

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 is another article with Questions & Answers. Before I get to the questions, I'd like to say this is my first anniversary article in the newsletter. It has been an interesting year for all of us and I'm honored to have my articles in your newsletter.

This month's question actually ties back to my first article on computer maintenance. The question is: **How much hard disk capacity do I need, anyway? I read about 100 gig drives, but I can't imagine I would need anything close to that.**

This is an interesting question! Hard disk capacity seems to be doubling every year. Also, the cost of the disks continues to decrease so what was maybe not affordable two years ago is today. Common disk capacities are expressed in Gigabytes (GBs), with 1GB = 1,000MBs (Megabytes) and 1MB = 1,000KBs (Kilobytes). Let's look at the minimum requirements for the operating system and standard business applications. Today, Windows XP has base requirement of 1.5GBs and a typical suite of business applications require a base of 2GBs. So the base is about 3.5GBs. Data files (Word Documents, Excel Spreadsheet, AutoCAD Drawings, etc.) vary in size from about 35KBs to 2MBs, with the average being about 500KBs. Say you create 1,000 files per year, you would use an average of 500MBs in the year. For the first year you'd have 3.5GBs base + .5GBs data = 4GBs, so that's your minimum disk capacity. A 10GB disk should last about 7 years at this rate. Even with proper computer maintenance, you'll probably start to run low on capacity after 6 years. So do you get a 20GB disk? It should last about 12 years! It should but most computer equipment is replaced every 5 years.

Currently, the price point for Hard Disks has the 40GB disk being the most economical and from what we've seen above it should be all of the disk capacity you'll need. If you are thinking about upgrading or buying a new computer, I'd be happy to talk with you so that you can purchase equipment that meets your needs.

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](mailto:meggert@wi.rr.com), my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.