

Getting Started with Windows NT

Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 4.0 is an *operating system*. An operating system is a set of instructions that allows your computer *hardware* (the physical pieces of your computer—CPU, memory, hard disk, and so on) and your *software* (the programs stored on your computer) to communicate. The software includes *applications* (word processors, spreadsheets, databases, and so on) that enable you to use your computer to complete tasks. In addition, the Windows NT operating system provides a *graphical user interface*, or *GUI* (pronounced “goeey”), that you use to run application programs and manage the electronic files stored on your computer. Windows NT also comes with such accessories as a card file, a clock, and a calculator.

Windows NT provides a common interface and commands for application programs. With Windows NT you can run more than one application at a time and share information between applications. For example, if you are creating a report in a word-processing application, you can include data from a spreadsheet or incorporate a picture of your company’s logo from a graphics application.

Defining Networking

With Windows NT, you can access powerful *network* functions by using your computer as a *workstation*. A workstation is a computer linked through a network. A network consists of two or more computers that are physically connected. A network can consist of a few workstations in a single department, or it can link all the computers in a company in one location or at numerous locations across the country. A network can be a group of computers that function as a *workgroup*, in which all the participants are equal. In addition, a network can be controlled by a *domain* in which one computer, called a *server*, provides shared *resources*, such as printers or data, to the workstations on that network.

Windows NT can link your computer with other computers in a network. You can also run Windows NT in a stand alone mode. If your computer is part of a network, your system administrator can provide more information about the type of network to which you are attached. The type of network will affect the administrative tasks you can carry out on your computer.