

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This article will cover operating systems.

The operating system on a computer is the program that the computer boots into or starts up when it is turned on. Today there are three main operating systems for personal computers (PCs): Windows, Mac OS, and Unix/Linux. Which of these operating systems can run on your computer depends on which chip or Central Processing Unit (CPU) is installed in the computer.

The Windows Operating Systems are by far the most popular operating systems in today business PCs. Therefore, the rest of the article will discuss the various versions of the Windows Operating Systems. There are two product lines of the Windows Operating System, one for home use and one for business use. This doesn't mean that you won't find home version used at a business or the business version used at home.

The home version is the Windows 9x series (95, 98, and ME) and the business version is the Windows NT series (NT and 2000). The main differences are hardware/software compatibility and system security. The Windows 9x series being used at home for everything from home finances to playing games needed to accept a wider variety of hardware configurations and software programs than the Windows NT series. Also when the Windows 9x series first appeared networks were in their infancy and so the system security is very weak compared to the Windows NT series. Another big plus for the Windows NT series is that it is a more stable system and therefore crashes less often.

Which Operating System is right for your business depends on the software you use and the importance of security in your business. There are many companies using a mixture of two depending on the users needs. The typical business user could perform their job by using the Windows 9x series. The power user, Engineers and Designers, would probably benefit from using the Windows NT series.

Just a short note on the upcoming Windows XP operating system, Microsoft is combining the two product lines into one operating system based in Windows 2000. There will still be two versions but the differences will be less obvious. The future of operating systems will be very interesting and I would be happy to discuss your company's needs will you.