COMPAQ

Learning More About Your Computer
Compaq Presario Computers

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The guide provides basic information to assist you in using the hardware and software features of your computer.

WARNING: Text set off in this manner indicates that failure to follow directions could result in bodily harm or loss of life.

CAUTION: Text set off in this manner indicates that failure to follow directions could result in damage to equipment or loss of information.

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1

Performing Common Tasks

You may find yourself wanting to perform tasks such as:

■ Modifying your display

■ Modifying your keyboard language setting

■ Modifying your mouse settings

■ Shutting down your system

■ Printing

■ Playing games

■ Listening to digital audio files

Modifying the Display

You can modify how information displays on the monitor.

To Modify the Display

1. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Appearance and Themes**.

4. Click **Change the Screen Resolution**.

5. Click and drag the **Screen Resolution** slide control on the **Settings** tab to display less or more on your screen.

✎ If you move the slide towards **Less**, the text on your screen increases in size. If you move the slide towards **More**, the text on your screen decreases in size.

Modifying the Keyboard Language Setting

You can modify the language setting for your keyboard.

To Modify the Keyboard Language Setting

1. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Date, Time, Language, and Regional Options**.

4. Click **Regional and Language Options**.

5. Click the **Language** tab.

6. Click the **Details** button.

7. Click **Keyboard**, then the **Add** button.
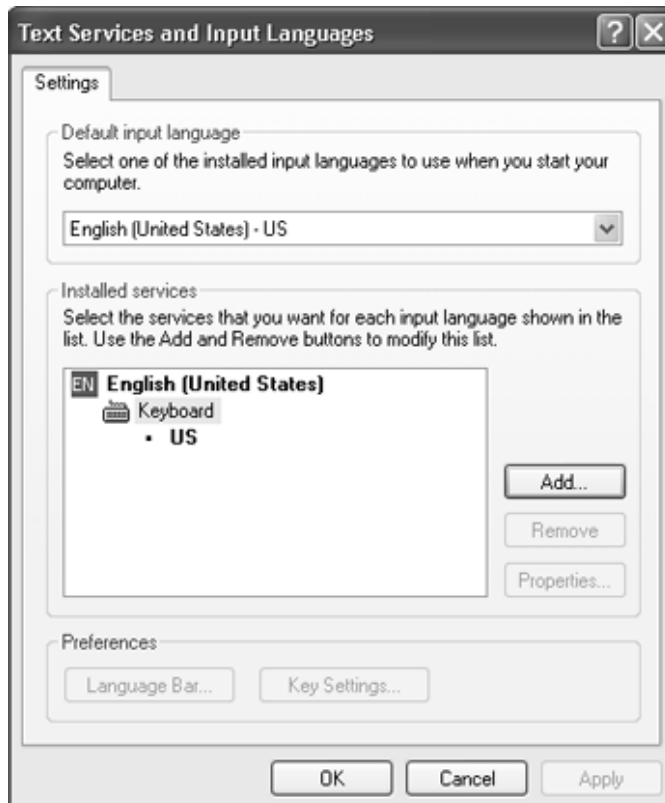
8. Click the **Keyboard layout/IME** down arrow and select a language from the list.

9. Click **OK**.

10. Click **OK** to apply the changes.

Modifying the Mouse Properties

You can view and modify different properties of the mouse from the **Mouse Properties** dialog box. The dialog box may vary depending on the type of mouse you purchased.

From the **Mouse Properties** dialog box, you can:

■ Change the type of pointer

■ Modify button assignments

■ Modify the speed of your mouse

■ Check the battery status if you have a cordless mouse

■ Review the manufacturer's information

To Modify Mouse Properties

1. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Printers and Other Hardware**.

4. Click **Mouse**.

5. Click the appropriate tab to modify settings.

6. Click **OK** to apply the changes.

Shutting Down the Computer

When you are finished working or playing on the computer, it is a good idea to shut it down.

To Shut Down the Computer

1. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Turn Off Computer**.

Printing

You can print text and graphics from most applications and Internet sites as long as you have your computer connected to a printer and the necessary software installed for your printer.

✎ For additional information on connecting the printer to the computer, see the printer's setup documentation.

If you want to look at the document or graphic before you print it, you can use the **Print Preview** option on the **File** menu. This option is available in most applications.

Using the Print Menu

The **Print** menu is widely used in Windows applications. Although, each application may modify the **Print** menu, you can generally:

■ Select the printer

■ Choose the page range (for example, all pages, current page, range of pages)

■ Determine the number of copies

■ Select all, odd, or even pages in a range

To Use the Print Menu

1. Click **File** on the menu bar.

2. Click **Print...**

3. Select your printing options. Remember, the look and feel of the **Print** dialog box varies from application to application.

4. Click **OK**.

Playing Games

You can use the computer to play games that were:

■ Installed when you bought your computer

■ Downloaded from the Internet

■ Purchased

Before you download or purchase any games, check the computer requirements for the game. These are usually listed on the Internet site or outside of the game box.

You should pay particular attention to the amount of disk space required for the game and make sure you have at least that amount available.

To Check Hard Disk Space

1. Click the **Start** button on the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **My Computer**.

3. Click the hard disk drive where you want to store the game files.

4. Notice the amount of free space listed in the **Details** area and make sure it is enough for installing game.

✎ It is recommended that you use the same disc drive (CD or DVD) to play a game that you used to install it. If you have problems installing or playing a game, contact the game manufacturer.

Playing Digital Audio

You can play digital audio files that you download from the Internet.

To Play Digital Audio

1. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **All Programs**, then your media player application.

3. Follow the on-screen instructions for creating a play list.

✎ Press the **F1** key for help with specific functions.

2

Using Your Computer Drives

Computers can have several types of drives that include:

- Diskette (floppy)
- Hard
- CD-ROM (compact disk - read only memory)
- CD-RW (compact disk - re-writable)
- DVD-ROM (digital versatile disk- read only memory)
- DVD-R/RW (digital versatile disk- recordable/re-writable)

The type of drive or drives your computer has depends on the model you purchased.

Using the Diskette (Floppy) Drive

The diskette drive uses a diskette or floppy disk to store files. You can copy information to the diskette from places like your hard drive or Internet. A diskette can only store a limited amount of information, so if your file is very large it may not fit on the diskette.

Remember, once you copy information onto the diskette, it remains there until you delete or overwrite it.

Inserting a diskette

You must insert the diskette into the diskette drive before attempting to copy information to it.

To insert a diskette

1. Hold the diskette with the label facing up and arrow pointing toward the drive

✎ If you have a tower model, hold the diskette with the label facing left and the arrow pointing toward the drive.

2. Gently push the diskette into the drive.
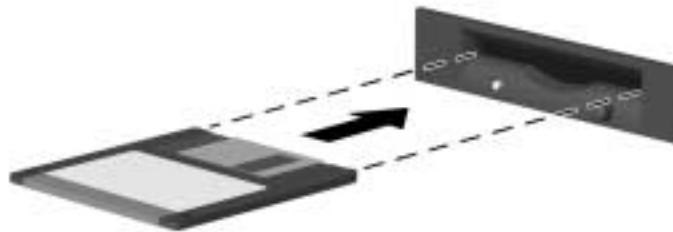
Removing a diskette

You should remove the diskette from the diskette drive when you are:

■ Finished copying information to your diskette, hard drive, or computer

■ Shutting down Microsoft Windows

To remove a diskette

1. Make sure the **activity light** ❷ is not glowing

✎ The **activity light** will glow until the diskette drive completes reading from or writing to the diskette.

2. Press the **eject** button ❶ on the diskette drive.

⚠ **CAUTION:** If you remove a diskette while the **activity light** is glowing, you can damage the diskette or the information stored on it.
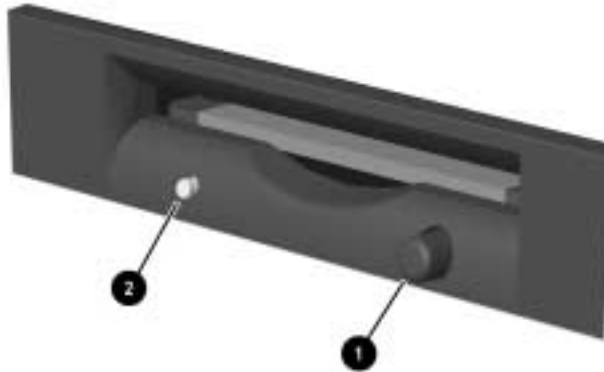
Using the Hard Drive

You can store computer operating files, applications, data, Internet, and personal files on your hard drive.

As you create and save files, download information from the Internet, install applications, or receive e-mail messages and attachments, your hard drive storage space diminishes. The amount of information you can store on your computer's hard drive depends on the size of the drive.

It is recommended that you periodically check the amount of space available on your hard drive. To check the amount of space on your hard drive, follow the directions in the "To Check Hard Disk Space" section of Chapter 1.

If you need to free space on the hard drive, you can:

■ Delete files and applications
■ Save files or applications to external storage media like diskettes (floppy), CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, or DVD-RW discs.

Using the CD or DVD Drive

The CD-ROM, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, and DVD-R/RW drives allow you to perform several different actions (such as, store information, listen to music, view and create movies).

The DVD-ROM and DVD-R/RW drives take longer to begin playback than CD drives because they must determine the type of media being played. If any of the drives fail to play a disc, check to make sure that the disc is inserted with the label facing up (facing left on tower models) and properly seated in the drive.

Table 2-1 provides a comparison of drives and actions. The number and type of drives your computer has varies by model.

Table 2–1:   Comparison of Drives and Actions

Allows you to...	CD-ROM	CD-RW	DVD-ROM	DVD-R/RW
Read CDs, CD-Rs, and CD-RWs	●	●	●	●
Read DVDs			●	●
Read data from CD	●	●	●	●
Listen to music	●	●	●	●
Write data to disc for storage		●		●
View movies			●	●
Record movies				●

It is important to read all directions before attempting to record onto a DVD-R or DVD-RW disc. You should make sure that all open applications are closed and remain closed while you are burning the DVD-R or DVD-RW disc.

✎ Your 4.7 Gigabyte (GB) (where 1GB = 1000 cubed or 1 billion bytes as is used on the disc packaging) DVD-R or DVD-RW disc is capable of storing data up to 4.38 GB (where 1GB = 1024 cubed or 1,073,741,824 bytes as is used by Windows).

Multimedia Support

You can use several different types of media with your CD or DVD drives. Media simply refers to the type of disc you insert into the CD or DVD drive.

What you can do with your drive is determined by the type of drive you have and the media you use in the drive. For example, you can listen to music, but not record it, if you use a CD-ROM disc in the CD drive. On the other hand, you can record and playback a DVD movie, if you use a DVD-R or DVD-RW disc in the DVD-R/RW drive.

✎ A DVD-R disc is more compatible than a DVD-RW disc with DVD set-top players. Consult with your DVD set-top manufacturer to determine DVD-R/RW discs compatibility.

Table 2-2: Media Comparison

Media	File Type	Ability to Record	Ability to Playback	Ability to Playback on other PCs	DVD Set-top
CD-ROM	Data	No	Yes	Requires CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW, or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model
	Music	No	Yes	Requires CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW, or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model

Table 2-2: Media Comparison *(Continued)*

Media	File Type	Ability to Record	Ability to Playback	Ability to Playback on other PCs	DVD Set-top
CD-R	Data	Yes (only once)	Yes	Requires CD-RW or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model
	MP3 Music	Yes (only once)	Yes	Requires CD-RW or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model
CD-RW	Data	Yes	Yes	Requires CD-RW or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model
	MP3 Music	Yes	Yes	Requires CD-RW or DVD-R/RW hardware	Varies per model
DVD-ROM	Data	No	Yes	Requires DVD playback software and DVD-ROM or DVD-R/RW hardware	No
	DVD Movie	No	Yes	Requires DVD playback software and DVD-ROM or DVD-R/RW hardware	Yes
DVD-R	Data	Yes (only once)	Yes	Requires DVD-ROM or DVD-R/RW hardware and software	No
	DVD Movie	Yes (only once)	Yes	Requires DVD-ROM or DVD-R/RW hardware and software	Yes (varies per model)
DVD-RW	Data	Yes	Yes	Requires DVD-R/RW hardware and software	No
	DVD Movie	Yes	Yes	Requires DVD-R/RW hardware and software	Varies per model

Regardless of the drive(s), you insert and remove a CD or DVD disc using the same steps.

Inserting a CD or DVD

To Insert a CD or DVD

1. Power on the computer.

2. Press the **load/eject** button to open the drive.

3. Carefully lift the CD or DVD from its case. You should avoid touching the surface of the CD or DVD. If possible, hold the CD or DVD by the edges.

4. Place the CD or DVD, label side up (label side left if tower model), into the round tray

✎ If the tray has support tabs, carefully slide the disc under the tabs to position it correctly in the tray.
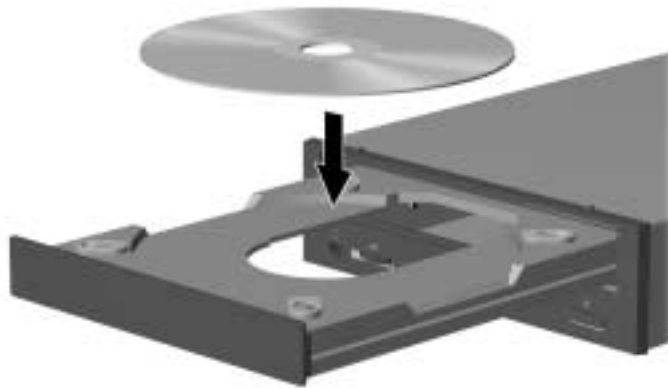
5. Press the **load/eject** button to close the drive tray.

Removing a CD or DVD

To Remove a CD or DVD

1. Power on the computer.

2. Press the **load/eject** button to open the drive.

3. Carefully lift the CD or DVD from the drive. You should avoid touching the surface of the disc. If possible, hold the CD or DVD by the edges.
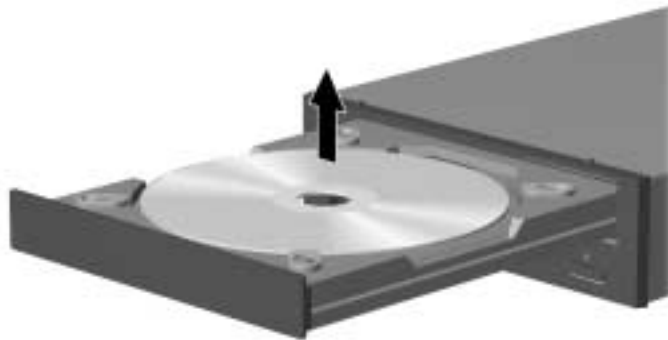
4. Press the **load/eject** button on the front of the drive to close the drive tray.

5. Store the CD or DVD in its protective case.

Listening to Music

You can listen to music using any of the CD-ROM, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, and DVD-R/RW drives.

✎ The DVD drives may take longer to begin music playback because they must determine the type of media being played.

To Listen to Music

1. Insert a CD or DVD as described previously in this chapter, "Inserting a CD or DVD."

2. Wait for disc to automatically start playing.

3. Press the **load/eject** button to eject the CD or DVD from the drive.

To Adjust the Volume

1. Click the **Start** button on Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices**.

4. Click **Adjust the System Volume**.

5. Make adjustments to the device and speaker volume levels.

6. Click **Apply**, then **OK**.

Playing a Movie

You can only play a DVD movie from the DVD-ROM and
DVD-R/RW drives.

To Play a Movie

1. Insert a DVD as described previously in this chapter, "Inserting a
   CD or DVD."

✎ For best performance, it is recommended that you close all running
programming before inserting a DVD movie.

2. Wait for the DVD to automatically start playing. If the DVD does not start playing automatically, follow these steps.

   a. Click the **Start** button on your Windows desktop.

   b. Click **All Programs**, **Compaq WinDVD**, then **Win DVD Player**.

   c. Click the **Play** button to start the movie.

3. Press the **load/eject** button to eject the DVD from the drive.

Creating a CD

There are several applications available for creating CDs. Compaq provides CD burning software on select models to assist you with creating CDs. Follow the instructions provided in the documentation included with the CD burning software to create your CD.

You can create many types of CDs using the CD-RW drive:

■ Audio

■ Data backup

■ Copies of files or CDs

Table 2-3 lists the various uses of the CD-RW drive.

Table 2-3: Uses of the CD-RW Drive

You can create a(an)...	To....
Audio CD	Create personal music CDs with your favorite music tracks and MP3/WMA files.
Data CD	Store data from files or folders on your hard disk. This feature is useful for backing up important files or for sharing data with other people.
Direct copy	Write files directly to a CD-R and CD-RW just like you copy files to a disk drive. You can drag-and-drop files from one drive to another in Microsoft Explorer.
Copy of a CD	Create an entire copy of a CD or a backup of data files.
Jewel Case Creator	Make custom jewel case inserts and CD labels to indicate the title and contents of a CD (labels are sold separately).

You can use either CD-R or CD-RW discs to create your CDs. You can only write to a CD-R disc once, but you can write to, erase, rewrite to, and reuse a CD-RW disc.

It is recommended that use a CD-R disc if you are going to use it in a CD player, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, or DVD-R/RW drive.

The CD-RW discs are typically used for making data backups of your personal CDs and computer hard drive. They are not recommended for use in the Compaq 12X or slower CD-RW drives.

Table 2-4 provides a comparison of the CD-R and CD-RW discs.

Table 2-4: CD-R and CD-RW Disc Comparison

Allows you to...	CD-R	CD-RW
Write to CD	●	●
Write to CD multiple times		●
Use multiple recording sessions		●
Reuse CD		●
Erase information		●

Maintaining the CD or DVD Drive

You should keep the following guidelines in mind when maintaining and cleaning your CD or DVD drive:

■ Do not move the drive while it is operating

■ Avoid exposing the drive to rapid changes in temperature

■ Wait one hour before turning off the computer if the drive is exposed to sudden change in temperature

■ Avoid exposing the drive to high temperatures or humidity, direct sunlight, or mechanical vibrations

■ Clean the panel and controls with a soft, dry cloth.

■ Never spray cleaning fluids into the drive

■ Unplug the computer if any liquids or objects fall into the drive

3

Maintaining and Shipping

Routine and preventive maintenance for the computer is easier than you might think. A few basic procedures will help keep the computer and monitor in good operating condition.

■ Disk cleanup

■ Scan disk

■ Defragment

Use virus scan software to protect your operating system, applications, and personal files.

If you plan to ship or travel with the computer, make sure to review the shipping guidelines.

Routine Maintenance Guidelines

Keep the following care guidelines in mind when you are setting up or using your computer:

■ Operate the computer on a level surface

■ Make sure you have at least 3 inches (7.6 cm) of space between the back of the unit and any cabinet or wall

■ Make sure you have at least 3 inches (7.6 cm) of space between the top of the monitor and any cabinet

■ Never block vents or air intake areas for the computer or monitor

■ Never operate the computer with the cover or side panel removed

■ Do not place the keyboard, with the keyboard feet down, against the front of the desktop

■ Keep the computer away from excessive heat, cold, moisture, and direct sunlight (for specific ranges of temperature and humidity, see your computer specifications)

■ Keep liquids away from the computer and keyboard

■ Turn off the computer before you:

❏ Wipe the exterior with soft, damp cloth

❏ Clean the air vents

Preventive Maintenance

Preventive maintenance is essential for keeping your computer in good working condition. A few basic tasks include:

■ Creating backup files

■ Deleting unwanted files

■ Optimizing your hard drive

■ Running virus scan software

It is recommended that you backup files and optimize your hard drive at least monthly. If you use your computer a great deal, you may want to perform any and all of these tasks more frequently.

Cleaning Up the Hard Drive

As you use your computer and store files, the hard drive begins to fill up, get cluttered, and ultimately affects performance. To prevent this, you can delete files that you are not using.

Ⅰ **CAUTION:** You should not delete any unfamiliar files. If in doubt, do not delete.

To Clean Up the Hard Drive

1. Close all open programs.

2. Click the **Start** button from the Windows taskbar.

3. Click **My Computer**.

4. Right click the hard disk drive you want to clean up.

5. Click **Properties** on the pop-up menu.

6. On the **General** tab, click **Disk Cleanup**.
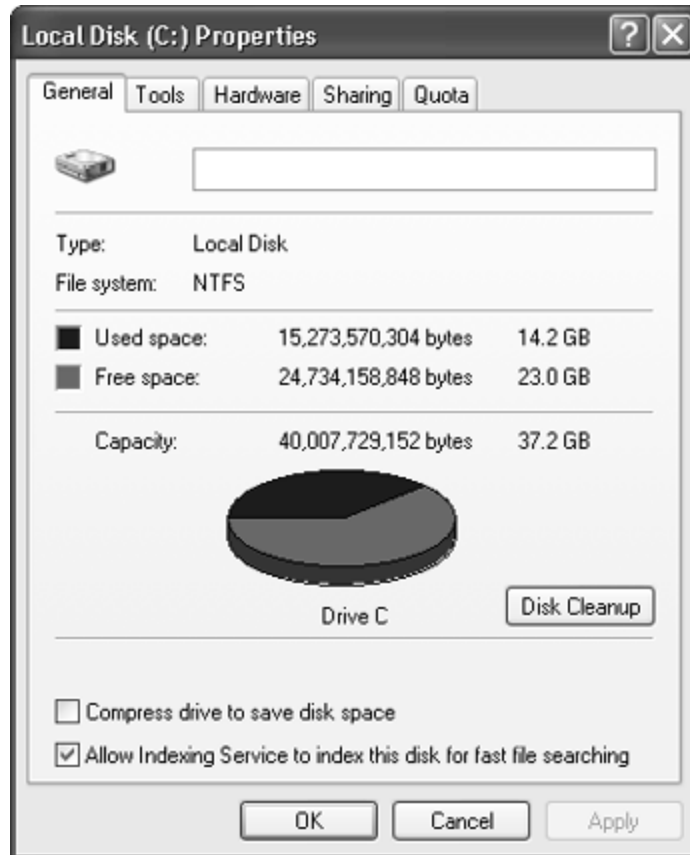
7. Click the types of files you want to delete.

8. Click **OK**.

Emptying the Recycle Bin

After you delete files from the hard drive, they are sent to the recycle bin. You can retrieve files that are sent to the recycle bin as long as you have not emptied it.

Once you empty the recycle bin, your files are permanently deleted.

To Empty the Recycle Bin

1. Double click the **Recycle Bin** icon on your Windows desktop.

2. On the **File** menu, click **Empty Recycle Bin** to delete all files.

3. Click **Yes** to confirm the deletion.

Scanning the Hard Drive

You can scan the hard drive to search for and repair errors.

✎ Your computer may not have the ScanDisk application installed.

To Scan the Hard Drive

1. Close all open programs.

2. Click the **Start** button on the Windows taskbar.

3. Click **My Computer**.

4. Right click the hard disk drive you want to check.

5. Click **Properties**.

6. On the **Tools** tab, click the **Check Now** button.

7. Select the disk check options you want to use.
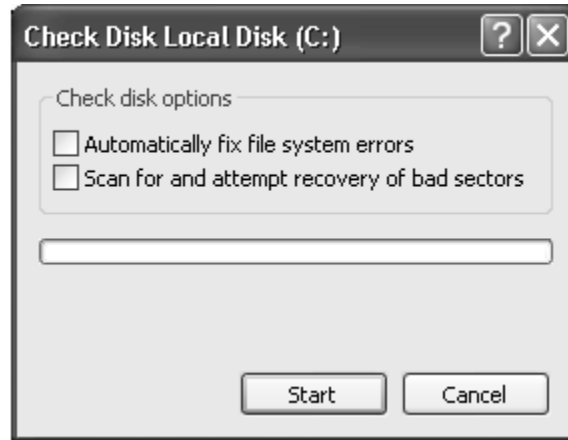
8. Click **Start** to begin scanning.

Defragmenting the Drive

You can increasingly improve the efficiency of the computer by defragmenting it on a regular basis. Defragmenting moves the files closer together so that the hard drive space is used more effectively.

✎ Your computer may not have defragmenting software installed or use another type of defragmenter.

To Defragment the Hard Drive

1. Close all open programs.

2. Click the **Start** button on the Windows taskbar.

3. Click **My Computer**.

4. Right click the hard disk drive you want to check.

5. Click **Properties**.

6. On the **Tools** tab, click the **Defragment Now** button.

7. Select the disk you want to defragment.
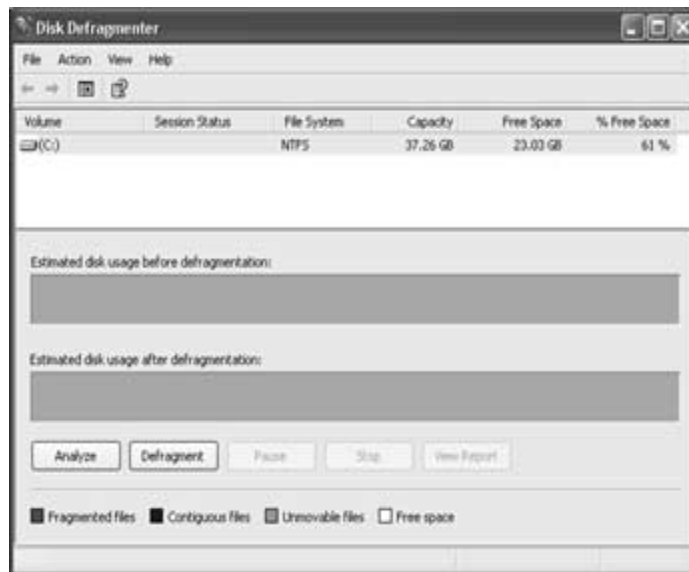
8. Click **Defragment** to begin.

Protecting from a Virus

A computer virus can destroy information on the hard drive. You can get a virus through:

■ An infected diskette

■ A CD, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD, DVD-R or DVD-RW disc

■ E-mail messages and attachments

■ Infected files downloaded from the Internet

Some viruses will affect your computer immediately, while others may activate only if you open a certain file or do not delete them before a certain date.

Norton Anti-Virus is ready to install on your computer with preset options that make your computer safe. Your computer will be scanned for viruses as you install the Norton Anti-Virus application.

You should take the following precautions in order to protect your new computer:

■ Do not open unsolicited e-mail from unknown sources

■ Only download files from sources you feel are safe

■ Always scan documents for viruses before opening

■ Make sure you have the latest version of Norton Anti-Virus

Norton offers a free upgrade for six months from the date you register Norton Anti-Virus. To download the latest version of the anti-virus application, go to **Norton.com**.

Preparing for Shipping or Travel

Follow these guidelines when preparing the computer for shipping:

■ Back up the hard drive

■ Make sure the back up media is not exposed to electrical or magnetic impulses

■ Remove any diskette, CD, or DVD from the drive and store it separately

■ Insert a blank diskette (floppy) into the disk drive

■ Turn off the computer and external devices. The hard drive automatically locks when the computer is turned off.

■ Disconnect the power cord(s) from the electrical outlet and then the computer and external devices

■ Pack the computer and external devices in their original packing boxes or sufficient packing material to protect them

4

Saving Energy

You can conserve energy by using the Microsoft Windows Power Management system. With this system, you can determine when the computer is sleeping, hibernating, or awake. You can also determine when your monitor and hard drive turns off.

Using Power Management

The Microsoft Power Management System provides preset power schemes to assist you with conserving energy:

■ Home/Office Desk

■ Always On

These power schemes determine when your system goes into sleep or hibernation mode and when your monitor and hard drive turn off.

Table 4–1: Preset Power Scheme Properties

Power Scheme	System goes to sleep...	System hibernates...	Monitor turns off...	Hard drive turns off...
Home/Office Desk	After 20 minutes of no activity	Never	After 15 minutes of no activity	After 30 minutes of no activity
Always On	Never	Never	After 10 minutes of no activity	After 1 hour of no activity

To alter these settings, you can change them in the **Power Options Properties** dialog box.

✎ If your computer is connected to a network or has "always on" DSL connection, you should use the **Always On** power scheme.

Using the Power Options Properties

1. Click **Start** from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Performance and Maintenance**.

4. Click **Power Options** to display the **Power Options Properties** dialog box.
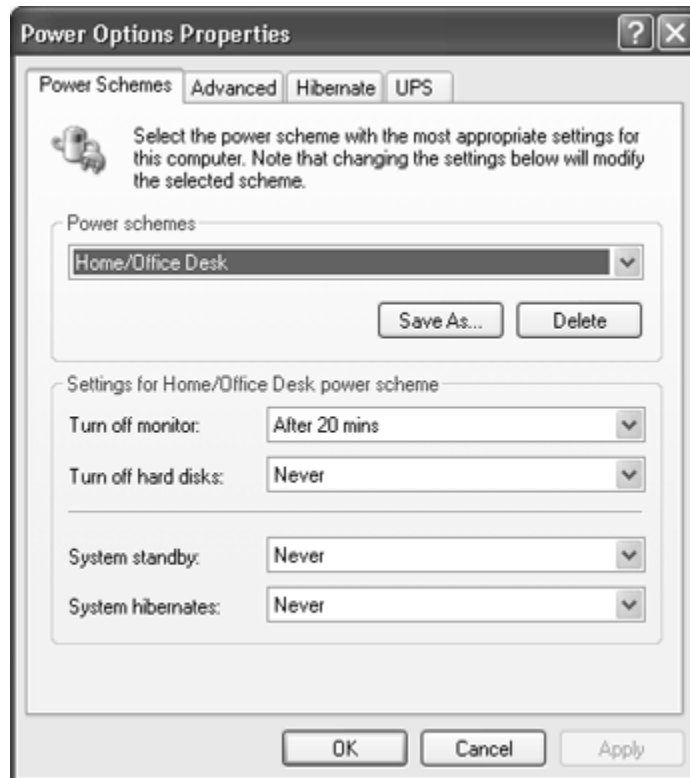
Sleep Mode

Sleep mode is a low-power standby state that reduces the amount of electrical power consumed by the computer while you are not using it.

The Microsoft Windows Power Management system automatically puts the computer into sleep mode after it has been idle for a while. You can:

■ Determine when your computer should automatically go into sleep mode

■ Manually put your computer to sleep

Adjusting the Sleep Mode

You can determine when the computer automatically goes into sleep mode.

To Adjust the Sleep Mode

1. Click **Start** from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Performance and Maintenance**.

4. Click **Power Options**.

5. Make sure the **Power Schemes** tab is selected.

6. In the **System Standby** drop-down list, select how much inactive time you want to pass before putting your computer to sleep.

7. Click the **Apply** button, and then **OK**.

Manually Entering the Sleep Mode

You can manually put the computer into sleep or standby mode to conserve energy.

To Manually Enter Sleep Mode

1. Close all programs and save any open files.

2. Click **Start** on the Windows taskbar

3. Click the **Control Panel**.

4. Click **Performance and Maintenance**.

5. Click **Power Options**.

6. On the **Advanced** tab, under **When I press the power button on my computer**, click **Standby**.

7. Click **OK** or **Apply**, and then turn off the power.

Awaking From Sleep

You must wake the computer to use it again. You can wake the computer by:

■ Pressing any key on the keyboard

■ Moving your mouse

Hibernate Mode

You can also set the computer to go into Hibernate mode after a specified period of inactivity.

Before the computer can hibernate, it saves everything in memory to the hard drive. Then, it shuts itself off. When you awake the computer, the Windows Desktop appears exactly as you left it.

Adjusting the Hibernate Mode

You can determine when the computer automatically goes into hibernation mode.

To Hibernate the Computer

1. Click **Start** from the Windows taskbar.

2. Click **Control Panel**.

3. Click **Performance and Maintenance**.

4. Click **Power Options**.

5. Make sure the **Power Schemes** tab is selected.

6. In the **System Hibernates** drop-down list, select the number of minutes of inactive time you want to pass before your computer goes into hibernation mode.

7. Click the **Apply** button, and then **OK**.

Awaking from Hibernation

You must wake the computer to use it again. Press the **Power** button on the front of the computer to awake it from hibernation.

5

Understanding Computer Terms

This chapter provides definitions for computer terms used in this guide and other documents that ship with your computer.

A

1394 port

A new type of connector for plugging in peripherals with extremely fast data-transfer rates, such as video cameras. The 1394 standard synchronizes audio and video files by delivering data at the intended rate-in real time. See peripheral. See also USB port.

Acrobat Reader

Software created by Adobe Systems that can be downloaded free of charge from the Adobe Web site (www.Adobe.com) The Acrobat Reader allows you to view an electronic document with the exact layout (font, colors, and graphics) that the author intended. Regardless of the program the author used to create the document, every computer with the Acrobat Reader installed can display the document with the same layout once the file is converted to PDF format. (To view an ordinary e-mail attachment in its original format, your computer must have the same program, the same or later version of the program, and the same fonts as the author used.) To save printing and postage costs, companies, professional organizations, and clubs distribute newsletters to employees and members over the Internet. With the Acrobat Reader, you can view and print the newsletter in its original format. See PDF. See also font.

anti-virus utility

A program that detects, and in many case repairs, the damage caused by a computer virus. See virus. See also utility.

application
A technical term for a computer program. See program.

audio/video streaming
See streaming.

authoring
What you do to create a program that may eventually be stored on a CD. For example, if you want to create a multimedia game or presentation, you need authoring software that allows you to combine sound, graphics, and text with user interactivity. When you finish creating your program with the authoring software, use Easy CD Creator to record it on CD.

B

back up
To copy files in case the original files are lost or damaged. Backup copies can be stored on the hard drive or on a diskette, Zip disk, or CD-R disc. Regular backups of all data files on removable storage media are recommended in case of hard drive failure.

bit
The smallest possible piece of computer information-a single digit (either a 1 or a 0). See digital.

bitmap
Defines a display space and the color of each pixel or bit in the display space. A GIF and a JPEG are examples of graphic image file types that contain bitmaps.

boot
To start or restart the computer. During the start-up process, information necessary for the computer to operate is loaded into memory. See main memory.

browser

Software that searches for, displays, and downloads text, graphics, sound, and video from the Internet. Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator are two popular browsers.

buffer

A temporary storage area in memory. It acts as a holding area where data with different transfer rates can be collected, then sent as a steady stream to the device that processes data for permanent storage. In CD recorders, the buffer helps to prevent buffer underruns.

buffer underrun

The inability of your computer to maintain the steady stream of data required for CD recording. The CD recorder has an internal memory buffer to protect against interruptions and slowdowns; however, if the interruption is so long that the buffer is completely emptied, a buffer underrun occurs, writing stops, and the CD can be damaged beyond repair.

bug

A mistake in the design of computer software. Because of their complexity, designs may have minor bugs. As soon as the manufacturer becomes aware of the problem, modifications are made to correct it. These modifications, called fixes or patches, can be downloaded from the manufacturer's Web site. If a major bug is discovered, the manufacturer releases a new version of the software. Visit the Compaq Web site (www.compaq.com) from time to time for the latest information about your computer, including software updates that you can download. And visit the manufacturer's Web site for any software or peripherals that you purchase for your computer. See peripheral.

bulletin board

An electronic notice board on the Internet where people can post notices for others with similar interests. Professional organizations and clubs often have bulletin boards for members to share information and opinions.

byte
Eight bits of data strung together to make a message that the computer can interpret. Most information is organized into bytes, the standard unit of data. One byte of data is required to represent a single character that you can see on the screen (a letter, number, punctuation mark, or other symbol). For example, the byte 01001000 represents the capital letter H. See bit.

C

cable modem
A modem that allows you to access the Internet through your cable service provider. Continuously connected to the Internet, it allows high-speed, high-capacity data transfer.

CD (Compact Disc)
Media used in a CD player (digital recordings of music) or CD-ROM drive (computer data, such as programs). Both types of compact disc are read-only; once data is recorded or written to them, they can only be played or read.

CD-DA
Compact disc-digital audio. Jointly developed by Philips and Sony and launched in October, 1982, CD-DA was the first incarnation of the compact disc, used to digitally record and play back music. The standard under which CD-DA discs are recorded is known as the Red Book.

CD Extra, CD Plus, or Enhanced CD
A multi session CD containing a number of audio tracks in the first session, and one CD-ROM XA data track in the second session. Additional characteristics are defined in the Blue Book standard. An alternative to mixed-mode for combining standard CD-DA audio, which can be played in a normal audio player, and a computer application on a single CD.

CD-I

A compact disc format developed by Philips, designed to allow interactive multimedia applications to be run on a player attached to a television. The standard document defining CD-I is called the Green Book.

CD-R (CD-recordable)

Media used in a CD-R drive to record or write data that cannot be erased. The base is a circular piece of clear plastic, molded with a spiral track to ensure that the CD-R drive follows the same spiral path as that stamped on a conventional CD. The plastic layer is covered first with an organic dye that is photosensitive, then a reflective layer of silver alloy or 24-carat gold, and finally lacquer to protect the metal from air and dust. Depending on the dye and metal used in manufacture, the disc may be gold/gold (gold on top and bottom), green/ gold, silver/blue, or silver/silver. When referring to CD media, "CD-R" is often used to refer to write-once CDs in contrast to CD-RW.

CD-R drive

Drive that uses a low-power laser to burn pits into the dye layer of a CD-R, on which digital data is written. The marks are permanent. When the finalized disc is played or read, the metal layer reflects laser light in much the same way as the aluminum layer in a music CD or CD-ROM. For this reason, the write-once CD-R can be read by most of the newer CD players, CD-ROM, and DVD-ROM drives.

CD-ROM (CD Read-Only Media)

Media used in a CD-ROM drive. The data is read-only; you cannot erase or record over it. The disc has three layers. The base is a circular piece of clear plastic, mechanically stamped with tiny indentations, or pits, in which digital data is written. The plastic layer is covered with a sheet of shiny aluminum to reflect laser light; and the aluminum is coated with lacquer to protect it from air and dust. Specifications for the CD-ROM were first defined in the Yellow Book.

CD-ROM drive

A drive that reads a CD-ROM (or music CD) by shining a laser into the clear plastic base and interpreting the way the laser light is reflected by the shiny aluminum layer. The CD-ROM drive is read-only; it cannot write to a disc. Most modern drives can also read a CD-R (unless written in multi-sessions by a CD-RW drive). Only the newest multi-session CD-ROM drives can read a CD-RW written in multi-sessions.

CD-ROM XA

"XA" stands for Extended Architecture. CD-ROM XA is an extension of the Yellow Book standard, generally consistent with the ISO 9660 logical format, but designed to add better audio and video capabilities taken from the CD-I standard so that a CD-ROM could more easily be used for multimedia applications. CD-ROM XA was abandoned as an independent multimedia format, but Photo CDs are written in the CD-ROM XA physical format.

CD-RW (CD-Rewritable)

Media used in a CD-RW drive to record data that can be overwritten thousands of times. The clear plastic base is molded with a spiral track to ensure that the CD-RW drive follows the same spiral path as the one stamped on a conventional CD. The middle (recording) layer is a phase-change crystalline mixture. Sandwiched between two layers that draw away excess heat during the writing process, the phase-change layer gives the disc a metallic grey color. The media can be used for single-session or multi-session writing (recording different tracks on different occasions). Advanced multi-session technology is not backward-compatible. Only multi-read capable CD-ROM and newer DVD-ROM drives can read CD-RWs written in multi-sessions. Because of the lower reflectivity of the phase-change recording layer, older CD players and CD-ROM drives cannot read CD-RWs, even when written in a single session. CD-RW technology is improving, but the quality of recordings is not yet comparable to CD-R recordings.

CD-RW drive

A drive with three laser powers that can write to a CD-RW, erase the data, or read the data. A high-power laser melts the crystalline recording layer. It cools quickly, sets without forming crystals, and absorbs the laser beam. Data is written in pits that form as the non-crystalline material shrinks. A medium-power laser erases the data. It melts the recording layer at a lower temperature for a longer period of time. As the phase-change material cools, crystals form that reflect the laser beam. The high-power laser can then overwrite the crystalline material. A low-power laser, which does not alter the state of the recording layer, reads the data. A CD-RW drive can read CD-ROMs, CD-Rs, and CD-RWs. It can write to both CD-Rs and CD-RWs.

CD Text

An audio CD format in which up to 5000 characters of CD information (title, artist, and song titles) are written into the Table of Contents of a CD. The information is displayed when the CD is played back on CD Text-enabled players.

chat

An Internet feature that allows you to exchange typed messages with another person (or group of people) in real time. A message you type is instantly displayed on the other person's computer.

click (left-click)

To press and quickly release the left mouse button to select an item.

close disc

To "close" a recordable disc so that no further data can be written to it. This is done when the last session's lead-in is written. The next writable address on the CD is not recorded in the lead-in, so that the CD-Recorder in subsequent attempts to write has no way of knowing where to begin writing. Note: It is not necessary to close a CD to read it in a normal CD-ROM drive.

close session

When a session is closed, information about its contents is written into the Table of Contents of the CDs, and a lead-in and lead-out are written to prepare the CD for subsequent sessions.

coaster

Popular term for a ruined recordable CD, named after the round object you rest your drinking glass on to avoid marking the table.

component

a device installed inside the computer. Examples are the CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, Zip, disk, and hard drives, memory chips, modem, graphics cards, and sound cards. See peripheral.

cursor

The blinking vertical line on the screen that indicates where the next character appears when you type.

D

data

Information that can be processed by a computer. See digital.

data file

Files that you create with a computer program. Most programs are designed to process a specific type of data. For example, spreadsheet programs allow you to create data files primarily with numbers; word processing programs primarily with letters; page design programs, with text and graphics; drawing programs, with lines; photo manipulation programs, with photos and drawings; and music programs, with sounds.

database

Collection of related data designed to retrieve useful information easily.

dedicated line

A telephone line that is always connected to the modem (inside the computer) to provide constant access to the Internet. A separate telephone line is used for phone calls. See modem.

default

The option that the program automatically chooses for you when you do not indicate a choice yourself. For example, when you print a document, the Print dialog box asks which pages to print (the default is All) and how many copies to print (the default is 1). You can change the settings, and you can designate the new settings as the default.

desktop

See Windows desktop.

desktop computer

A personal computer designed to be placed on a desk. It is not portable as is a laptop or notebook computer.

dialog box

A small window that requests information from the user before a command can be carried out digitally.

digital

A system that uses electronic signals to transfer data in the form of bits. A bit is represented by a single digit. Computers use only two digits-either a 0 or a 1-in various combinations. See bit and byte.

digital audio extraction

The process of copying CD-DA audio tracks digitally, from your CD-Recorder or CD-ROM drive to a hard drive or to a recordable CD. Not all CD-ROM drives support this, but most CD-Recorders do.

disc-at-once

A method of writing CDs in which one or more tracks are written in a single operation, and the CD is closed without ever turning off the writing laser. Contrast with track-at-once. Not all CD-Recorders support disc-at-once.

disc image

A single large file which is an exact representation of the whole set of data and programs as it will appear on a CD in terms of both content and logical format. This may be an ISO 9660 image or some proprietary format such as the .cif format used by Easy CD Creator.

discussion group

A group discussion held on the Internet on a topic of mutual interest. Instead of meeting in a classroom, students may meet for group discussions on the Internet.

directory

See folder.

disk

Low-capacity, removable storage media made of flexible plastic film encased in a hard plastic shell. Since the plastic film is flexible, the 3.5-inch disk is sometimes referred to as a floppy disk.

disk drive

The drive that reads and writes to a disk.

double-click

To push down and quickly release the left mouse button twice in rapid succession to open an item.

download

To receive files from another computer on the Internet.

drive

A device that reads and sometimes writes to storage media. Examples are CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, Zip, diskette, and hard drives.

driver

Software that enables the operating system (OS) to recognize and operate devices installed in or attached to the computer, such as a printer. All drives that use removable media and all peripheral devices have drivers. You can download updated drivers from the manufacturer's Web site. See drive and peripheral. See also OS.

drop-down menu

A list of options that drops down when you click a menu name on the menu bar or click the down arrow on a dialog box.

DSL (digital subscriber line)

A telephone line that carries both voice and data signals, allowing you to talk on the phone and surf the Internet at the same time. The data part of the line, which is continuously connected to the Internet, allows high-speed, high-capacity data transfer. Your local telephone company provides the necessary equipment-a DSL modem, a network interface card, (NIC) and a splitter. See NIC.

DSL modem

A modem that connects to the Internet using digital subscriber line service through an existing copper telephone line.

DVD-ROM (DVD read-only media)

A CD-sized disc that stores full-length movies, music videos, and multimedia computer games with three-dimensional graphics. Both single-sided and double-sided discs are available.

DVD-ROM drive

A drive that reads DVDs. Backward-compatible with CD technology, it also reads old music CDs, CD-ROMs, CD-Rs, and CD-RWs.

E

e-mail (electronic mail)

Messages sent over the Internet.

encrypt

To translate data into a secret code. You must have access to a secret key or password to read an encrypted file. See secure Web site<.

Explorer

See Microsoft Internet Explorer and Windows Explorer.

F

fax modem

A modem that allows your computer to transmit and receive faxes. It can transmit documents to fax machines and other computers with fax modems. It can broadcast a fax to several sites at once.

file extension

A dot and three letters after a file name that indicate the program in which the file was created. For example, filename.doc. The file extension .doc indicates that the file was created in Microsoft Word.

floppy disk

An older term for disk. See disk.

folder

Represented by an icon that looks like a yellow manila folder, a computer folder contains other folders (subfolders) and files. MS-DOS and early versions of Microsoft Windows used the term directory (and subdirectories) for folder (and subfolders).

font

A complete set of letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and symbols in a particular typeface. When you use a word processing program, you can choose from a long list of fonts to give your document personality. Typefaces can suggest masculinity, femininity, strength, delicacy, formality, frivolity, friendliness, warmth, coldness, classical tradition, or contemporary trends. Matching the personality of the typeface with the content of the text is a challenge for desktop publishers.

G

game port

A connector on the back of the computer for plugging in a gamepad, joystick, or steering wheel. See joystick.

gap

The gap (more correctly called a pause) is a space dividing tracks on a CD. In some situations, a gap is required by standards such as the Red Book. For example, if you have data and audio tracks within the same session, they must be separated by a gap. Also, there must be a gap of two to three seconds preceding the first track on a CD.

GIF

(pronounced "giff"). A file format for graphics displayed on the Internet. These are easily identified by the file extension.gif. You can save a GIF file from a Web site to your computer. Point to the image with the cursor and right click. A shortcut menu is displayed. Select Save Picture As... The Save As dialog box is displayed. Select a folder, name the file, and click the Save button. See file extension. See also JEG.

graphical interface

Communication between a person and a computer by means of images. With a pointing device such as a mouse, you can click an icon to tell the computer what you want. See icon. See also interface.

graphics

Pictures or illustrations, including drawings, pie charts, bar graphs, street maps, architectural and engineering designs, fashion designs, musical scores, cartoons, animated images, and photographs. A graphics card enables the monitor to display these items on the screen. See SVGA.

H

hard disk

Internal media for permanent storage of system files, programs, utilities, and data files. The hard disk consists of flat, round platters. Each side of each platter has a head that floats on a thin cushion of air over the surface of the rapidly spinning disk and reads electronically stored data or writes data onto the disk. If the computer is dropped, a head may fall onto and dig into a platter and cause the hard drive to become unreadable.

hard drive

The drive that reads and writes to the hard disk. If you have a large hard drive, it may be divided into several partitions. Each partition is designated by a different icon and a consecutive drive letter, beginning with the letter C. Partition C: contains the files the computer uses to start up. The other partitions contain no pre installed files.

hardware

The physical components of a computer-the parts you can physically touch. See software.

HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)

The standard language for documents designed for viewing on the Web with a browser. Tags embedded in the documents mark the locations of other electronic files. Click the hyperlinks to jump from one Web site to another. Documents formatted for a browser can be identified by the file extension .htm or .html. See hyperlink. See also file extension.

http:// (hypertext transfer protocol)

This protocol commands the Web server to locate the Web site you requested and transmit the Web site to your computer. You communicate a request to your computer by using the keyboard or mouse. You type the Web site address (URL) in the address box of the browser or click a hyperlink on a Web page. Your computer communicates the request to the Web server by using hypertext transfer protocol. The Web server communicates the request to other servers and computers connected to the Web. Throughout the world, servers and computers recognize the same protocol. Their common language makes the World Wide Web possible. See URL, browser, hyperlink, and server.

hyperlink

An embedded link to another document or Web site. When you position the cursor over a hyperlink (colored text or image), a small hand is displayed. When you click the hyperlink, the browser displays the new document or Web site. See HTML.

I

icon
A small picture that represents a menu command, file, program, tool, or peripheral.

interactive
A computer program that responds to you as if you were having a conversation. You give instructions; computer performs an action (or requests additional information). Computer games and multimedia tutorials are interactive programs.

interface
A means of communication between two entities. A person and a computer interface through an operating system (OS). Two computers interface through protocol. Computers on the Web use hypertext transfer protocol (http://). See OS and http://.

Internet
A worldwide collection of computer networks that are interconnected so that users can share electronic information.

Internet Explorer
See Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Internet keyboard
A keyboard that resembles a typewriter keyboard but is equipped with special buttons programmed to connect to the Internet.

Internet phone
A video telephone that allows you to make long-distance calls over the Internet.

ISO 9660 Format
The most common international standard for the logical format for files and directories on a CD-ROM. Some other common logical formats such as Joliet and Rock Ridge are extensions of ISO 9660.

ISP (Internet Service Provider)
A company that provides access to the Internet. To use the service, you need the ISP software, a user name, a password, and access phone number(s).

J

jewel case
The hinged plastic case in which CDs are often stored.

jewel case sleeve
The pieces of paper that can be inserted into the jewel case to help identify the contents of the CD stored in the case.

joystick
A lever that moves in all directions to control the movement of a pointer or objects on the screen. It is used for computer games in which you drive, fly, or shoot objects displayed on the monitor.

JPEG
(pronounced "jaypeg"). A file format for graphics, especially photographs, displayed on the Internet. It is easily identified by the file extension .jpg. JPEG files, which store more information per pixel than GIF files, are used for complex, high-resolution images. See GIF. See also pixel.

L

lead-in
An area at the beginning of each session on a recordable session that is left blank for the session's table of contents. The lead-in is written when a session is closed, and takes up 4500 sectors, approximately one minute, on a CD. The lead-in also contains the next writable address on the CD so that future sessions can be added, unless the CD is closed.

lead-out

An area at the end of a session which indicates that the end of data has been reached. The first lead-out on a CD is 6750 sectors long. Any subsequent lead-outs are 2250 sectors, or about 30 seconds.

link

See hyperlink.

link block

A block, also known as a sector, of digital rubbish that is written each time the recording laser is turned on (before) or off (after) writing a track or a packet. See also Run-in/Run-out Blocks.

linked multi-session

A CD containing more than one session, in which all (or selected) data from the various sessions can be seen as if they had been recorded in a single session.

listserv

See mailing list.

logical block

The smallest addressable space on a CD. Each logical block is identified by a unique Logical Block Number (LBN), each of which is assigned in order starting from 0 at the beginning of the CD. Under the ISO 9660 standard, all data on a CD is addressed in terms of Logical Block Numbers.

logical format/logical structure/file system

A file system, such as ISO 9660, that translates the sector-by-sector view of a CD into a virtual tree of directories and files. This system makes it easier for both people and computers to use the information on the CD. UDF is another example of a file system that can be used to write CDs. See UDF.

log on

To gain access to a computer network or the Internet by entering a user name and password. See network.

M

mailing list

An electronic mail-forwarding service that allows subscribers to send e-mail to a single address where the message is copied and sent to all addresses on the list. Clubs and professional organizations use this service, sometimes called a "listserv," to contact members quickly, cheaply, and effortlessly.

main memory

RAM memory chips inside the computer. Every program you launch and every file you open must be copied from a storage disk, disc, or diskette into main memory. The amount of main memory in your computer determines how many programs you can run and how much data you can process at one time. Memory is measured in megabytes (1 million bytes or characters) of information. Most personal computers come with a minimum of 32 megabytes of main memory-the minimum recommendation for windows-based programs. You can install extra memory (refer to "Upgrading Your computer" in this guide). See RAM. See also byte.

mastering

Technically refers to the process of creating a glass master from which CDs are reproduced in quantity. In desktop recordable CD systems, mastering is done together with premastering by the desktop CD-Recorder, and the term is generally used to mean recording.

maximize

To enlarge the screen (or maximize the window) in a Windows-based program by clicking the Maximize button, the button with an open square in the upper-right corner of a window that has not been maximized. See Microsoft Windows. See also minimize.

microprocessor

A silicon chip inside your computer that processes the instructions and data from input devices (such as the keyboard and mouse) and communicates them to output devices (such as the monitor, speakers, and printer).

Microsoft Internet Explorer

A Web browser developed by the Microsoft Corporation. See browser.

Microsoft Windows

The most popular computer operating system in the world. It is characterized by the use of windows and icons. Each running program and open file has its own window. Instead of memorizing commands, you click icons to communicate with the computer. Clicking the Minimize button shrinks a program to a button on the taskbar. Clicking the button again displays the program as a window. You can have several windows open at the same time and toggle from one to another by using Alt+Tab (press and hold down the Alt key, press the Tab key, and then release both keys). A palette with an icon for each program is displayed. Click the icon for the program you want.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)

(pronounced middy). A file format used to store electronic music sounds. A sound card that supports MIDI files allows the computer to generate the synthesized musical sounds found in games, CD-ROMs, and multimedia presentation packages. The format is easily identified by the file extension .mid. See file extension. See also music software.

MIDI connector

A connector on the back of the computer for plugging in a synthesizer keyboard. A MIDI connector allows you to record sounds created by a synthesizer and then manipulate the data to produce new sounds, such as changing the key of a composition. See MIDI. See also music software.

minimize

To shrink a running program window into an icon on the Windows taskbar by clicking the Minimize button-the button with the minus sign in the pper-right corner of a window. Click the button on the taskbar to view the window again. See Microsoft Windows. See also maximize.

mixed-mode disc

A CD that includes both computer data and CD-DA tracks. The data is all contained in track one, and the audio in one or more of the following tracks. Contrast with CD Extra.

modem:

A device in the computer that converts data from digital format to analog format so that it can be transferred through a standard telephone line to another computer. The modem in the receiving computer converts the data back to digital format. See digital.

mouse

A device that you move across the top of your desk (or a mousepad) to move the pointer or cursor on the screen. Click to select an item, double-click to launch a program, and right-click to display a shortcut menu. See mouse pointer and cursor. See also click, double-click, and right-click.

mouse pointer

The arrow on the screen that moves with the mouse.

MP3

The file extension for MPEG (pronounced "empeg"), audio layer 3, sound files. The format is easily identified by the file extension .mp3. This format compresses sound data from a stereo music CD to 1/12th its original size without sacrificing sound quality. Because of their small size, MP3 files can be transferred over the Internet easily. You can download individual songs or entire CDs in MP3 format to your computer. See file extension.

MPEG

Moving Picture Experts Group, a standards organization responsible for the MPEG1 and MPEG2 standards for the compression of full-motion video.

multimedia

Two or more media formats used together, such as text, graphics, animation, audio, or video.

multiread:

An OSTA (Optical Storage Technology Association) standard for CD-ROM and ROM drives. Drives that follow the multiread standard can read commercial CDs (audio and data), CD-R discs, and CD-RW discs. They can also read CDs written in fixed- or variable-length packets.

multi-session

A method of adding data incrementally to a CD in more than one recording session. If data is linked between sessions, all data on a multi-session CD, when read on a multi-session CD-ROM drive, may be seen as part of a single logical structure. Multi-session is different from packet writing. See packet writing.

mutli-volume

A CD containing multiple sessions that are not linked together. Each volume on the CD must be read as if it were a separate CD. You can read different sessions on a CD by using the Session Selector in Easy CD Creator Deluxe.

music software

Programs for composing and editing music. When you play a tune on a synthesizer keyboard connected to a computer, the music program translates what you play into a written score. Music software creates MIDI files. See MIDI and MIDI connector.

N

navigate

To move through a Web site or online document by clicking the hyperlinks. See hyperlink.

Netscape Navigator

A Web browser developed by the Netscape Communications Corporation. See browser.

network

Two or more computers linked together to share resources, such as programs, files, and printers.

newsgroup

A discussion group on the Internet where people can post or read messages on thousands of topics, such as professional basketball, environmental protection, Himalayan cats, Scottish bagpipes, Irish clog dancing, soufflés, macramé, book reviews, mountain bikes, political candidates, and cartoon strips. Imagine a topic, and you can probably find a newsgroup that discusses it.

newsreader

A program that lets you read and post messages to newsgroups.

news server

A server that receives the Usenet news feed (all the individual messages collected from 100,000 news servers around the world). You access the news server through your Internet Service Provider. See Usenet. See also newsgroup.

NIC (network interface card)

A computer circuit board or card installed in a computer so that the computer can be connected to a network. Personal computers and workstations on local area networks (LANs) typically contain a network interface card specifically designed for the LAN transmission technology, such as Ethernet or Token Ring.

O

online

To be communicating with another computer through a modem or network. You are online when you log on and establish a connection. You are offline when you lose or terminate a connection. See modem and network.

online Help

A help manual that is displayed on the screen while you are actually working in a program and need help. It can be accessed through the Help menu at the top of the screen. Help for the Windows operating system can be accessed from the Start button on the taskbar.

online shopping

Ordering products on the Internet. You can purchase books, flowers, music CDs, toys, groceries, stocks, airline tickets, cars, and much more.

on the fly

To write on the fly means to write directly from source data to CD data without first writing a disc image.

OS (Operating System)

The interface that permits a person and a computer to "talk" to one another. Microsoft Windows, the most popular operating system, displays icons, menus, and dialog boxes to find out what you want. You use a mouse and keyboard to reply. See Microsoft Windows. See also interface.

P

packet writing

A method of writing data on a CD in small increments. Packets can be of fixed or variable length. Roxio's DirectCD software supports packet writing. Contrast with track-at-once and disc-at-once.

parallel port

A connector on the back of the computer for plugging in a parallel cable attached to a parallel device, such as a printer. Data is transferred, one byte at a time, through eight data wires (one for each bit in the byte). All eight bits travel side by side and arrive at the same time. A parallel port is faster than a serial port, which lets data through one bit at a time. See byte. See also serial port.

path

A sequence of information that directs the operating system to a file. For example, C:\Windows\Clouds.bmp is the path to a bitmap file named Clouds. It is located in a folder named Windows, which is located on the C drive.

peripheral

An external device connected to a computer, such as a monitor, keyboard, mouse, joystick, scanner, printer, and digital camera. See component.

PDF (Portable Document Format)

A file format that has captured all the elements of a printed document as an electronic image, which you can view, navigate, print, or forward to someone else. PDF files are created using Adobe Acrobat, Acrobat Capture, or similar products. To view and use the files, you need the free Acrobat Reader, which you can easily download. Once you have downloaded the Reader, it starts automatically whenever you want to look at a PDF file.

photo CD

A CD format based on the CD-ROM XA and Orange Book Hybrid Disc specifications; it is used to store photographic images for display and printing.

physical format

The physical format of a CD determines how data is recorded in each sector. The various physical formats are defined by the color book standards, such as Red Book, Yellow Book, and Orange Book.

pixel (short for picture element)

One of the individual dots that compose a graphical image. See graphics.

PMA (Program Memory Area)

An area on a recordable CD that temporarily contains the table of contents information when tracks are written in a session that is not yet closed. When the session is closed, this same information is written in the session lead-in.

playlist

Tracks chosen to be played from a CD or DVD.

plug-and-play
A feature introduced with Windows 95 to simplify the use of some peripheral devices. Once the device is installed (in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions), you can plug it into the computer while the computer is running. The operating system automatically recognizes the new device. In order to connect a non-plug-and-play device, you must first shut down the computer. See peripheral.

pop-up menu
A list of options that pops up when you right-click an icon on the desktop or taskbar, the vacant part of the desktop, a selection in a document, or a file in Windows Explorer. See right-click.

premastering
The process of preparing data to be recorded onto a CD. This includes dividing the data into sectors and recording those sectors with the appropriate header (address) and error correction information. In the case of recordable CD systems, premastering and mastering are done in one operation, resulting in a ready-to-read CD.

Processor (short for microprocessor)
The brains of the computer. See microprocessor

product key
A unique series of letters and numbers that is assigned to each software package you buy. You are asked to enter the product key when you install the software. When you register the software, you transmit the product key to the manufacturer for entry in a customer database. Registration activates your warranty. When you telephone for technical support, you are asked for the product key. The technician matches it against the database to determine whether you qualify for support. You should keep a record of all product keys to protect your investment. They are comparable to the serial numbers on hardware. See software.   See also hardware.

program

A set of instructions, written in a programming language understood by the computer, that tells the hardware what tasks to perform. Some programs are installed at the factory as ROM chips that cannot be altered; they are essential for operating the microprocessor. These programs are called firmware. Most   programs are installed as software from removable storage media. The word "program," however, is commonly used for specific type of software applications that create data files. See data files. See also hardware and software.

R

RAM (Random Access Memory)

The main memory of the computer. It holds a copy of the operating system (OS), any programs that are running on the computer, and any data that is being processed. RAM is temporary memory; turning off the computer clears RAM. The more RAM your computer has, the faster the programs respond. See main memory, OS, program, and data file. See also ROM.

random erase

The ability to erase a single file at a time from a CD-ReWritable CD, freeing up CD space for immediate re-use, just as you would do on a hard or floppy disk. (Available with CD-RW CDs and DirectCD).

recordable disc

The media used in recordable CD systems. The blank CD is made of a bottom layer of poly carbonate with a preformed track spiral, which the recording laser follows when inscribing information onto the CD. A translucent layer of recordable material is laid on top of the bicarbonate, then a reflective layer (gold or silver colored). On top there is a thin layer of lacquer and sometimes a printed label. The standard recordable CD is "write-once," which means data written to it cannot be erased, although it is possible to add data in a later session. See multi-session. For erasable and rewritable CDs, see CD-RW.

right-click

To press and quickly release the right mouse button to display a menu of options. See pop-up menu.

ROM (Read-Only Memory)

Memory that contains the basic instructions for the microprocessor. ROM is permanent memory; turning off the computer does not erase it. Since you cannot change or write to ROM, it is referred to as read-only. See microprocessor. See also RAM.

Run-In/Run-Out Blocks

Blocks of written data before and after a packet or a track. These blocks allow the recorder to synchronize with the data on the CD and to finish up interleaved data. Four run-in blocks and two run-out blocks are written for each packet.

S

scanner

A device that creates digital images of printed documents and photographs. Optical character recognition (OCR) and photo manipulation programs allow you to save and edit the images on your computer. See digital

screen saver

A moving picture or pattern that appears on the screen when you stop using your computer for a specified period of time. Originally designed to protect the monitor, screen savers are now used for amusement.

scroll

To gradually move information across the screen when a document or Web page is too long or too wide to view all at once. Scroll bars are located along the right side and across the bottom of a window. When scroll arrows are present at the ends of the bars, you know that some information is off the screen. Click one of the arrows to scroll the information into view. See click.

scroll mouse

A mouse with a scroll wheel (between the two mouse buttons) for automatic scrolling through long documents or Web pages. See scroll and mouse.

search engine

A program, accessed on the Internet, that allows you to search large databases for information by using keywords or phrases. See database.

sector

The smallest recordable unit on a CD. A CD can contain [(75 sectors per second) x (60 seconds per minute) x (number of minutes on a CD)] sectors. The amount of data contained in the sector depends on the physical format in which it is recorded; for "regular" CD-ROM data, you can fit 2048 bytes (2 kilobytes) of data into a sector.

secure Web site

A Web site that encrypts data to protect it from unauthorized use. When you purchase items over the Internet, you are asked to type your name, mailing address, e-mail address, and credit card information on an electronic form. Sending information to a secure Web site is comparable to giving it over the telephone when you order from a catalog. (Never send your social security number over the Internet. Criminals can steal your identity with your social security number.) See encrypt.

sequential erase

Erasing the entire CD so that it can be re-used. (Available with CD-RW CDs).

serial port

A small connector on the back of the computer (or keyboard) for plugging in a thin cable attached to a serial device, such as a mouse. Serial devices transfer data one bit at a time through a data wire. The serial cable has two wires for bi-directional communication (sending and receiving information simultaneously). See bit. See also parallel port.

server

A computer with a large hard drive that serves (provides information to) other computers connected to it on a network. In a local area network, several computers in the same room or all the computers in a high-rise office building may be connected to a server. The server stores everyone's files. The Internet is the largest computer network in the world. It is a network of servers. When you send or receive e-mail, it travels through a series of servers to which both the sender's and receiver's computer are connected through a modem. When you enter a Web site address in the address box of your browser, Internet protocol commands the Web server to locate the site you requested, transmit the files to your computer, and display them on your monitor.

session

As defined in the Orange Book, a recorded segment of a CD that may contain one or more tracks of any type (data or audio). In data recording, there is usually only one track per session. In audio recording, all audio tracks are contained in a single session. A lead-in and lead-out are recorded for every session on a CD.

session-at-once

Session-at-once is a subset of disc-at-once, used for CD Extra. In session-at-once recording, a first session containing multiple audio tracks is recorded in a single pass; the laser is then turned off, but the CD is not closed. A second (data) session is then written and the CD is closed.

shareware

Software you can try before you buy. After a trial period, usually 30 days, the program either uninstalls or refuses you access unless you pay for it. You can download shareware from the Internet. See software.

shortcut

An icon on the Windows desktop that you double-click to launch a program. Without the shortcut, you click the Start button on the Windows taskbar, point to Programs to display a menu of programs installed on your computer, and click the one you want to launch. You can create shortcuts to your favorite programs. See icon and double-click.

shortcut menu

A menu that pops up when you right-click an icon on the Windows desktop or taskbar, the vacant part of the desktop, a selection in a document, or a file in Windows Explorer. The options on the pop-up menu are the most commonly used commands that relate to the item you right-clicked. See right-click.

sleep mode

A low-power state that saves electricity when the computer is on but not in use.

software

A program you can install on computer from a disk, CD, DVD, Zip disk, or the Internet. Software can be upgraded or uninstalled. It may contain system files for an operating system (OS), an application for creating data files, a utility for making the computer run efficiently, or a game for entertainment. See OS, data file, and utility.

streaming

To deliver real-time multimedia content that you can play while it is being downloaded from the Internet, not afterwards. Several tools use advanced streaming technology: Microsoft Media Player, RealNetworks RealPlayer, and Vivo VideoNow.

surf

To jump from place to place on the Internet, searching for topics of interest, by clicking hyperlinks. Instead of searching for specific information, surfing is an undirected type of Web browsing. You just click whatever catches your interest. See hyperlink.

surge protector

A device that protects a computer from fluctuations in power. A surge protector regulates the flow of electricity to the computer and prevents high-voltage surges from reaching and possibly damaging the equipment.

SVGA (Super Video Graphics Array)

A video display standard that offers greater resolution and color depth than VGA. The resolution (clarity and sharpness) of an image is determined by the number of pixels that can be displayed per square inch. Color depth is determined by the number of colors (from 256 to 16 million) that can be displayed simultaneously. The number of both pixels and colors is limited by the amount of video memory on the SVGA system. See pixel.

system file

A resource file that contains resources needed by the operating system, such as fonts, icons, and default dialog boxes.

T

taskbar

See Windows taskbar.

table of contents

Shows the number of tracks, their starting locations, and the total length of the data area for a whole CD or any session within a CD. The table of contents does not show the length of each track, only its starting point.

track

Every time you write to a CD, you create at least one track that is preceded by a gap. Any session may contain one or more tracks, and the tracks within a session may be of the same or of different types. For example, a mixed-mode CD contains data and audio tracks.

track-at-once

A method of writing data to a CD. Each time a track (data or audio) is completed, the recording laser is stopped, even if another track will be written immediately afterwards. Link and run blocks are written when the laser is turned on and off.

U

UDF (Universal Disk Format)

A file system endorsed by OSTA (Optical Storage Technology Association) for use with packet writing and other recordable optical disc technologies. Also known as EAN.

upload

To send information to another computer on the Internet.

UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply)

A device that provides a short-term backup power supply as well as surge protection. See surge protector.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator)

The address of a Web site, for example, www.compaq.com.

USB port (Universal Serial Bus Port)

A connector for plugging in multiple, ultra-high-speed peripherals. USB ports are gradually replacing serial and parallel ports and are eliminating the need for so many connectors and cables. (Multiple USB peripherals can be linked together in a daisy chain to share the same port.) Windows 98 included a built-in driver for USB peripherals. Windows Millennium supports a new USB standard that is 40 times faster than the previous standard. See serial port and parallel port. See also peripheral</i> and driver.

Usenet (Users' Network)

A worldwide network of computers set up to transmit messages to newsgroups. See newsgroups.

utility

A small program that helps your computer to manage system resources for optimum performance. For example, anti-virus, diagnostic, file backup, file compression, and font management utilities.

V

V.90 standard

A standard adopted in 1998 to resolve competition between two technologies for 56KBps modems. (If your modem does not conform to the V.90 standard, you can visit the manufacturer's Web site and download a software update.)

video CD

A standard for displaying full motion pictures with associated audio on CD. The video and sound are compressed together using the MPEG1 standard and recorded onto a CD Bridge CD. Video CDs contain one data track recorded in CD-ROM XA Mode 2 Form 2. This is always the first track on the CD (Track 1). The ISO 9660 file structure and a CD-I application program are recorded on this track, as well as

the Video CD information area that gives general information about the Video CD. After the data track, video is written in one or more subsequent tracks within the same session. These tracks are also recorded in Mode Form 2. The session is closed after all tracks have been written.

video phone

See Internet phone.

virus

A program written to cause harm to computers. A virus can cause unusual messages to be displayed on the screen, destroy information on the hard drive, or cause your hard drive to crash. Some viruses affect your computer immediately; others are set to activate on a certain date. See anti-virus utility. See also program, hard disk, and hard drive.

W

WAV

A file format used to store sounds. WAV sound files can be identified by the file extension .wav. Microsoft and IBM developed the format for Windows-based programs that support sound. See file extension.

Web

See World Wide Web.

Web browser

See browser.

window

A framed area that is displayed on the Windows desktop after you select an item or open a program.

Windows

See Microsoft Windows.

Windows desktop

The main screen you see when your computer completes startup. The desktop displays icons (small pictures) that represent items in the operating system (such as My Computer and Recycle Bin), shortcuts to programs installed on your computer, and shortcuts to folders or files. See shortcut.

Windows Explorer

A file management program that lets you see the hierarchy of folders on your computer and the files and subfolders stored in each folder. Visualizing the hierarchy is useful for copying and moving files. You can open the folder that contains the file you want to move or copy, click and drag the file to a new folder, and then drop it in. To find Windows Explorer, click the Start button, and point to Programs. You can also create a shortcut to Windows Explorer.

Windows taskbar

The gray bar across the bottom of the screen that you see when your computer completes startup. The Start button is on the left end of the taskbar, and the systray (a tray with icons and the computer clock) is on the right. Programs that are running but have been minimized are displayed as buttons in the middle of the taskbar.

wizard

Part of a program that guides you through a complex process, such as signing up with an Internet service provider or posting a Web site to a server. Most programs on CD-ROMs have wizards to guide you through the installation process. World Wide Web: A system of Internet servers supports documents formatted in HTML. See HTML. See also server.

Z

Zip disk

High-capacity, removable storage media made by Iomega Corporation.

Zip drive

The drive that reads and writes to a Zip disk. A Zip drive can be internal (installed inside the computer) or external (a peripheral). An external Zip drive is portable; it can be taken to a friend's house or a client's office.

zipped file

A file that has been squeezed to a smaller size by compression software, such as WinZip, developed by Niko Max Computing. An archive (group of related files that are zipped together) can be transmitted as an e-mail attachment much faster than individual files. An archive takes up less storage space on your disk and can be identified by the file extension .zip. An archive contains a self-extracting program with the file extension .exe (for executable). Double-click the executable file, and a wizard guides you through the process of unzipping the files. See file extension and wizard.

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