

Proper mindset is essential for computer training

by Matt Joy

So, you're going to take a computer class and you're feeling intimidated by this imminent immersion into complexity. Common and understandable—but take a deep breath and relax. Taming your computer, or your fears of computers is not nearly as rough as bronc riding, or surfing in the Aleutians in January.

It's easy to blame yourself for computer glitches, and I often hear intelligent people like attorneys or doctors put themselves down when they encounter a computer problem.

The first thing to remember when learning to use computers is that computers are just dumb machines that have the ability to do a few tasks rapidly and repeatedly without getting tired. If computers were smart, they would be able to understand what we wanted without our having to learn a whole lot to get them to cooperate. People are working on that task today, but we still have a long way to go.

The truth is, the computer is just a chunk of metal and plastic. The human brain by contrast can remember much more than even the most powerful computers can. And as humans, we can do so much more, like recognizing the face of a friend, carrying on a conversation, and appreciating a good joke! Just remember:

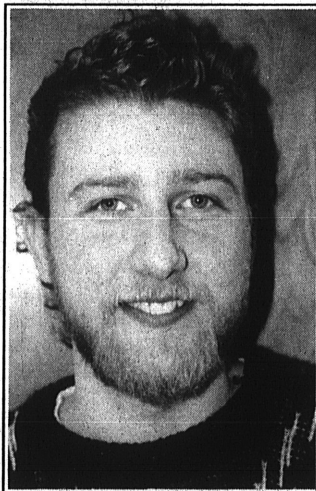
You are in control. You can always reach for the power switch or reset button.

The second thing to remember is that the world of computers is changing rapidly. As things change, so do the steps involved in

performing a certain task. Don't let this fact discourage you. Usually change means improvement in ease of use, features or speed. When you are learning how to do something on your computer, take time to understand the underlying logic of the computer's "mind." Concentrate on the underlying concept of what you are learning to do rather than getting caught up in the details of the actual steps involved. Memorizing a bunch of keystrokes by rote will only frustrate you and make change harder to accept. So, concentrate on the

"what and why" of the lessons more than on the "how", and the "how" will follow more readily.

Matt Joy is a computer consultant with Alaska Village Initiatives, providing computer support and training for rural Alaskan computer users.



Matt Joy
Computer Consultant
for Alaska Village Initiatives