



Central Bank of Barbados

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS OUTREACH  
PROGRAMME**

**Information Technology Fair**

*"Information Technology and Education -  
Investing in our Future"*

November 8 - 10, 2004

**Operating Systems**

**&**

**Applications**

An overview

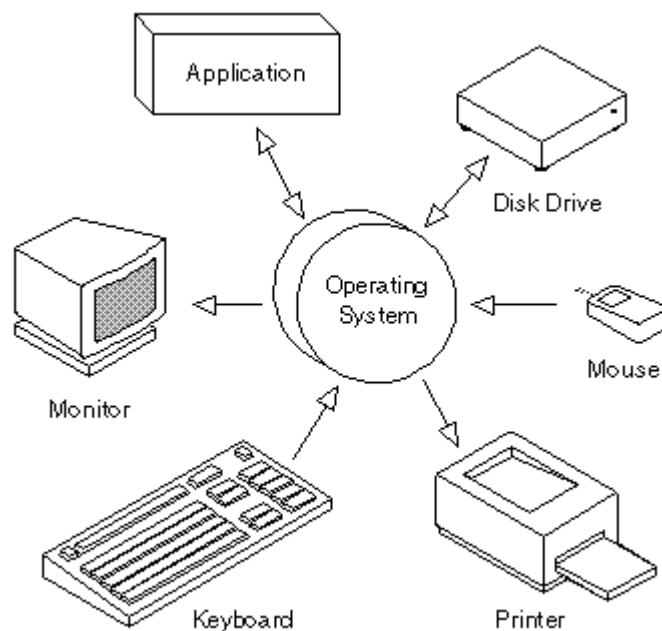
compiled by

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## Operating System

An Operating System (O/S) is the most important program that runs on a computer. It is a software program that enables the computer hardware to communicate and operate with the applications software. Without an Operating System a computer would be useless. Every general-purpose computer must have an operating system to run other programs.

Operating systems perform basic tasks, such as recognizing input from the keyboard, sending output to the display screen, keeping track of files and directories on the disk, and controlling peripheral devices such as disk drives and printers. Some examples are Windows, Linux, Unix, and MacOS.



### Interaction with the Operating System

Operating Systems can be:

**GUI (Graphical User Interface)** – an operating system that contains graphics and icons and is commonly navigated by using a computer mouse (windows).

**Multi-user** – an operating system that supports multiple users at once and/or different times.

**Multiprocessing** - an operating system capable of supporting and utilising more than one computer processor.

**Multitasking** - an operating system that is capable of allowing multiple software processes to be run at the same time. (Below are some examples of multitasking operating systems.)

The chart below describes some features of the operating systems and corresponding web sites with more information.

Operating System	Features
DOS	Operating system for IBM compatible PCs. <a href="http://www.computerhope.com/msdos.htm">http://www.computerhope.com/msdos.htm</a>
Windows	Operating system for PCs and workstations. Has multitasking, multiprocessing and networking capabilities. <a href="http://www.microsoft.com/windows/WinHistoryProGraphic.msp">http://www.microsoft.com/windows/WinHistoryProGraphic.msp</a>
OS/2	Operating system for IBM PCs. Supports multitasking and networking. <a href="http://www-306.ibm.com/software/os/warp/">http://www-306.ibm.com/software/os/warp/</a>
UNIX	Used for PCs, workstations and minicomputers. Supports multitasking, multi-processing and networking. <a href="http://www.unix.org/what_is_unix.html">http://www.unix.org/what_is_unix.html</a>
Mac OS	Operating system for the Macintosh computer. Supports multitasking, multimedia and networking. <a href="http://www.kernelthread.com/mac/oshistory/">http://www.kernelthread.com/mac/oshistory/</a>
LINUX	A version of the Unix operating system designed to run on PCs. <a href="http://www.linux.org/">http://www.linux.org/</a>

## Applications

Application software is a program or group of programs designed for end-users to achieve a particular objective. Application software sits on top of the operating system software as it is unable to run without the O/S.

Applications require data to be input and processed to produce information. There are two categories of applications: general and specialized.

### 1. Generalized –

- Word processing,
- Database management systems
- Spreadsheets

### 2. Specialized –

- ACCPAC
  - Peachtree
  - Prophecy
  - In-house developed applications
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## References

- Laudon K & Laudon J (1998) Management Information Systems, Prentice Hall, Inc. New Jersey
- [www.webopedia.com](http://www.webopedia.com)