Your Personal Computer Guide
By Walton Chin

Preface: Welcome to another fun fill and informative issue of Your Personal Computer Guide. By now you should have had some time to get familiar with the various parts of your new computer. In this issue we will explored different software programs for you to use with your system and we will take a look at some of the most common problems you can encounter with your computer and how you can fix them. Also we will take look at CD copying basics.

News: On January 7th 2003, Microsoft released the final version of it's new Windows Media Player Version 9. It is a much improved Windows Media Player. It allows you to play audio and video files locally stored and streamed from the Internet. It includes a visualizer, a jukebox, a media guide, an Internet radio tuner, a CD burner, and support for countless   media formats and various external devices. In keeping with modern trends, Microsoft has added features such as Smart Jukebox technology that features audio CD burning with volume leveling. Windows Media Player can automatically organize your media files, even if you move them around. You can rate each song you play or let the program assign ratings based on the number of times each song is played, then create playlists of your favorite music. Another feature, Auto Info, can automatically fix or add album details (tags) to your MP3 and WMA files such as artist or album name, year, composer, or track number. Additionally, you can toggle between a full-screen interface and a miniplayer mode that docks the player to your taskbar. You can download your free copy at http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/9series/player.aspx

Software: So you have a new computer and you want to start using it, but before you can do anything with it you need to purchase or download programs and install them into your hard drive. Software programs today come in either stand alone or suite bundle package. Depending on your needs you will most likely need a basic set of programs that includes a word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation and personal information manager. Microsoft has a program call OfficeXP that includes all of these programs together for you. So what is a word processor like Word do? It is a program that includes tools for entering, editing, formatting text, graphics and once finished you can print them. A spreadsheet such as Excel is used to perform numeric calculations rapidly and accurately and are updated automatically so you always have the most current information at hand. A database program like Access is use to manage data that can be organized into lists of related information such as customer names and age etc.   Programs like PowerPoint are presentation programs use to organize and present information through a media such as a projector or overhead. Lastly Outlook is used to manage your personal information such as appointments, contacts and tasks, while providing you with the communication tools you need such as electronic mail.

If you intended to read newspapers or watch the evening or late night news you will then need a web browser such as Netscape http://channels.netscape.com/ns/browsers/download.jsp or Microsoft Internet Explorer http://www.microsoft.com/ie both of these are free to download from the web just type the link for the browser you are interested in and follow the on screen messages. You will also need to purchase a monthly agreement with a Internet service provider company such as Primus Canada or Sympatico before you can connect to the web.

CD Copying Basics: If your computer has a CD copier/burner and you use Windows or Mac OSX on your computer here's one way you can burn a CD. Insert a blank CD into the CD recorder and started your CD copying program such as Easy CD Creator and following the on screen prompts. Now here are a couple of tips to keep in mind:

1. Close all unnecessary programs before you start the burning process.
2. Do not attempt to copy more data to the CD than it's designed to hold
3. Treat your CD as you a camera lens. Don't wash them like you might with a commercially produced CD. Always use a clean lint-free cloth to remove dust.

Problems & Fixes: *Problem:* I try to print, but nothing happens. *Fixes*: You should first check each of the following connections and settings to determine if in fact you do have a problem:

1. Make sure your printer is turned on and is "on line"
2. Check to see that the printer has paper
3. Try printing another document. If that document prints the problem   might have something to do with the content of your first document or your printer might not have enough memory

In the next issue we will begin the" how to" of the World Web Wide and Microsoft Word 2002. Stay Tune.

If you have any computer questions, comments and concerns you can e-mail them to me at wchin@primus.ca   I am a Certified Microsoft Office Specialist.

Happy Computing