

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 start the new format of Questions & Answers.

The first question(s) will deal with the Windows Operating Systems. They are: I have an older version of Windows (95/98). Do I need Windows 2000? Is Windows NT the same as 2000? What's this I read about XP? These questions could be of great interest to many of us since Windows XP is due out shortly.

If you have Windows 95, you should definitely think about upgrading. The main reason for this is that Microsoft has dropped support for Windows 95. If you have Windows 98, you should think about upgrading also because Microsoft will be dropping support for it when Windows XP is released. I do not recommend upgrading to Windows NT 4.0 or Windows ME because there are some stability issues with these two operating systems.

Currently, the best performing Windows Operating System is Windows 2000 Professional. It has far greater stability than all of its predecessors and it supports a large number of hardware devices and software programs. You should note that it doesn't support all hardware and software, so computer hardware and software needs to be looked at on a case by case basis before upgrading. Windows 2000 Pro builds on the security strengths of Windows NT 4.0 and goes beyond by allowing multiple users to use the same computer but have different software configurations. So no, Windows NT is not the same as 2000.

Windows XP is the next operating system from Microsoft due out on Oct. 25th. It is built on the stability of Windows 2000 Pro but adds support for more hardware. The other enhancements are mostly behind the scenes except for the Use Interface. With the release of Windows XP, Microsoft is trying to make it harder for software piracy. This means that Windows XP will need to be activated so it can be used for more than 30 days after installing. Microsoft claims this will be an easy process but only time will tell. I would recommend waiting awhile before upgrading to Windows XP. One thing to note here is that computer manufacturers will be shipping Windows XP as the only operating system choice in a few months, so you will not have a choice but to use it. I'll probably have an article about Windows XP in a few months once the general public has had time to work with it.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.