

## LESSON 146

### YOU HAVE A NEW COMPUTER - NOW WHAT?

It's that time of the year and, if you're lucky, there'll be a new computer under your Christmas tree. So what do you do now?

There are a few things you should consider before you start ripping computer boxes open. Let's start with the boxes your computer was shipped in. Open these boxes carefully and DON'T throw them away just yet. If your new computer or monitor is defective, or has been damaged during shipment, you'll need to use these same boxes to return them. In most cases, you can return that computer system any time during the first 30 days.

Also, consider where your new computer will go before you open the boxes. You'll want to place the computer close enough to a telephone jack so that you can connect your modem to it without having to run telephone wire up and around door moldings or under the carpet.

Keep in mind that your monitor should not be facing any surface that will create glare on the screen. Don't place your monitor facing an uncovered window.

Once you have determined where the computer will go, you'll want to select a surface for your monitor, keyboard and mouse. You can place these items on any desk or table, and you'll need room for a printer and perhaps a scanner. I don't use computer furniture so my equipment resides on tables, one next to the other. One of my friends uses baker's stand because that puts the monitor down low enough so that she is viewing the monitor through the bottom part of her trifocals without having to arch her neck. Of course, you can always spend money on a "computer desk" if that fits your needs, but choose comfort over convention every time.

Purchase a "power strip", a unit that plugs into any standard electrical outlet and provides anywhere from four to ten three-pronged plug outlets. If you don't mind spending an extra \$100 or so, pick up a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). This device protects your computer from electrical spikes and power outages. It's cheap computer insurance.

Having now decided where the computer will go, let's open the boxes. The monitor box is heavy and hard to handle. Open the top of the box, then fold one of the box top sides down against the box. Tilt the box down and lay it on the floor with the folded flap underneath. Now, while holding the other three box top pieces back, rotate the box again so that the open portion of the box is facedown. Now you can lift the box up over the monitor. Inside of the monitor box, you'll find a manual and a power cord that will connect the monitor to an electrical outlet. The cable that connects the monitor to the computer is usually attached to the back of the monitor, and the connector plug may have a plastic cover over the connector.

The rest of your computer system is probably contained in one single box. The tower will be located in the bottom of the box, while the keyboard, mouse, electrical plug, CD-ROM and ↓



floppy disks will be contained in separate boxes within that large box. Some computer makers pack your speakers in the main box, while others ship them as separate units.

Place the tower on the floor with the back of the unit available for you to see. Notice that there are several places on the back of the computer where various plugs can be mounted. These will be color-coded; as will the plugs you'll place in these plug receptacles.

In most cases, the keyboard plug is purple while the mouse plug is green. Insert the plugs gently. If the purple keyboard plug has a flat side, that side should face to your right, and the same goes for the green mouse plug, which will have either a flat side or an arrow at one point around the plug. If you have a computer desk, route the keyboard and mouse plugs through the keyboard drawer to the computer.

Now connect your monitor to the back of the computer. The monitor input is usually blue, and it has three rows of pins, although there are some spaces without pins in each row. Note that the top of the socket is wider than the bottom. The monitor plug also has a wide top and narrow bottom. Take care here not to force the connection. Be gentle, because a bent pin can cause monitor problems.

Now you can plug in your speakers. The speaker connection is a small, round input jack, usually light green in color. There are also two other similar-sized inputs for things like microphones.

If you purchased a modem, you'll see two-telephone jack input openings on the back of the computer. They are usually labeled Line and Phone. Connect one end of a phone cable to the Line input on the modem and connect the other end to the wall jack. If you want to use a phone while at the computer, connect one end of a phone cable to your existing phone and the other end of that same cable to the phone input at the back of the modem. Even if you don't plan to go online right away, connecting your modem now is still a good idea because most computer makers will ask you to register with them online.

Once everything is connected, turn on your monitor by pressing the on switch, usually located in the lower right corner. Don't be alarmed if the monitor doesn't turn on, as some of them require a signal from the computer before they respond. Now turn on the computer, and again, the power switch is on the front of the unit.

Your computer will execute a POST (Power On Self Test) during which it counts RAM, checks for a keyboard and drives and then loads Windows. In the process of loading the Windows operating system, you may be asked to supply a special product ID number. You'll find this number on the Windows package that came with your computer. It's a long number, but you don't have to enter any dashes, as the computer will fill that space for you. ↓



Keep all of the manuals, disks and CD-ROM disks in a safe place, along with the packing list that was included with your computer. Check the packing list to make sure that you got everything you paid for.

