Key Board & Mouse

If you are a Personal Computer user, it is important that you understand the basics of your keyboard. New PC users tend to suffer from "Key-phobia". Just the fact that there are somewhere near one hundreds keys scares many of us.

Most of us understand the QUERTY part of our keyboard. Most of these keys are used for lower and uppercase letters, numbers and special punctuation characters. Many users have trouble with the **Caps Lock** key. Some software will try to correctly control is use, but most of us find when we pushed the "A" key we also pushed the **Caps Lock** key. Some software can detect this mistake and turn off the **Caps Lock** key when that happens, but most software will allow that mistake to continue. User Id and Passwords are normally "Case Sensitive". That means that "AX5678" is not the same as "ax5678". The **Shift** key is how we choose Upper or Lower Case and the alternate key characters on the number rows.

Of particular interest is the **Insert**, **Backspace** and **Delete** keys. Normally the Insert mode is turned on, thus any typing is inserted between existing texts. If you push the **Insert** key and turn the insert mode off, the typing will replace existing text to the right of the typed character. The easiest way to correct your typing is to **Backspace** over mistakes. Deleting text works best if you swipe or select a character, word, or paragraph and then push the **Delete** key.

The "Navigation" keys normally consist of four **Arrow** keys: Up/Down/Left/Right and the **Home**, **End**, **Page Up**, and **Page Down** keys. These keys normally move the Insertion Point (Flashing bar marking the place where your typing will insert) around on your work area.

Most desktop computers, but not all, have a numerical keypad on the right. This can be great for large amounts of numerical input such as what an accounting system may need. The "/", "*****", "-", "**+**" are used to sign Divide, Multiply, Subtract, and Add characters respectively. Software often will be designed to understand what the signs do.

If the **Num Lock** key has been pushed and the **Num Lock** light is NOT illuminated the numerical keypad is set to "Navigation" key mode that duplicates the "Navigation" keys as discussed above.

The **Tab** key in a Word Processor will provide a spacing function, but in other types of software the **Tab** key may move the user from field to field.

The **Enter** key(s) in a Word Processor will provide a paragraph ending function, but in other types of software the **Enter** key may execute a send or Process Finish command to move the user to the next process within the software.

The Function keys **F1-F12** and **F13-F24** (Using the **Shift** Key) are normally assigned functions by the software in current use. A common Function Key that most software packages use the same way is **F1** or the Help Function. Windows uses **F1** for help, as well as all MS Office Products.

Finally there are a series of keys we refer to as Control keys. They include the **ESC** (Escape) key, then **Ctrl** (Control), the **Alt** (Alternate), the **Pause/Break**, the **Scroll Lock**, and the **Print Screen/SysRq** (System Request) keys. The **ESC** key is used to cancel a process, but is

dependent upon the software that is running to understand it, so often it does nothing. **Ctrl** and **Alt** keys are used like a shift key, usually in combination with another key(s). The most common use of these keys is the **Ctrl** + **Alt** + **Delete** key sequence. This is the sequence that allows you to login onto an idle system. It is also used to bring up the **Windows Security Dialog** of which **Task Manager** is of particular importance. The **Task Manager** program can be used to terminate a program that gets stuck and stops responding to the user. The user can go to the **Application Tab**, select the stuck application, push the **End Process** button, and confirm the cancellation. Care must be used when pushing the **Ctrl** and/or **Alt** keys in any combination with any other key(s). Often software responds to few of these sequences and the user can do things like disable their keyboard without knowing it or loose a document without saving it.

The **Scroll Lock** button is used in programs such as spreadsheets to prevent page scrolling to limit the scroll from keeping the active cell in the screen area.

The **Print Screen** key when pushed will copy what is on the screen into an area we call the **Clip Board**. Once in the Clip Board you can open up a MS Word document or an Outlook email and paste your screen print into it. This can be particularly important if you are in need of help with an issue and want to show your helper what you are doing or what the error message is.

The **SysRq** (Shift) key has no standard use. This key can be traced back to the operator interrupt key used on console keyboards of the mainframe computers which was used to cause the operating system to allow the console to give input to the operating system.

Some keyboards have a couple of extra keys that are used to navigate in Windows environments. The **Windows** key has a Windows Icon on it and open up the **Start** menu without having to use your mouse. The **Menu** key has a Menu Icon on it and opens up an object's menu without having to use your mouse right-click.

Some key boards have special keys normally at the top of the keyboard that are non standard. They usually do things like play music, set volumes, load emails programs, or surf the web. You will have to read your manual for them.

Laptops normally have another set of key functions to compensate for the smaller keyboards and additional functions that laptop users need. The most important special key is the **Fn** key. It has type normally in Blue. When you hold it down there are several other keys that have Blue typed on them and can be used. One key in particular is the **Screen Icon** key. This key allows the user to attach an external display screen or projector to the laptop. Laptop will also have special keys for Speaker Volumes and new Laptops may have a button to turn off/on wireless connections.

The PC Mouse normally has two buttons. The left button is normally used to select objects or move insertion points. The right button is normally used to open object menus and display special options. For left-handers the buttons can be switched by going to **Start/Settings/Control Panel** or **Start/Control Panel** and selecting the **Mouse** program. While most left-handers will move the mouse to the left of the screen, many do not switch the buttons. If you have a center wheel on your mouse you can scroll up and down pages when the vertical scroll bar shows on the screen.