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## Northern Computer Connection

In the last two issues, we started our discussion - "What the Heck's In Your Computer". Paul talked in a non-techy, easy to understand language about the mother board and the CPU. This month he discusses the hard drive and Ryan discusses the decision to upgrade or replace your hard drive.

Do you often find yourself emailing the same group of people? Check out this month's tips and tricks to learn how to create a group list in Outlook.

## What the Heck's In My Computer? - Part 3

### Part 3 - The Hard Drive - A Good News - Bad News - Good News Story

The design of hard drives, although basically the same concept implemented 31 years ago in the original XT IBM



microcomputer (and barrel sized 5 megabyte drives in IBM mainframes before that), have undergone drastic changes to increase speed and capacity over time. The first microcomputer drives having 40 megabyte capacities where now 2 terabytes and larger are becoming common and inexpensive. The idea of a fast spinning magnetic disk with a floating head reading and writing was a quantum leap forward from floppy disk and tape used previous - both in speed and capacity. Without the hard disk the multimedia

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***"Preparation for hard drive failure is key because if the drive fails it can mean catastrophic data loss."***

Coming up next month...

***The different versions of MS Office & Valuable Shortcuts***

and graphical interface properties we enjoy today would simply not be possible. Likely the computer revolution would not have happened and so many things would be different. The fact we are still using the same technology 20 years later speaks to what an incredible design the hard drive is.

So what is the bad news? Hard drives can fail. All drives are sold with a "mean time between failure" rating in hours (ie 100,000) from the manufacturers. So they certainly acknowledge the possibility. The reality is a drive may fail early in its life (called infancy failure), later in life or never until eventually it's recycled.

Click [here](#) to finish reading the article.

- Paul C, Service Bench Supervisor

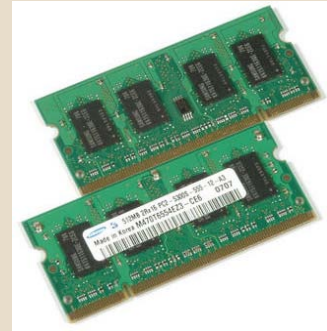
## How Do I Know If I Need a New Hard Drive?


Easy answer; If it has failed or is failing. An easy way to tell if it is failing; listen to the hard drive itself for a clicking or grinding sound, couple that with degrading performance and it is likely that your hard drive is on its way to a better place. If you notice these symptoms try to do a backup as quickly as possible, or call your local Northern Computer technician to have us save the data before it is too late.

If you have decided to upgrade or replace your hard drive then you have a few things to consider: Interface, style, storage size, data transfer rate, form factor etc etc. In years gone by the standard interface for hard drives and other devices was IDE, more recently a shift has been made to SATA. Without overloading you with computer jargon; IDE is slower/bigger (bigger being a problem for heat dissipation within the computer case,) while SATA is fast and getting faster and has a very small footprint within the computer. To sum up, older PC's



**What the heck's in my computer  
- Part 4/RAM**



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**" An easy way to tell if your hard drive is failing; listen for a clicking or grinding sound,**

(5+ years old) will very likely run on a IDE interface, while anything newer than that will give you the option of both IDE and SATA.

Click [here](#) to finish reading.

Ryan R, Network Support Technician

## Tips and Tricks

### Creating a Group List in Outlook



Need to get the message out to a group of people? Do you often need to email the same group of people? This list (group) of people is called a "distribution lists" in Outlook. These lists make it easy to email a group of people.

To setup a mailing list in Outlook, follow these instructions:

Select File, then New and Distribution List from the menu. In Outlook 2010, select the New Items button, then More Items, then Contact Group.

This will open the Contact Group window. Give your group/list a name and click on Add Members and select the people that you want to add from your Outlook Contacts, Address book or create new ones.

After you have the contacts that you want in the group, click Save & Close.

Now when you create a message, you should be able to type in the name of the contact group that you created.

*couple that with degrading performance and it is likely that your hard drive is on its way..."*

## Remote Support

### Need Help?



We provide online help from 8AM to 5PM Monday to Friday.

**Contact us at:**  
250-762-7753  
or

[service@northerncomputer.ca](mailto:service@northerncomputer.ca)