# The "BIOS"

This "Basic Input/Output System" is a small file, so to speak, that is stored on a chip on your computer's motherboard, and it is the first thing that begins to function when you push the power button on your computer.  The fundamental purpose of the BIOS is to check for, and to check on, your system hardware components.  Among other things, for example, it checks to see whether you have a keyboard and a monitor attached to the computer.  It also checks to see if you have a storage drive (hard drive or CD/DVD drive) with an operating system installed, i.e., WIN Vista, WIN 7, WIN 8, etc.  If you are missing any of the required components your computer needs the BIOS will not start up your computer.  And, if the BIOS should ever become corrupted it will also affect the startup of your computer.  Each computer motherboard (model) has a specific BIOS that works only with that motherboard.  In other words, the BIOS is "model specific" for your computer.

You "enter" the BIOS when the computer is starting up, and before the operating system comes up.  The procedure for this varies by computer manufacturer but it is usually accomplished by holding down the "Delete" key on the keyboard as the computer is starting up.  Some computers require holding down one of the "F" keys, such as "F-1".  In most cases when the computer is starting up you will see on the monitor screen "Hold down the  ***  key to enter the BIOS".  Your computer manual should also tell you which key to hold down to enter the BIOS, or you can "Google" for the info.

Contained in the BIOS are numerous parameters that can be set and adjusted on your specific computer.  Many of these parameters should only be set by a knowledgeable techie, but a number of items can be adjusted and set by the "layman".

Depending on the manufacturer of your computer will result in how much information is available for "adjustment and setting" in your specific BIOS.  Some manufacturers will show only a very limited amount of info that can be adjusted and set.  Some will give you pages of information.

One must be careful in the adjustments and settings that are made in the BIOS.  Some changes may result in drastic detrimental changes in the operation of your computer.  However, some adjustments may well increase the speed and improve the operation of your computer.  In all cases no changes will be made to your BIOS until you click on "Save Changes & Exit".  You also have the option to "Exit Without Saving Changes".  And, if you have made changes that you subsequently do not like you can always go back into the BIOS and adjust those changes.  And finally, you always have the option of selecting the "Set Default Parameters" which will automatically put your computer back to its original manufacture's settings.

One last note:  On each computer mother board is a small "button battery".  This battery powers the BIOS, and among other things keeps the date and time current in the BIOS.  These batteries normally last 5 or more years.  If you should find that your computer clock is losing time it is a good indication that your button battery is beginning to fail and it is time to replace it.  If the battery has totally failed your computer date and time will revert to its default setting, which probably be when your computer was built.  One can do this replacement themselves, as it is not a critical "techie required" operation.

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