

The Professional Writer in the Digital World

Overview

Here's what you should have if you plan on making a career of writing this year.

Hardware (*aka Your Computer*)

- A computer no more than 5 years old
- Minimum of 4 GB memory
- 500 GB Hard Drive or larger

Operating System

Try to stay within a couple of generations of the newest operating system.

Windows People – the latest version is 8.1.

The most recent editions are: Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, and now 8.1.

- Preferably, **upgrade to Windows 7 or above**

Mac Folks – the latest version is OS X Mavericks (10.9.1).

The most recent editions were OS X Leopard, Snow Leopard, Lion, Mountain Lion, and now Mavericks.

- Preferably, **upgrade to OS X Lion (10.7) or above**

Word Processing Software

The majority of editors, publishers, and agents today have Windows computers and are using Microsoft Office products.

For PC users, the most recent editions of Office are: XP, 2003, 2007, 2010, and now 2013 or 365. For Macs, it's Office 2004, 2008, and now 2011 or 365.

Again, try and stay within a couple of generations of the newest version available.

- PCs - Preferably **upgrade to Office 2010 or above**
- Macs - Preferably **upgrade to Office 2011 or 365**

Internet Browser

To access the Internet, you use Browser Software. Most PC users stay with the Browser that came with their computer and that is Internet Explorer (IE). For Mac lovers, their computers come with Safari pre-installed. There are other browsers, however. For example, the most popular Internet Browsers being used today are:

1. Google Chrome
2. Mozilla Firefox
3. Internet Explorer
4. Safari
5. Opera

There are other, lesser-used browsers as well, but it is best to stay with one that is more widely used, as computer programmers design their software and websites for the majority of users. You are more likely to have problems if you use an old browser or one that isn't used much anymore (for example, Netscape).

There are also different versions of all of these browsers, just like there are older and newer versions of Operating Systems and Software, so you must keep your browser updated just like your Windows or Office program.

It is recommended that you update your browsers frequently, as this not only helps with accessing websites, but also with security to prevent malware from infecting your computer. All of these browsers are free, as are the updates. If you set your computer to update automatically, you'll never have to worry about having the latest version on your computer.

What OS, Office, or Browser Are You Using?

Use the following sites to determine which Windows (or Mac) operating system you are running, what Office / Word version you are using, and which Internet Browser (and version) you use to access the Internet. Most of these sites do all of the work for you. Just click on the link:

- Windows - <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/which-operating-system>
- Internet Browser - <http://whatbrowser.org>
- Microsoft Office - <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/what-version-of-office-am-i-using-HA101873769.aspx?CTT=5&origin=HA102756586>
- Mac OS - http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1633?viewlocale=en_US&locale=en_US

Other Helpful Links

- http://apple.wikia.com/wiki/List_of_Mac_OS_versions
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Microsoft_Windows_versions
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Office
- http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp
- http://community.spiceworks.com/software/browser/reviews?source=product_taxons_23859
- <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/home>
- <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/try/> (Free trial - Try Microsoft Office 2013 and Office 365 products - Office.com)

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