

# Computers for Doctors

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Computers are fast becoming an integral part of everyday life and have become integral to the practice of medicine. However, many doctors find it difficult to adapt to computers and the increasing computerization of medicine.

The book 'Computers for doctors' edited by Thacker N, Shendurnikar N, Shah AP and Unni JC aims to impart a working knowledge of computers to doctors. The book has three sections: Computers- general considerations, Computers for doctors and Internet and doctors.

The first chapter 'Why to computerize?' discusses the benefits of computerization in medicine. The chapter on computer hardware details the various components that constitute a computer and how to make an informed decision about buying a branded or an assembled personal computer. The chapter on computer software talks about various operating systems (OS). The most popular OS, Microsoft Windows is discussed in detail. The advice on which version of windows to go for is very informative. The section on application software will be of interest to the readers. The section on Tricks and tips for Windows was delightful. There are useful tips for Word and Excel. These tips are sure to save a lot of time and effort for the software users. Considering the increasing popularity of palmtops the medical software available for palm operating system will be of interest. The issue of software piracy has been briefly addressed.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Maintaining your computer'. The hardware section is routine but the software section is very interesting. Creating back ups, defragmenting hard drive, scan disk of hard drive, deleting cookies and protecting against viruses is very pertinent and useful. The chapter on Computer security and viruses is vital. The types of viruses, precautions while using the internet, using antivirus packages and information on ant virus packages and firewall software is useful. The chapter on computer ergonomics will be of interest to all computer users and will help them avoid the ills associated with spending long hours

hunched over computer screens.

The seventh chapter deals with computerization of clinics and hospitals. The chapter on choosing medical software especially for the purpose of medical records is useful. The section on medical presentations will be of interest to all doctors presenting their findings in conferences. Computer assisted instruction and computer assisted learning are covered in detail. Telemedicine is becoming an important concept in South Asia and the role of computers in telemedicine has been well covered. The role of computers in educating patients will be of interest to practicing doctors. The chapter on web browsers will be of interest to all doctors. Electronic mail or e-mail, a major use of the internet has been described in detail. The Internet and Medline is increasingly becoming an important source of information for doctors. The rules for searching on the web have been clearly delineated. Online medical journals and citing internet resources will be useful.

The appendix contains basic shortcuts for windows which will be very useful. The second part of the appendix contains a glossary of electronic terms. The index should be more comprehensive. The reader suggestion sheet is an interesting innovation and should be followed by more books in South Asia. Many of the contributors are practicing pediatricians and members of the pediatric communication network.

However, computers and the internet is a rapidly changing field and many of the information in the text (written in 2003) may not be fully relevant today. Overall this compact book serves as a good introduction for doctors to the world of computers. A online resource may be considered for the buyers of the book which can be regularly updated as new information comes in.

**About the book:** Computers for doctors. Editor-in-Chief Thacker N. Executive editors: Shendurnikar N, Shah AP, Unni JC. Published by Jaypee Brothers, New Delhi, 2003. Cost INRs 200.