

## What is RAM and Why is it Vital to your Computer's Performance

Also known as Random Access Memory, RAM is the lifeblood of your computer's power. But when you're newer to computers or you simply don't understand how this piece of your computer works, it might not seem like an important piece to learn about. However, if you're ignoring the presence of RAM, you're cheating yourself out of a superior computing experience. Here's what you need to know. **Defining RAM, the Easy Way** The invention of RAM as a way to store information was revolutionary in its beginnings. While tapes and other storage systems used to be in computers, they were often slow and hard to access in a quick fashion. You might be able to get to the stored file that you wanted, for example, but the computer would need to go through yards of tape before it found the exact file that you wanted. Things used to be stored in order, which made sense at the time, but RAM made things better. With RAM, pieces of memory are stored at random intervals. This might seem to make things more difficult, but it actually helps. While the pieces may be stored in a random order, they can also be accessed in a random order, no need to sift through irrelevant information to find what you're looking for. This creates a faster system of information gathering, one that we are all accustomed to now. What's also innovative about RAM is that there is no physical storage of the data, which allows it to be accessed quickly, as well. But at the same time, this also means that data you store on RAM is going to be erased when you turn off your computer. This is not a bad thing, however. It simply allows the drive to be able to continuously store new information to be quickly accessed when you need it i.e. temporary internet files, files you are working on that have not been saved, etc. **Why RAM Makes Your Life Easier** Though it's clear that RAM allows you to access files more quickly, what you might not realize is what this means in a real life setting. Take, for example, the idea of working in different programs in your computer. If you have your internet connection up as well as a few document files, your computer is storing these pieces of information in the RAM portion of your computer. This is allowing you to move from place to place without losing any information in the process. If you have more RAM, you will be able to open more pieces at the same time, and if you have less RAM, you may have troubles moving from program to program. Most computers and laptops will come with a fairly decent amount of RAM that will allow you to work in word processing programs and email programs quite easily. However, if you need to access larger programs like a video making program or a design studio system, you need to have more RAM in your computer to help you perform the functions you need to perform without problems. **What You Might Want to Know** Of course, everyone wants to have a computer that runs faster and faster, but at what cost RAM is expensive to add to your computer if you already have a computer in your home. You need to buy certified pieces of memory from your computer manufacturer that will allow you to install them on your own or with their guidance. You can also purchase a computer with the higher amount of memory already installed, but this also comes at a premium price. Another thing to consider is that many computer CPUs or central processing units are unable to handle higher amounts of RAM due to their age. Older computers are simply not equipped to handle large amounts of memory as they can not sync all of the processes in the computer to still function well. This is simply something to keep in mind if you have a very old computer. The fact of the matter is that adding RAM is the best way to improve the function of your computer until you can afford to buy a new model. Most computers will allow you to upgrade to about 1 to 2 GB of total memory, allowing you to run a number of functions with ease. However, there are other brands of computers that are beginning to offer 4GB and 8GB of information to help you run highly complicated programs. For the home user, more memory than 2GB is generally unnecessary. Unless you're using a lot of high memory using programs, it simply is like having too big of an engine in a smaller car.

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