

TECHNICAL GUIDE

COMPUTER BASICS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
IT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Second Edition

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why does the amount of Random Access Memory (RAM) I have matter?

The more you have of it the quicker instructions can be passed to the Central Processing Unit (CPU) for processing. It is important to have as much as you need in your PCs, servers and output devices, otherwise processing will be too slow and your system unproductive.

2. What is a motherboard?

This printed circuit board is responsible for allocating power to the CPU, RAM and other hardware components. It also allows the computer's hardware components, such as a graphics board or serial port connectors, to communicate.

3. Why are there different types of RAM and does it matter?

RAM is the most common sort of computer memory and the technology has evolved in line with the clock speeds of CPUs. You don't need to worry about the different types unless you work with ancient technology, but please don't do this.

4. How does a reboot work?

Rebooting your computer clears RAM and tidies up memory allocation, so you have a clean slate. Turning off a router to fix your internet connection works in the same way.

5. How do Windows and the Mac OS differ?

Apart from originating with different developers (Microsoft and Apple), the two operating systems are fundamentally different. Mac OS is at heart Unix however it is drastically different from other Unix derivatives such as Linux.

6. Why is mobile computing special?

It allows you to manage processes when you are not at your desk. Smart phone or tablet apps give you access to the resources and tools you need to oversee or monitor work remotely.

7. Why does my computer freeze?

The most common reason is that the system lacks enough memory to execute the tasks required. A digital block will occur if the RAM and CPU are hit with too many instructions to process. Sometimes the problem is so severe that a reboot is required. When all else fails, pull the plug and start again.

8. Why does software perform better with more RAM allocated to it?

Your computer's operating system assigns RAM to applications, more or less, depending on how much RAM the software is set up to use and how many apps you have open. Apps such as Photoshop or Excel are supposed to manage with their allocations, but if they

are processing intense as Photoshop is and you work with massive files, they need a larger allocation in order to run efficiently and not keep you waiting.

9. What is a portal?

It's a web gateway that brings together multiple sites and resources under a single, uniform page. They can be very simple or very complex depending on the information databases gathered together.

10. Do I need a client/server architecture?

If you have more than a couple of computers sharing resources, such as software or printers, in your system, you will find a client/server architecture more efficient and the system easier to maintain than a network of individual devices.

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