




# Types of Software

When a computer is first turned on (or "booted up"), it responds to its BIOS (Basic Input / Output System), located on a ROM (Read Only Memory) chip. The BIOS directs the computer to look to a specific location where special boot files can be found. Autoexec.bat and config.sys are two examples of these boot files. Once they are found, the computer will follow the instructions contained therein. One of the instructions is to start the system software.



There are two basic types of software related to the operation of a computer:


- **System Software** - Manages the operation of, and the information flow through, all of the computer's hardware devices (input, processing, storage & output).
- **Application Software** - Performs a collection of related but specific tasks. In other words, it is designed for a specific purpose.

# System Software

There are two types of system software:


- **Operating System (OS)** - This handles the routine operations of a computer system, such as file management, printing, input and storage. The most widely used OS for personal computers (PC's) is the "Windows" operating system. Apple computers use the MacOS line of operating systems. There are other, lesser known OS's: UNIX, LINUX.




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- **Utility Software** - This type of system software helps maintain the "health" of your computer system and/or diagnose any problems. File (Windows Explorer), disk (file scan and disk defragmenter) and memory management are all functions of utility software. Other types of utility software may be installed on your computer to perform specific tasks, such as virus protection, spyware protection, and file compression (zip files).

# Application Software

- Application software is designed to perform a specific operation or task. By definition, an application is a program that "runs" on a computer. Applications require an operating system before they will work. There are thousands of examples of application software.

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- **Word Processing:** able to manipulate and format text or character information. Examples include WordPerfect, Microsoft Word and StarOffice Write.
  - **Spreadsheet:** work with numbers, formulas, functions and charts. Examples include: Excel, Lotus 123, Quattro Pro, and StarOffice Calc.
  - **Data Base:** able to organize, and report on, a large amount of data. Examples include: Access, FileMaker Pro and Oracle.
  - **Graphics:** there are two basic types: those used for drawing (Paint, CorelDraw) and those used for photo enhancement. (PhotoShop, Fireworks, PhotoPaint). We can also include in this category those programs that help create two and three-dimensional animation (Flash, 3D Studio, Maya).



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- **Electronic Presentations:** create presentations using a variety of media (text, graphics, sound, video, etc.). Examples include PowerPoint, Presentations, and StarOffice Impress.
  - **Communication:** allow one computer to connect to another for information and file transfer. Examples include, dial-up networking, network software, email, chat, and instant messaging.
  - **Browsers:** interpret certain information (html, java, flash) sent and received via the Internet. Examples include Mozilla, Internet Explorer and Netscape.
  - **Games:** You may know this kind of software ... with examples, no doubt!
  - **Integrated Software Package:** also known as "Suites". These are a number of application programs bundled together into one package. Examples include Microsoft Office, WordPerfect Suite and Lotus Notes.

