For those who wish to know more about their computers, but are not sure where to start, the information below is a foot in the right direction.

The information is intended to give the reader a ground floor understanding of the internal components of their personal computer. Understand some of these parts may differ from a *Desktop*, *Laptop* or *Tablet* computer.

The CPU: The letters stand for Central Processing Unit, strictly speaking the CPU is the chip, or processor, that runs programs, what can also be referred to as “The Brain”. There are two major companies that create CPUs, AMD and Intel. Over the years, the form factor of these CPUs have remained relatively the same, only making slight physical changes to shape or thickness. Speed for modern CPUs are measured in GHz (Example : 1.2 GHz).

Hard drive: Also called the hard disk, fixed disk, HDD / SSD, or sometimes just storage. When you install a program on your computer or save a document created with that program, it's where the files are saved. Users often mistakenly refer to the hard drive as memory, which is incorrect. Hard drives are different because they implement cold storage, meaning the hard drive can maintain data even while no power is flowing to the hard drive.

Memory: Sometimes called Random Access Memory or RAM, memory is where information is held while the processor (CPU) works with it. For example, software, such as Microsoft Word or Paint, have instructions to how to start the program, and where the program is held on the hard drive. The processor communicates with RAM to understand how to start the program you have selected.

Video adapter: Also known as a video card or graphics adapter, this would be the place where you connect a cord, such as an HDMI, VGA or DVI cord.

Motherboard: It's also known as the mainboard. It's the circuit board inside your computer's case that all other internal components connect to. These boards are very fragile and should be handled with care.

Network adapter: Here's the part that connects your computer to a network, or the Internet. It might connect via a cable (Ethernet cable from modem / router to the computer) or wirelessly (usually Wi-Fi adapter, either internal or via USB).

Router: This device acts like a traffic cop for information flowing through a computer network, as well as to and from the Internet. It routes the information to the proper computer on the network. A router typically supports wired and wireless connection. When setting up a router, you do not need to decide between wired or wireless.

Modem: Connects you to the Internet, usually through your telephone or cable line, but it is more common to be done through a cable connection. The modem may be connected to a single computer, or to a network by way of a router. A modem is a key component to setting up an internet connection.

World Wide Web: The Web is a collection of documents, contained in computers (also known as servers) on the Internet, that can display text, pictures, video and play audio. The World Wide Web is not the Internet, but rather a subset of it. This is an important distinction, and one that should be understood thoroughly. The internet is the collection of computers, servers, and routers and how these devices inter-communicate with each other.

Web browser: A Web browser — such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari or Opera — is software that lets you view pages on the Web. This specific piece of software has some security features built in, but one should not rely solely on these to keep them safe when online.

Web app: A program that runs in your browser, as opposed to one that is stored on your hard drive and runs on your computer. Microsoft's Outlook is a program that runs on your computer.

Social network: An Internet-based service that lets people find, connect to and interact with each other. This is usually done through a Web browser — *Facebook*, for example — but a different software program may also be used, such as *TweetDeck*, for use with Twitter.

RSS: Stands for *Really Simple Syndication*, and it's an easy way to have the content from a Web site come to you when it's updated. You can read RSS feeds in your Web browser; in a Web app, such as Google Reader; or in a software program, such as *FeedDemon* or *NetNewsWire*.