

# Fundamental Technology

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New technology appears almost daily, but what tools and practices does 21<sup>st</sup> century professional success really require? This presentation describes important but easy-to-forget tips and resources for computing and online productivity and safety, and suggests a mindset for matching technology with individual needs.

- ❖ Have you ever...
  - ...tailored a purchased PC, opened a PC case, or looked inside?
  - ...done a custom software update or installation?
  - ...found, installed, enjoyed free or inexpensive utility software?
  
- ❖ Hardware
  - PC purchase: Planned use? Build? Design? Off-the-shelf? Laptop? Netbook? Mac?
  - USB ports: Plan ahead, multiply/extend via hub, perhaps powered
  - Other connection architectures: Firewire and Bluetooth
  - Docking station or multiple monitors for productivity
  - Consider ergonomics
  - Microsoft Intellimouse or equivalent. Wireless? Trackball?
  - UPS: Power protection; PC connect via USB for alert and shutdown
  - Home server to centralize files and backup
  - Network printer/storage to support multiple computers or legacy devices w/adapters
  - Scanner/FAX/printer/copier (maybe all-in-one, but...) –software matters too
  - Webcam –have fun, stay in touch
  - Camera – let needs determine specifications; don't overspend
  - Gadgets: Portable (not external) drive, USB drive, portable applications (U3 or other architecture), connector adapters, USB transfer box, mailing label printer, media reader, headset (switchable between PC and phone?), laser pointer (with remote mouse?), Laptop Desk, etc.
  
- ❖ Software
  - Always custom install/update
  - Aggressively update/patch – applications, add-ons, router, etc. But be careful!
  - Configuration management, e.g., Belarc and Secunia
  - Anti-virus and anti-spyware (read krebsonsecurity.com) -- resident and drive-by; e.g., MS Security Essentials, Norton, Trend Micro, McAfee, Antimalware, Superantispyware, SpySweeper
  - Email: Software client or Web access?
    - Multiple addresses for different material?
    - Retain all/some/none?
    - Spam filter, email filter rules, disable graphics
    - Personal domain (vs. HotMail) for credibility, though Gmail is accepted
  - Office suite – Microsoft Office or compatible; file viewers
  - Photo editing – expensive (Photoshop) or free (GIMP)
  - Reading level and spell check tools – built-in or add-ons
  - Recordkeeping: contacts, changes, pitches, projects, invoices – text or ACT!, etc.

- Utilities for productivity
  - Acrobat Reader (frequent updates!) or Foxit plus CutePDF (Windows 7) or equivalent
  - OCR (Optical character recognition)
  - Screen capture – CaptureWizPro – [www.pixelmetrics.com](http://www.pixelmetrics.com)
  - PC index/search – built-in/add-on – File Locator Pro – [www.mythicsoft.com](http://www.mythicsoft.com)
  - 1-4a for file renaming – [www.1-4a.com/rename](http://www.1-4a.com/rename)
  - URL shortener – [tinyurl.com](http://tinyurl.com), etc.
  - WinZip for file compression – [www.winzip.com](http://www.winzip.com)
  - Beyond Compare for file compare – [www.scootersoftware.com/](http://www.scootersoftware.com/)
  - ClickBook – <http://www.bluesquirrel.com/> -- optimizes print output
  - Handle “new” Office file formats (.docx, etc.) – native/Web/software
- Browser (Firefox?) / email (Thunderbird?) add-ons and plug-ins for productivity
- Fun/games – Second Life, Farmville, World of Warcraft, etc.
- ❖ Network
  - Broadband for productivity – measure bandwidth with [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)
  - Router/firewall for safety
  - Telework, VPN (virtual private network)
  - WiFi for convenience; configure securely
  - Inbound/outbound FAX – eFax?
  - VoIP: Skype/Vonage/MagicJack/Google Voice/Gmail – but power failure means no phone
  - Phone connection (TLP-102) to computer for recording; Audacity software
  - Remote access to home computer – GoToMyPC, LogMeIn, etc.
  - Simple or powerful collaboration tools – IM, Google Docs, SharePoint, LiveMeeting, etc.
  - Large file transfer site and/or FTP -- YouSendIt
  - Photo sharing site – Picasa, Flickr, etc.
- ❖ Procedures
  - PC housekeeping/hygiene – combine automatic/manual
  - Google is your friend!
  - Plan support: Fee-based? User group buddies or Helpline? Personal community?
  - Separate administrative/non-administrative accounts for maintenance and work
  - Backup – files and function – test!
    - Oddball things – bookmarks, Quicken files, email folders and settings
    - Smart phone? Synchronize and back up
  - Keyboard shortcuts
  - Caution: Don't click, don't install
    - Don't trust, verify. If your mother says she loves you, check it out

Don't panic! Not everything mentioned here matters to everyone. And, likely, not everything that matters to you is mentioned here. So build on and modify this list of MY tools to meet YOUR unique needs. Explore, be efficient, automate what you can, remember backup/security, seek tools that make your technology faster, easier to use, less expensive, and better.

For more specific information, remember that Google is your friend. Enter relevant search terms, read reviews and tutorials, visit vendor Web sites, and shop online.