

Book Review: PC Hardware In A Nutshell

By Bruce Pechman, The Muscleman of TechnologySM
bruce@mrbicep.com



Whether you're looking for advice on how to upgrade your PC, thinking about taking the plunge on building your own box, or just want to learn more about current and future PC technologies, "PC Hardware In A Nutshell" 2nd Edition is the absolute definitive reference you'll want along side your keyboard and mouse (that's covered too—keyboards and mice Chapters 19 & 20).

With the rapid progression of the computer hardware industry, it is critical to have a timely and up to date reference handy. "PC Hardware In A Nutshell" 2nd Edition from O'Reilly has been completely updated in June to include the latest hardware advances in 28 clearly delineated chapters. From Fundamentals to Motherboards to Hard Disk interfaces, "PC Hardware In A Nutshell" is a highly recommended read to keep your anxiety level in check when it comes to computer related techno-speak.

As a technology analyst, I found this book to be an invaluable resource for analyzing computer assignments across many categories. Chapter 5 "Memory" is probably the finest anthology of copiously documented, and understandable explanation of most RAM types used in computers (all new memory types are also clarified). Additionally, everything you ever wanted to know about computer memory is answered in just the right amount of detail. Now, let me give you some advice about chip density as it relates DIMM/RIMM guidelines—just kidding!

"PC Hardware In A Nutshell" gives insightful tips for selecting and installing every PC component, as well as offering a layman's explanation of all computer component technologies. Chapter 14, for example, not only explains how hard disks work, but more importantly how to select, install, and set up the BIOS. Even more critically, it describes how to prepare the disk for use including low-level formatting and partitioning. The book's other chapters also go into similar levels of detail for Video Adapters, Cases, Power Supplies, etc. It culminates with the final chapter "Building A PC", which details a 13-step outline for building your dream rig.

In my opinion this book is an invaluable reference for newbie's, computer hobbyists, and computer enthusiasts alike. "PC Hardware In A Nutshell" 2nd Edition from O'Reilly by Robert and Barbara Thompson is available for \$39.95. Members of PC User Groups can receive a 20% discount on this book or any other O'Reilly title. For more information about purchasing books with your User Group discount, go to www.oreilly.com and use code DSUG.