INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The Basics

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The Basics

Barbara Wilson

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Chief Executive, ECCTIS 2000

To the memory of my father, Philip Jeffs

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BARBARA WILSON

ABOUT THIS BOOK

WHO IT'S FOR

This book is a beginners' guide to information technology and the use of computers. Everything is explained and no previous knowledge is assumed, making it equally suitable for the 16- and the 80-year-old. It can be used by people on information technology courses in school and college or on company-based training courses, and by those working independently at home.

It covers the requirements of the City and Guilds 4242 scheme (Basic competence in IT) and the first-level modules on word processing, databases and spreadsheets of the 7261 IT scheme. It is also suitable for equivalent RSA and BTEC courses.

WHAT IT CONTAINS

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first six deal with the background needed to make you feel at ease with the machines, and introduces you to some of the words and terms you need to know. The rest of the book covers the most common applications of computers – word processing, databases, spreadsheets – and an introduction to computer-aided graphics and desk top publishing.

The approach is practical, and is concerned with getting you to learn by doing. Throughout the book there are sections marked TO DO. These include tasks and activities to help you become familiar with a computer system and use it to complete a wide range of practical exercises.

You will also see sections marked YOU SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO. . . These list skills and knowledge which you should have at that particular stage in your learning. These will be useful in keeping track of your progress in building up competence. There are also sections marked with an elephant symbol: these summarise important information or points to note in that part of the book.

A Glossary explaining some of the most common words and terms is given at the end of the book.

HOW TO USE IT

The early parts of the book can be used without a computer, but to get the most out of it you will need access to a microcomputer system, including a printer, together with standard applications packages for word processing, databases, spreadsheets and graphics and desk top publishing. The exercises can all be done using any system and any package.

You will find it helpful to keep a notebook or file in which to keep a note of information you acquire from doing the activities. Further tasks on all the applications can be found in the companion book *Information Technology in the Office* by Caroline Wilkinson (also published by Macmillan in association with City and Guilds).

Now start reading this book and practising the activities. You will soon find that your confidence builds and your skills increase. Enjoy it!