

Computer Tips

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Michael's Computer Services

Understanding Your PC

How does your computer work? What goes on inside that box under the desk? Why does your PC whir and chug, and occasionally go clunk? What happens when I press SAVE? Why do I need more memory?

No doubt you have asked many such questions about your PC. For the next few editions of this column, I will be telling you a little about how your PC works, and why it does the things it does.

Your computer is a complex machine, made up of smaller parts working together. Lets begin by outlining each of these parts, and then we will examine how they work together.

The Case

The most obvious part of your computer is the case, also known as 'the box'. The case, which is almost always metal, protects all the fragile parts inside, and also provides a secure structure to screw them to. The case has sides that can be removed; or with older ones, the entire 3 sides of the case is removable. Cases come in several sizes—Mini-Tower, Mid-Tower, Full-Tower, and Desktop. The size you choose depends on how many accessories you have or may want in your PC.

Another important function of the case is to provide regulated ventilation. The case is specially designed to give the right airflow across the internal parts. It is often thought that leaving the sides of the case off during use will improve the ventilation, but this is not true. The internal fans, which keep the airflow moving, must pull the air across the internal parts to give them proper cooling. Removing the sides of the case interrupts this airflow, and prevents the internal parts from cooling down efficiently.

Along with ventilation, the case also provides protection from dust, water, and other foreign articles. Dust is a major enemy of computers, because when present in any quantity, it interrupts the flow of electricity to the different parts of your PC. It causes heat to build up as well, and significantly shortens the life of your PC. Smoke, especially tobacco smoke, will do a similar thing. We recommend to all our customers to get their PC's regularly dusted out. This way they will lengthen the life of their PC.

The case, while providing structural and protective functions, is also the 'pretty face' of your computer. It is what you first see when you are looking to buy it, and with some, seriously influences the purchase. The front of the case is ascetically coloured, and arranged with the different PC control buttons. The largest of these is the power button, often in a complimentary contrasting colour. The next smallest button is usually the reset button, although in older cases, this will be the turbo button. Close to these buttons are the power and hard drive indicator lights. These lights are important, as they show whether or not these components are working satisfactorily.

For more information on your PC, or any other aspect of computers, you are welcome to contact us on 4171 0981, or email us at info@mcsyarraman.com.au.

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