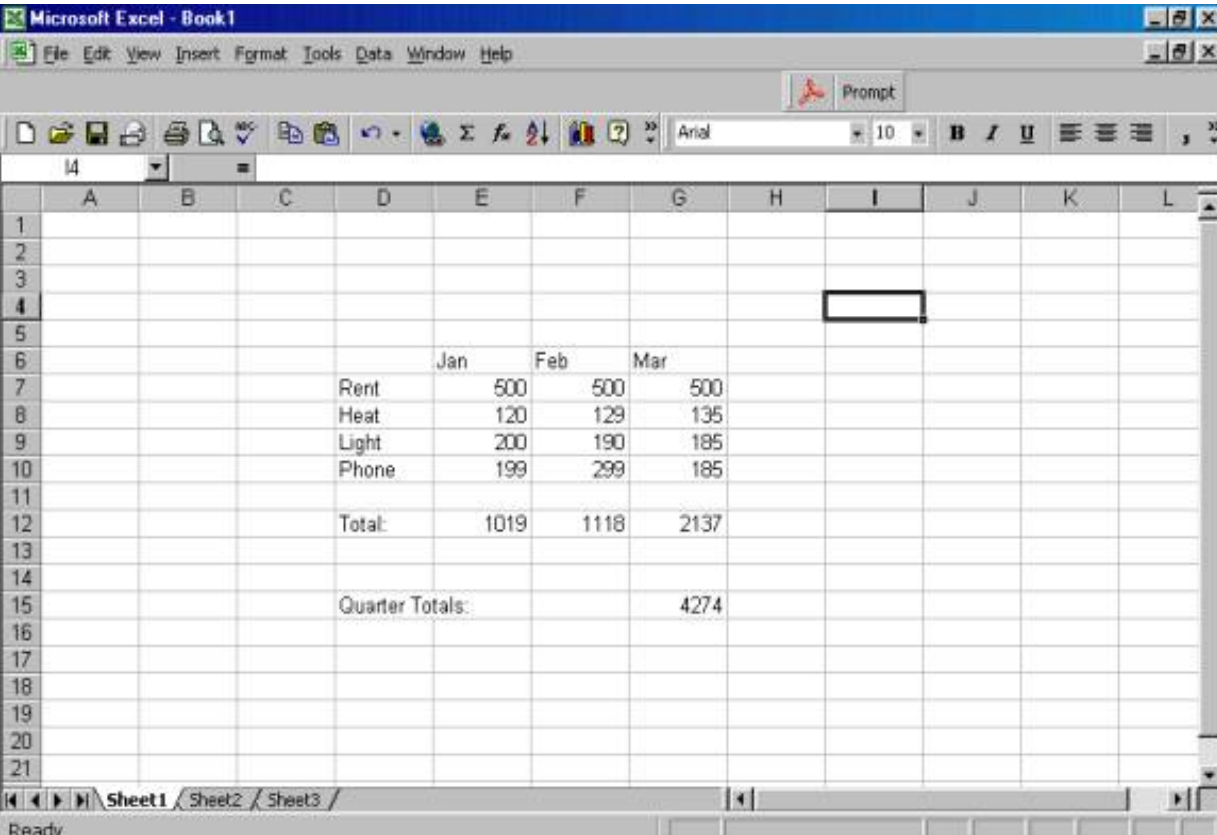
- Grammar Checker: Automatically checks your grammar.
- Spelling Checker: Automatically finds misspelled words and presents the correct spelling.
- Thesaurus - look up synonyms and antonyms (words with similar/dissimilar meaning)
- Word Wrap - Automatically wrap words to the next line.

Note: Some of the more powerful word processors now perform many of the functions of desktop publishing for making graphics, newsletters, forms, banners and such.

Examples: Microsoft Word, Lotus Word, WordPerfect and a few of my favorite FREE programs. You can get a list of clones by sending me e-mail to: [jddavin@mynewoffice.com](mailto:jddavin@mynewoffice.com)

## [ ] Spreadsheets

Uses: Spreadsheets are used for making calculations and manipulating numbers. Profit and loss statements, balance sheets, cost estimates, household budgets and more can be done on a spreadsheet. With a spreadsheet, you can quickly add up balance sheet of costs for living in your home, and forecast a budget for the future.



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled "Microsoft Excel - Book1". The spreadsheet contains a table with the following data:

	Jan	Feb	Mar
Rent	500	500	500
Heat	120	129	135
Light	200	190	185
Phone	199	299	185
Total:	1019	1118	2137
Quarter Totals:			4274

Example: Home budgets, balance sheets, checkbook balancing.

For example, with the home budget, you want to know how much money you spend each month, compared to your income. Then you need to be able to quickly change one factor, such as the amount of rent you pay per month for your home and see how it effects your total income for each month and the year. In a spreadsheet, you can change just the monthly rental cost, and it will adjust your budget for the month and year in a matter of seconds, or less!

This is just one example!

Examples: Microsoft Excel, Lotus 123, Quattro Pro

## [ ] Database Management

Uses: Databases allow the user to enter and track specific details. The information can be searched, compiled and reported at a later date. Uses are: Inventory control, customer lists, home recipes and more.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "John Davin - A coolebiz member" with a "Contacts" header. The interface includes a "Goto DataSheet View" button and a tabbed menu with "Contact Info" selected. The "Contact Info" section contains fields for First Name (John), Last Name (Davin), Home Phone (319-338-9477), Work Phone (319-338-9477), Email Address (pc\_prof1@inav.net), Best Time to Call (8 After 8 pm), Time Zone (Central), and Next Date To Call. Below this is a "Category" dropdown set to "A coolebiz member", with "Add Category" and "Delete Category" buttons. A section for scheduling includes "Day Started" (9/10/00), "Next Message" (Done), and "Date to Send". Navigation controls show "Record: 1 of 7". A checkbox "Stop All Messages To Contact" is present. A "Search Contacts by" section has fields for First Name, Last Name, and Email. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Add Contact", "Delete Contact", "Appointments", "View All Contacts", "Filter Contacts By Category", "Immediate Message", and "Print Contact Info". The bottom status bar shows "Record: 2 of 9 (Filtered)".

Functions:

Any good databases program will have the following:

·Report Writing: Print reports in detail of information collected.

- Mailing Labels: Create mailing labels, one at a time or thousands.
- Mass Mailings: Used for sending information to thousands at a time.

Examples: DBase, FoxPro, Microsoft Access.

## [ ] Personal or Business Tax Preparation Software

Uses: Yes, you may have to purchase new software each year to estimate and print out your tax forms for the government, but the small cost may far outweigh the costs of someone else doing your taxes or not getting them done on time! This software can save you hours of time and headaches estimating taxes and preparing tax paperwork. Many systems now simply prompt you for each answer, and have pop-up help when you aren't sure what they are asking! Simply complete the information, tell the program to print, and the program can print your 1040 information and the form itself!

You can even have someone electronically transmit the information to the IRS via computer modems, saving time and money. You may even get your tax return back earlier!

This is just one example from one company. There are many.

### Taxact - tax preparation software

#### **From our newsletter:**

Is it time to file your taxes again already, or are you just getting a head start on it this year? Either way, use your computer and this software package to help you save time and be more accurate.

Taxact is a software package that you can download and use absolutely free. My wife used this software this year to to prepare our taxes. She's an accountant and has worked as a controller for large international Nonprofit organizations. If she says it works well, I think we can take her word for it.

She did mention that there is a small fee to file electronically, ([I checked the site today](#) on 6-27-2002 and the upgrade is \$7.95). But hey, they have to make their money some where, right?

I also reviewed the site today and the site says that now you can do your tax work online via the Internet, so you don't even have to download any software!

Because offers change, you'll need to read the agreements before you purchase the package, but this is a great software package and a great place to start your tax year.

Please join the discussion board and let us know if she was right and you liked the software!

[Download your free version here!](#)

Other examples: Turbo Tax Software

## [ ] Business Accounting:

Uses: To be successful in today s competitive market, a business person needs to be on top of accounts payable,

accounts receivable, inventory and payroll. Reports have to be prepared for the government, bankers, investors and others.

Some accounting programs are single user, others allow more than one person to share certain information and functions of the program, which are multi-user. Be sure your accounting software can grow as your company grows!

Functions:

Different accounting programs have different options. Check with your dealer.

- Accounts payable (bills you owe to vendors, suppliers, etc.).
- Accounts receivable (bills owed to you from customers for products, services).
- General Ledger (print balance sheet, P+L statements, adjust balances).
- Payroll Module (calculate and print employee wages, W2/940/941 forms etc.)
- Inventory control (track product in inventory, shrinkage, etc.).
- Order Entry system (Create quotes, work orders, invoices and more).
- Point of sale (bar coded products, inventory control, automatic pricing).

Examples: Quicken, Quickbooks, Business Works, Peachtree, etc.

NOTE: Consult a professional for advice or ask for our review of accounting packages.

### [ ] **Desktop Publishing:**

Uses: Design and print your own newsletter, letterhead, calendars, advertising, advertising flier, greeting cards, birthday cards, banners, maps and more! Desktop publishing is a booming business today, and one that you may want to get into for a side line business.

Note:

Many of today's word processors have many of the functions of desktop publishing built right in to the program. Ask your computer dealer for examples.

Examples: MS Publisher, Corel Draw, Pagemaker, etc.

### [ ] **Contact Management Software**

Salespeople, and other professionals use contact management software to track phone numbers of their contacts, scheduled meetings, calls to make, as well as information regarding each respective contact. This information can be related to a spouses name or children's birthdays, past purchases, quotes, questions, and any other information they may want to track about the customer.

John Davin - A coolebiz member

## Contacts

Goto DataSheet View

Contact Info | Add Info | Notes | Category Messages Sent | Custom Fields | Immediate/Un

First Name: John Last Name: Davin  
 Home Phone: 319-338-9477 Work Phone: 319-338-9477  
 Email Address: pc\_prof@inav.net Best Time to Call: 8 After 8 pm  
 Time Zone: Central Next Date To Call:

Category: A coolebiz member Add Category Delete Category

Day Started: 9/10/00 Next Message: Done Date to Send:

Record: 1 of 7

Stop All Messages To Contact

Search Contacts by  
 First Name: Last Name: Email:

Add Contact Delete Contact Appointments View All Contacts  
 Filter Contacts By Category Immediate Message Print Contact Info

Record: 2 of 9 (Filtered)

Customers can be individuals, municipalities, small business concerns or corporations, so you can track individuals within each group as needed. One of the greatest uses of this software is for keeping track of events and happenings related to specific customers. This page of information can be free form (similar to a simple word processor file) where you can add whatever type of information you want about the contact. You may want to keep track of this information chronologically (by time and date) so you can track progress of your sales efforts.

Be sure to read the chapter on [Internet marketing](#) for a complete business plan using this application.

### [ ] The Internet

Uses: To perform research and communicate with others.

Once online, you can do a variety of things, such as: Product or educational research, reserve an airline flight, check the weather, purchase products, send messages to other people, download (receive) computer programs to use on your computer as well as many other things!

You may even be able to access your local university to register for classes or to turn in your homework! You may be able to contact your local library and retrieve information or reserve books.

You can access many different types of services with a modem, such as the Internet, Prodigy, Compuserve, America

Online, and thousands of BBS computer systems around the country. However, most BBS systems are now part of the Internet and we will see fewer and fewer BBS systems in the years to come, if any.

Here is an example of a Web site, Yahoo.com, the best known search engine (directory) on the Internet.



Functions:

Any good communications program will have the following:

- e-mail, newsgroup and website browsing capabilities.
- Printing Capabilities - send information from other computers to your printer.
- Upload and download - send and receive files - programs and documents.

Examples: Netscape, Microsoft Explorer, AOL,

[Click here for our book on the Internet](#)

## [ ] Creating your own web site on the Internet

Read the entire book on [developing your own website here!](#)

## [ ] Additional uses of your modem/fax card.

The fax / modem card in your computer will play a larger and larger part in your life in the future. Today you can use your modem card for the following:

Voice Mail - Allows callers to call you and leave voice mail to you (most software allows for 99 different mail boxes).

You have remote access to your voice messages if desired, which means you can check your messages from any phone, or perhaps any computer!

Receive Faxes - Now you can accept faxes without owning a stand alone fax machine! The computer will save the fax to the hard disk drive, and allow you to view it on screen, saving printing costs on cheap thermal paper. Of course you may also save the fax to a file for further viewing and editing and printing at a later date.

Or you may immediately print the file (fax) to your laser printer for a quality print.

You may also edit the fax you have received and re-send it back to whoever you choose! Faxes received at this number can also be forwarded to another fax number if desired. Many new programs also allow you to send a fax via e-mail on the Internet!

**Fax On Demand:**

An inexpensive program can turn your computer into a communications and fax on demand center! Callers can call in and request specific information be sent to them via fax back. Fax Back means that the program will automatically send them the information they request via fax. This can be done while the person is connected to the computer, or the computer will ask the person to leave a phone number for the computer to call as soon as the caller hangs up the phone.

You can send a fax to your computer from a standalone fax machine and turn around and have it available as a fax back from the computer system. This allows you to provide information to customers 24 hours per day with an automated system.

### [ ] **Remote Communications (training/sales/computer support)**

Uses: There are many applications for remote communications from accessing the programs and files at work from your computer at home to diagnosing problems with your computer without taking it to the shop to training others how to use a computer or duplicate your success! We'll explain them in further detail below.

Functions:

Any good communications program will have the following:

- Password Protection and security features
- Multiple user support - for multiple levels of access
- Printing capabilities - send information from other computers to your printer

Examples: Talking Communities, PC Anywhere, Remote Control, etc.

### **Working from home:**

If you work for a company that allows its employees to work at home (or if you re the boss) and you want to work from home, you ll need software that will allow you to access the computers at work from home! You can do this via modem or the Internet, and you can actually have access to all of the programs and data files at work! Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

## **IMPORTANT:**

The 2 programs listed here are two of the most important developments in computers to come down the line for some time.

### **Application one #1:**

Are you tired of unhooking your computer and taking it to the technician to have it fixed, or wish that the experts could make changes to your computer without coming to your home or office? Now the experts can actually operate and diagnose your computer without actually being at your computer!

Here is an excellent program for this application.

[Instant Work Mobility-Try Remote PC Access Free, click here.](#)

### **Application one #2:**

Do you ever wish you could show someone a favorite Web site, even if they are way across the United States or in another country? Or show them how to operate a software program, or give a seminar through the Internet, and chat and talk all at the same time?

Well, we found a program that will allow you to:

- \* Make live presentations via the Internet (to one person or many).
- \* Take your audience along with you to any web site on the Internet.
- \* Talk to your audience live while making your demonstration via microphone.
- \* Answer additional questions via the chat mode while you give the demonstration (or you can have an associate do so while you continue with the presentation).
- \* Make prerecorded presentations for your customers, so they can play them over and over and over.

The program will soon even allow you to share applications on your computer! This means you can literally have your potential customers or your salespeople and other employees actually watch how you work so they can learn how to emulate you! I know that sounds a bit conceited, but hey, if you are good at what you do, why not share your secrets with others to share your success?

[Click here to use this technology now>](#)

## **[ ] Games:**

Uses: Last of all, after a hard day of work, we need games unwind and to have fun.

Some games are also educational in concept and some even in practice! Many current games are almost as realistic as television today. One can play golf or football, fly a plane, and endure a kickboxing match all in one day without getting tired or hurt! You can be challenged by the computer, which never says no and never gets tired. Tennis (at 2:00 in the morning) anyone?

Functions:

- Any good game has sound and great graphics.
- Examples: Wing Commander, Links Golf, etc.

## **More fun things you can create and print on your computer!**

Now that we're finished talking about fun games, we can move to fun things to print on your computer! These days, if you can imagine it, you can create it on your computer and print it on your printer. You can even fax whatever you create on your computer, sending it to your entire Christmas list or customer list, right from your computer too, if you care to do so.

Creating these documents and distributing them is becoming easier all the time because the word processors of today are a hybrid mix of word processor, desktop publisher and database program, among other applications. Some of these word processors even have templates for hundreds of applications such as letterhead, newsletters, invoices and more.

### **[ ] Creating your letterhead to fax or print from your computer!**

Another great feature (there are so many) of Microsoft Windows and today's powerful word processors is the power to utilize graphics inside your word processor. This means that you can create your own letterhead in your word processor, save it on your computer, and bring it up on screen for use at anytime with a quick click on the icon representing your letterhead!

Write the letter, print it, fax it or save it. Then bring it up a week or a year later, change it and start all over again. What a time saver. [Click here to learn more.](#)

### **[ ] Design your own business cards**

Create your own business cards!

One of our favorites will allow you to use clip art (pre-made pictures) to create your own business card logo and text, then allow you to print out as few or many copies as you like. Talk about flexibility with your own instant printing press!

Do you have multiple employees, or many divisions or departments in your firm? Or do you just wear many hats at your home office? A quick change of text, and you are moved from the sales department to the marketing department, complete with new business cards!

You can even choose paper that allows you to print as few as 1-10 business cards at one time to save money! These sheets are 3 cards across on an 8 1/2" by 11" inch sheet so you just print them, tear along the perforation, and go! Excellent for a company with new growing quickly with new agents all the time!

Visit your local office supplies store to order your business card templates.

### **BUSINESS CARD TIP OF THE DAY:**

We use a company for our business cards that will send you 250 free business cards, all you do is pay the shipping! Order your color cards here, from [Vistaprint](#) via the Internet!

**All kinds of cards - birthdays, invitations, more :**

Need a card but have no time to get to the store? Print your own! Be original!

Design your own Birthday cards!

Design your own Christmas cards!

Design your own Valentines Day cards!

Design your own Wedding Invitations!

**Designing your own Gift Certificates:**

Now you can create and print your own gift certificates for anything you want! You name it, you can do it! Save on setup fees and printing fees by doing it yourself, and print out only as many as you need.

**Design your own Achievement Awards**

Now you can create and print your own achievement awards for anything you want! Make life fun and reward someone!

**POSSIBLE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:**

- Athletic achievement
- Best boss award
- Certificate of appreciation
- Certificate of completion
- Certificate of excellence
- Certificate of membership
- Certificate of training
- Community service award
- Employee of the year
- Sales achievement
- Sales award of the month
- Service of the month
- Student of the year

Again, these new programs allow you to simply pop up pre-designed forms in your laser printer and go! Most programs even come with software that prints a picture of the card or certificate on the screen, and allows you to simply fill in the spaces. How much easier could it be?

**Raffle Tickets**

Print out your own tickets for raffles, the new neighborhood "theater club", flea market giveaway, church event, or any other event you can plan. Check with your local office supplies store for the templates.

**Rolodex cards**

Still like to use the rolodex for your contacts?

I understand. So just open up your contact manger and print your business contacts business cards and stick them in your rolodex. What could be more easier than that?

Well for starters, how about a computer program that will scan in business cards (with OCR - Optical Character

Recognition) so that you can see the picture and use the information from the card in your contact manager.

Check with your local office supplies store for the reader and the business card templates.

**[ ] Addition items you can create and print.**

- [ ] File folder labels!
- [ ] Overhead transparencies
- [ ] Multimedia presentations
- [ ] Birthday cards!
- [ ] Management guidelines
- [ ] Sales quotes
- [ ] Invoices
- [ ] Payroll checks
- [ ] Birthday cards!
- [ ] Newsletters (family)
- [ ] Newsletters (business)
- [ ] Labels for pricing!
- [ ] Thank you cards
- [ ] Business statements
- [ ] Business fliers
- [ ] Envelopes
- [ ] Memos
- [ ] Meeting reminders
- [ ] Checks
- [ ] W-2 forms
- [ ] 941 and 942 forms
- [ ] Banners
- [ ] Bumper stickers
- [ ] Multi-part forms
- [ ] Business cards
- [ ] Continuous feed paper
- [ ] Tractor feed paper
- [ ] To do lists
- [ ] Grocery lists[ ] Income statements
- [ ] Payroll reports
- [ ] Profit and loss statements
- [ ] Shipping labels
- [ ] A will for after death
- [ ] Name tags for conventions
- [ ] Name tags for security
- [ ] Index cards for contacts
- [ ] Indexes for special recipes
- [ ] Mileage forms for employees
- [ ] Employee time sheets
- [ ] Employee commission sheets
- [ ] 100 Legal forms and documents
- [ ] 100 Business forms

And so much more!

**[ ] Designing your own newsletter.**

Another program will use a template (a pre-designed form) to create a company or family newsletter for you. It will lead you through the development of your newsletter by asking you questions as you proceed at your own pace.

Here are some of the questions the program will ask you!

What is the name of your newsletter?

What is the date of this issue?

What is the issue #?

What language would you like?

How many columns?

Print on front and back?

How many pages?

Name of first article:

Name of second article:

Name of third article:

The Computer News Gazette

Jan 1, 1995.

Issue # 2, Volume 3

English Spanish German

3

Yes

5

New options for your computer!

New Pentium Chip Speeds up computing!

Upgrading your computer, how do to it!

Then the program goes ahead and draws the newsletter on the screen for you with the above information so you can concentrate on the content of the newsletter!

You can even import documents you have already written into the newsletter, and the program will do such things as:

- Format the text to match the column size.
- Wrap text around pictures you insert in the page.
- Plus many other things I cannot find space to write about!

Like we say, you name the project, and someone can tell you how to do it. Here are a few examples of what you can do with your computer and printer today, now!

You can also create and print the following items. You design the entire package, or buy preprinted forms that have the basic layout designs and pictures, and you simply type in the text!

### [ ] **Creating and sending your own e-zines (newsletter via e-mail)**

Of course you may also wish to create your own e-zine on the Internet or marketing on the Internet, so we've written complete books on both! Just visit the table of contents for more information on the Internet and your own e-zine.

We hope you get the idea! The sky is the limit! You can do just about anything you can imagine.

[Click here to learn how write your own e-zine!](#)

## [ ] **Getting on the Internet**

[Click here to learn what you can do on the Internet.](#)

## [ ] **Creating your own website**

[Click here to learn how top create your own web site from start to finish.](#)

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## [ ] **Choosing the right computer and how to get started using it!**

Now that you see that you can do a lot with a new computer, we're back to choosing the right computer hardware for your new computer system for jut a moment. **You can always go on to the other 7 books in our series on specific topics of what you do with a computer, but that should give you a good start.**

Again, it is a difficult question, but it will be much easier if you do not need specialized software. Specialized software would be an special program written for a special application, such as POS (point of sale cash registers, etc.), which may also require special hardware such as cash drawers and bar code readers. Most users simply need the basics, and we ll assume you are not doing anything that requires anything other than a standard computer at this point.

However, because computer technology moves so fast, we ll provide a check sheet for you to fill out and take to any prospective sales person. Be sure to get answers to each question, and shop around if you are not happy with the answers you get. Remember, the software, warranties and technical support are the most important part of any computer purchase!

I d rather have a slower computer with more software that works all the time than a computer that s on the bleeding edge that means it is probably the latest, greatest, fastest computer on the market, but it may not work correctly all the time, and you paid top dollar for all that brand new technology! J

However, your best option is to visit stores like Dell.com, Gateway.com or visit a local dealer for more information. Some of your local stores would be Officedepo.com or Staples.com

If you go to a local dealer, take along this form and ask them to fill it in for you for a quote! Then compare packages from sheet to sheet until you make your decision. [Click here for a printable version](#) of our request for a quote for a new computer. It's the easiest way to be sure you remember everything!

## [ ] **Unpacking and setting up your computer**

I'm sure you are excited about unpacking your new computer and starting to use it. This should be one of life s finest moments, right? It might well be, but I m here to tell you that if you don't do things in an orderly fashion, with a goal in mind, you may be surprised to have some delays, disappointments, and perhaps even some disasters down the line.

These problems may not show up for years, but they can happen. A good example is losing your receipt for the computer about 30 days before your 3 year warranty expires! Please take the time to read this section carefully, and to follow the instructions.

When you unpack your computer, be sure to do it at a time that will be relaxing and enjoyable time for you. You must

be able to be undisturbed so that you can unpack the computer and set it up correctly, including installation of software and filling out registration cards.

If you are constantly answering the phone at work or having people ask you questions, you will not be able to give your computer the time and attention it takes to learn how to use it correctly. Good times to do so are early in the morning or after everyone else has gone home for the day. If this is a computer at home, you will not have as many problems learning how to use your computer, but you may still want to do it at a time when there will be few others to disturb you while you are reading manuals and such.

### **[ ] Storing important documents in boxes**

Find a manila envelope to store all invoices, warranty information, technical support numbers, and any other documents you may need in the future. Store them in either a fire proof safe or at least put them somewhere that they will not get lost or misplaced. Some software cannot be upgraded without registration, or proof of purchase.

Find a box (old paper box?) to store hardware and software manuals and diskettes if you do not have room on the shelf. Some times it is easier to find the manuals you need if you keep them all together in a closet or under a desk when you need them than if they are mixed up with all the other books and manuals on your desk and shelves!

Write down all serial numbers for insurance purposes.

### **[ ] Send in all warranty information immediately.**

Immediately send in all registration and warranty cards to the manufacturers. This will cover you for repairs under warranty,

Make copies of any very important diskettes such as your DOS diskettes or windows or other program diskettes and put them in a fireproof vault or take them to another location in case of a fire or theft.

Keep all packing materials in case you either move or if you ever need to have the computer repaired. Please review section on moving your computer, and insurance available for shipping your computer, you may be surprised at how much money you could lose if your computer is damaged or lost while being shipped with some carriers if you do not add insurance!

- Be sure to save all packing materials in case you move or have to send in the computer for repairs.
- Fill out the enclosed forms with serial numbers, invoice numbers, cmos settings and any other items you feel may be important.
- Send in the registration cards for your computer.
- Send in the insurance form with serial numbers included.

### **[ ] Registering your software and tracking serial numbers...**

There are many reasons to send in the registration cards for software and hardware, as there are for keeping invoices for hardware and software purchases. Basically, you must register your hardware and software for upgrades, insurance, legal and ethical reasons. Please save all invoices in an easy to find area.

Here are just a few more reasons.

- You need to be able to prove legally that the software belongs to you.
- You will be notified of upgrades in the mail, and other special offers.
- You will need your registration card for warranty work in case of errors.
- You will need your registration card for technical support in case of errors.
- You will need your registration card to pass along ownership of the software, if the author allows transfer of the ownership.

So, be safe send in all registration cards so that when you need technical help, or in case of fire, theft, or other disasters, you have a legal paper trail showing that you purchased and own the software or hardware you have purchased.

What could be worse than to lose all your diskettes, manuals, invoices and all other proof of purchase for thousands of dollars of software and not be able to get new copies? Or to have a computer under warranty go unfixed because you cannot find the registration or invoice information?

Many businesses would go out of business in this scenario! Check out our chapter on backups and disaster recovery for more details!

Be sure to fill out an inventory work sheet, in case of fire or theft of your computer.

[\(Click here for a printable form\)](#)

### [ ] Protecting yourself against viruses.

Protecting your self against viruses is probably one of the biggest concerns you will have when using your computer. Human viruses make you ill, computer viruses that make your computer sick. Unfortunately chances are that some day you will probably run into a computer virus that could potentially damage your computer, especially if you do not take specific precautions to protect your computer today.

It is hard to believe, but people will actually intentionally write a virus program ( like a n amortization program, game or even e-mail attachment) intended to do damage to your computer. You and I certainly do not understand their reasoning, and probably never will, but they are a fact of life in the computer world.

You may come into contact with a virus from a variety of ways, from e-mail infected with a virus to accepting a diskette with a virus on it and inserting it in your computer. Some viruses are even embedded in Microsoft Word Documents that you download!

You need to know that a computer virus can destroy all the information on your computer. Viruses can do different things to your computer, from telling you that your computer is stoned to deleting all your files, which means viruses can be destructive or nondestructive.

Most viruses are spread from user to user via files transferred via the Internet or floppy disk, or even e-mail.

To prevent viruses from attacking your computer, download an anti-virus program from the Internet or have a computer consultant help you protect yourself. At the time of this writing, companies like [Mcafee.com](#) offer free downloads of software to detect a virus on your computer.

You should run this software on your computer at all times. You'll eventually need to purchase an anti-virus software package and update it regularly, or purchase a software package that will automatically update itself each time you

access the Internet.

In any case, this is a very dynamic subject, there are new viruses introduced ever day, and you simply need to visit one of these sites to keep updated regularly.

<http://www.norton.com>

<http://www.mcafee.com>

### [ ] **Backing up your computer.**

#### **A NOTE ABOUT COMPUTER BACKUPS:**

**Most people do not plan to fail, most people fail to plan.**

From "Steps to successful computing" by J.D. Davin.

Now that you've unpacked your computer. The next steps to successful and enjoyable computing are to:

- Be sure your anti-virus software is installed.
- Backup the files for your (OS) operating system.
- Backup the data files and programs on your computer.
- Create a schedule for regular and safe backups of your data.
- Register your software for updates on upgrades and related software news.
- Send a list of items and serial numbers to the insurance company for coverage.

Again, the key words are successful and enjoyable use of your computer for years to come. Part of that goal is making sure that you have backups of your OS and data in case you do have a problem with your computer, whether it be from from a malicious virus, a hard drive crash, theft, fire or even you accidentally deleting the wrong files!

So now that you understand the importance of backing up your computer data, you may have many questions to ask about the right hardware and software solutions to use to back up your computer data. Making backups today can be painless, but many people never make backups because they never take the time to ask the questions to learn how to make backing up their data a simple, scheduled event!

Because they don't ask, most simply do not know that there are simple solutions available today, particularly for those how have DVD Burner capable computers.

These packages will take whatever information is on your hard disk drive and make a mirror, or copy of that data to the DVD. Then if you have any of the problems listed above, you have a copy of the data and programs that you can restore (copy back) to your new hard drive or new computer.

#### **TIP OF THE DAY (FOR BACKUPS!):**

You should always have a copy of your tape backup off site, in a safe at the bank or at least at another physical location so that it is secure from fire and theft.

#### **Considerations when backing up your computer:**

Internal VS. External?

- How often do you need to backup?
- Number of DVDs to buy (at least initially)?
- How do you back up my computer data and files?

- How do you get information back from the tape?

### **Internal VS External:**

For most home users with one computer, an Internal DVD drive is best. If you have more than one computer and they are not networked, an external device is a good option so you can move it from one computer to the next.

Most businesses and corporations that have more than one computer will have a network installed and will not need a appreciate this mobility but may want to purchase an external writer in case they have computers that are not on the network but still need to be backed up. They can copy all the files from one computer and take it to another computer and install the software from the tape unit on the next machine, or simply use it to backup the hard drives of many computers without having to purchase individual tape units for each computer.

### **Types of backups:**

- Full Backups - all the data on the hard disk drive, including all software programs, directories, data files, letters, memos, etc.. In other words, every bit of information on your hard disk drive. This means if your hard disk drive crashed or was stolen, you could copy your entire hard drive information from the tape to the new computer drive or system.
- Files that have changed since the last backup - This means that the computer archives the files already backed up, and adds the new files on an additional backup. This means you save time and money because you are not backing up the entire hard disk drive.
- Selective files - You can choose a specific directory, specific hard drives, program files or data files on your hard disk drive. You may want to backup only your accounting directory, or only the data files in your accounting directory. Again, this allows you to have many backups on one disk, rather than a few backups of everything and a full disk.

### **Number of cartridges to buy?**

What determines the number of cartridges to buy?

- The amount of data you need to back up to your backup device.
- The frequency of times you will need to backup your hard disk drive.
- How stressed would you be if you lost the data on your hard disk drive?

Which leads us to the real question below:

### **How often do you need to backup?**

To answer this question, you need to ask yourself how important the data is to you and how dynamic or static are your programs and data? Do you install new software regularly? Do you enter new data in your accounting program on a daily basis, or on a weekly basis? And again, how important is the data to you? Could you duplicate it or would you lose sentimental items such as pictures and letters, or money, or a job or even a business over lost data?

### **How do you back up your computer?**

There are many ways to backup your hard drive, and many programs that will backup your hard disk drive for you. One of our favorites is offered by [321studios.com](http://321studios.com).

Please refer to the manuals for more instructions.

## **CLOSING NOTES ABOUT BACKUPS:**

Most people do not plan to fail, most people fail to plan. If you do not have a definite backup plan for your computer, chances are that someday, you will lose data and wish you had had a plan. Use the forms in the back of this book and track your backups on a daily, every other day, weekly or monthly basis. Just do it, as they say, and you'll be one step closer to taking the necessary "Steps to successful computing!"

Best of luck and happy computing. J.D. Davin.

Here is a [free form](#) you can use to schedule and track your backups!

### **[ ] Help using your computer, (computer training)**

In 20 years of helping people set up and use their new computers, the number one failure I've seen is that most people do not spend time and money on adequate computer training. That's why we always offered a free 3 hour introduction to computers course with every computer we sold.

This was very important to us. When we offered free classes, the customer showed up for the computer classes because they did not have to pay an additional fee for the classes.

The free classes helped our store in 2 ways. First, because they were trained in the class, they learned how to use their computers and we spent less time answering the phone for technical support. Second, we had a better reputation because our customers actually used their computers because they learned how to use their computers before they took them home!

There are a variety of ways to learn how to use your computer.

One on one training - very effective but very expensive. You have the option of learning what you want to learn.

- Classroom settings - these classes are not as expensive, and can be very helpful, but there are many times too many people in the class and you can't get the answers to your individual questions. Scheduling during the day can also be difficult.
- Video and cassette tapes. A great option because you can go at your own pace and review materials as needed.
- On-line training - Another great option because you can go at your own pace and review materials as needed, but more importantly you can take a test at the end of each chapter to see what you've learned. Another advantage is the convenience of taking classes in your home or office when your schedule permits.

We hope you take advantage of the training options available as you will benefit from additional knowledge of your computer. They can never take away your skills, right?

### **Wait, there's more!**

Well, that's it for this book. I hope you have found the information useful, but there's more of course!

We'd also like to tell you about our series of books and our checklist for success. You can utilize this 30 page checklist for success by writing down the important information in your checklist and placing it in your 3 ring binder and updating it regularly.

Welcome to MyNewOffice.com!

We also offer a free e-zine, if you are interested in learning more about your computer and the Internet. To subscribe, simply send e-mail as follows:

To: [newsletter@mynewoffice.com](mailto:newsletter@mynewoffice.com)

Subject: subscribe

Thank you for joining us at MyNewOffice.com

Sincerely,

J.D. Davin [jddavin@mynewoffice.com](mailto:jddavin@mynewoffice.com)

### **About John Davin**

John Davin is a self employed computer consultant for nearly 20 years. He has written over 20 books for the computing industry.

The series of Mynewoffice books and the related forums are targeted at small businesses and Internet marketers looking to learn more about their computers, the Internet and new, cost effective ways to market their products and services.

Mr. Davin is available for speaking engagements for your group or club. You can contact John at [jddavin@mynewoffice.com](mailto:jddavin@mynewoffice.com) or visit him at his website for his new office, <http://www.MyNewOffice.com>.

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THE END!

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Computing tips: How to buy a new computer, choose computer software, set up up and use it!