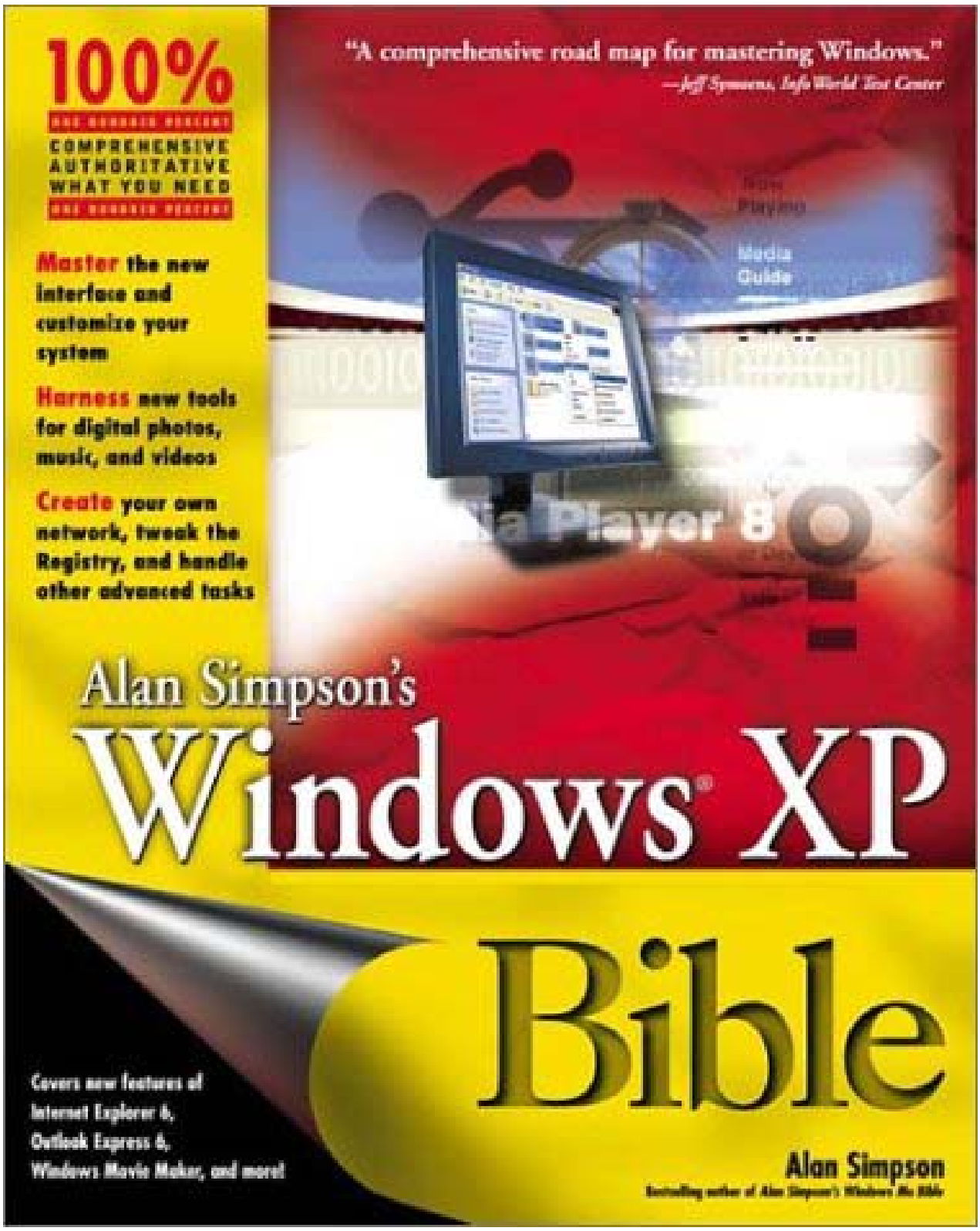

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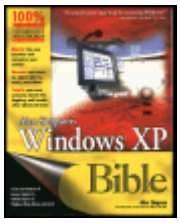

Alan Simpson's Windows XP Bible
by Alan Simpson

ISBN: 0764548603

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This book covers both the Personal and Professional editions of the Microsoft Windows XP.

Table of Contents

Alan Simpson's Windows XP Bible

Preface

Part I **Know This or Suffer**

Chapter 1 - What Is Windows XP? - 7

Chapter 2 - Getting Around Like a Pro - 22

Chapter 3 - Opening Programs and Documents - 55

Chapter 4 - Shortcuts and Other Cool Tricks - 67

Part II **Becoming an Internet Guru**

Chapter 5 - Connecting to the Internet - 74

Chapter 6 - Browsing the World Wide Web - 89

Chapter 7 - Maximum Web - 107

Chapter 8 - Internet E-Mail - 120

Chapter 9 - Participating in Usenet Newsgroups - 170

Chapter 10 - Windows Messenger, Games, and Such - 178

Chapter 11 - Online Conferencing with NetMeeting - 187

Part III **Have It Your Way**

Chapter 12 - General Housekeeping (Copying, Deleting, and So On) - 203

Chapter 13 - Organizing Your Virtual Office - 227

Chapter 14 - Personalizing the Screen - 248

Chapter 15 - Speech, Handwriting, Joysticks, and More - 262

Part IV **Growth, Maintenance, and General Tweaking**

Chapter 16 - Installing and Removing Programs - 280

Chapter 17 - Installing and Removing Hardware - 287

Chapter 18 - Disaster Prevention and Recovery - 301

Chapter 19 - Updates, Maintenance, and Monitoring - 312

Chapter 20 - Managing Multiple Users - 326

Chapter 21 - Road Warrior Tools and Techniques - 332

Part V **Work and Play**

Chapter 22 - Numbers, Text, and Pictures - 347

Chapter 23 - Cameras, Scanners, and Faxes - 357

Chapter 24 - Sounds, Music, Video, and DVD - 370

Chapter 25 - Fun with Windows Movie Maker - 401

Part VI **Local Area Networks**

Chapter 26 - Create Your Own LAN - 414
Chapter 27 - Sharing Resources on a LAN - 423
Chapter 28 - Cool LAN Tricks - 432
Chapter 29 - Beefing Up Security - 437

Part VII Advanced Stuff

Chapter 30 - File Icons, Associations, and Properties - 445
Chapter 31 - Partitions, Volumes, and NTFS - 455
Chapter 32 - Advanced Security Administration - 459
Chapter 33 - Dealing with the Windows XP Registry - 468
Chapter 34 - Special Features of Windows XP Professional - 481

Part VIII Appendices

Appendix A - Installing Windows XP - 487
Appendix B - What's New in Windows XP - 491
Appendix C - Special Folders and Shortcut Keys - 499

Back Cover

With a new kernel, a new interface, and loads of new multimedia and connectivity features, Windows XP is the most significant Windows upgrade since Windows 95. Written by renowned Windows guru Alan Simpson, this soup-to-nuts guide is just what you need to master XP, whether you want to customize your system so you can work faster, harness the digital media features so you can experience music or movies, or make the most of remote connectivity and networking so you can stay in touch.

About the Author

Alan Simpson is a computer guru and bestselling author with over 2 million books in print. Many of his works -- including *Understanding dBASE IV*, *Mastering WordPerfect for Windows*, *Mastering WordPerfect 5.1*, and *Understanding Microsoft Access* -- are considered classics in the computer book industry.

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Alan Simpson is a freelance computer/Internet consultant and veteran author of digilit (digital literature). He's the author of more than 80 computer books, published in many languages throughout the world. Alan is best known for his light, conversational writing style and clear jargon-free approach to dealing with technical topics. Prior to writing books full time, Alan taught introductory and advanced computer programming courses at San Diego State University and University of California, San Diego Extension. He also worked as a freelance programmer and computer consultant. He maintains the *www.coolnerds.com* Web site (when time permits), and can be reached at *alan@coolnerds.com*.

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To Susan, Ashley, and Alec, as always

Preface

Welcome to Alan Simpson's Windows XP Bible.

Professional Edition versus Home Edition

Microsoft Windows XP is the latest version of the widely used Windows operating system. This book covers both the Professional edition and Home edition of Windows XP. On the surface, the two editions are virtually identical. Skills you learn on one edition will carry right over to the other edition. The Professional edition offers some extra tools that are of interest to professional corporate system administrators and network administrators. The Professional edition is the only one to support the use of multiple monitors, however, which might be of interest to home and small business users as well. If you're wondering which version to buy, you might want to review Chapter 34, which covers the features of the Professional edition that aren't available in the Home edition.

Who Should Read This Book

This book is written for people who are *not* professional computer programmers or corporate administrators. It's written for that enormous class of people commonly referred to as *users* in the computer biz. These are people whose job requires them to *use* a computer as an adjunct to their "real

job," which isn't necessarily computer science. I think it's safe to say that about 99 percent of the jobs in this world fall into that non-computer science category.
Of course, plenty of people just enjoy using their PCs at home. Or, at least, would like to *start* enjoying that PC at home. This book is certainly not "all work and no play." You can do tons of fun and creative things with Windows XP. And this book covers them all in considerable depth. So if you're just looking to get the most from your home PC, you've definitely come to the right place.

No Experience Required

This book is not an "upgrade" book for people who already know some earlier version of Windows by heart. Even if you're new computers and don't know a megabyte from a turtle dove, you'll do just fine.

Features of This Book

Like most books, this one has the standard table of contents in the front and an index at the back to help you find information on an as-needed basis. Within chapters, lots of pictures and step-by-step instructions are provided to speed your learning and help you get the most from your PC as quickly as possible. The chapters are grouped into parts dealing with specific features, as follows:

Part I: Know This or Suffer

This part covers all the basics of opening and closing things, finding stuff, navigating your computer, getting instant help, creating shortcuts, and more. If you're a newbie, this is the stuff you really need to know to get started.

Part II: Becoming an Internet Guru

The first chapter in this part tells you everything you need to get online and start using the Internet. Then you learn to use all the most popular features of the Internet, including the World Wide Web, e-mail, newsgroups, conferencing, gaming, and instant messages.

Part III: Have It Your Way

In this part, you learn how to customize your work environment to suit your needs. Some important basic skills covered here include creating folders; moving, copying, and deleting files; and personalizing Windows XP to your tastes, and using the new speech and handwriting recognition features.

Part IV: Growth, Maintenance, and General Tweaking

This part helps you perform routine maintenance tasks to keep your PC running at maximum speed. You also learn how to install new programs and eliminate old ones, protect your computer, keep Windows up-to-date, create and manage user accounts, and take advantage of a notebook computer.

Part V: Work and Play

In this part, you discover general techniques for working with text, numbers, and graphic images (pictures), music, video, movies, and DVD. Create your own custom audio CDs and movies, get pictures from digital cameras and scanners, and so forth.

Part VI: Local Area Networks

Here, you find out how to set up a local area network using the Home Networking Wizard. Learn how to share a single Internet connection and account, as well as share disk drives, printers, files, and folders. If you're already a member of a network, you'll learn how to take advantage of its features here.

Part VII: Advanced Stuff

This part covers some of the more advanced topics that may not be relevant to everyone. Also, I go deeper into some of the more technical stuff that normally stays hidden behind the scenes — such as the Registry, file associations, and advanced features of Windows XP Professional.

The book also has some margin icons:

Tip	Tip icons indicate a useful trick, technique, or other tidbit worth calling special attention to so that you don't miss it.
Caution	Caution icons point out a technique you need to think about before you act. Tread carefully because if you make a mistake, it'll be difficult — or impossible — to undo.
Cross-Reference	Cross-reference icons refer to a source of additional information on a topic (just in case I didn't already tell you enough to bore you to tears).
Note	Note icons identify a piece of information that's especially noteworthy for some reason.
New Feature	New Feature icons point out something that's "new" in Windows XP. Of course, how "new" a feature is depends on where you're coming from, so I've had to wing it a bit. As a general rule, if a feature wasn't available in Windows 2000 or Windows Millennium Edition, I've flagged it as "new."

Acknowledgments

Even though only the authors' names appear on the cover, every book is actually a team effort. Many people were involved in the creation of this book. My sincere thanks to all the people whose skills and talents helped to make this book a reality.

First of all, many, many thanks to everyone at Hungry Minds, Inc. who made this book happen. You were all very supportive, very professional, and very patient. In particular, I'd like to thank Kyle Looper (Editorial Manager), Terri Varveris (Acquisitions Editor), Keith Cline (Project Editor), and Nancee Reeves (Production Coordinator).

Many thanks to everyone at Microsoft for helping me get an early start on this great product and for all the support and answers provided along the way.

To Matt Wagner and everyone at Waterside: Thanks for getting this opportunity to me and for making the deal happen.

And, of course, to my family: Thank you, thank you, thank you for your patience and understanding. I really had to concentrate on this one and I appreciate all of your support.

— Alan Simpson

Many special thanks to Walt Bruce, Andy Cummings, and David Mayhew at Hungry Minds, Inc. for keeping me busy.

— Brian Underdahl

Part I: Know This or Suffer

Chapter List

Chapter 1: What Is Windows XP?
Chapter 2: Getting Around Like a Pro
Chapter 3: Opening Programs and Documents
Chapter 4: Shortcuts and Other Cool Tricks

As the title of this part implies, these chapters cover all the "basic skills" you'll need to use Windows XP successfully. These skills apply to using your computer in general, and will also apply to virtually everything you ever do at your computer. No matter what your long-term goal is — be it to work with photographs, create a Web site, become a programmer, manage your business, or just have fun — the essential skills you'll learn here in Part I will provide the foundation on which you'll build your more advanced skills.

Chapter 1: What Is Windows XP?

Hello, and welcome to *Alan Simpson's Windows XP Bible*. The goal of this book, as mentioned in the Introduction (which, if you're like me, you probably skipped), is to teach both beginners and experienced users alike how to really put Windows XP to work. Because this is a book for all levels of users, this chapter starts off with the absolute basics. And therefore, I suppose, a good starting point is to answer the question, "What is Windows XP?"

What Is Windows XP?

Windows XP is the latest and greatest version of the ubiquitous Windows operating system. The *XP* stands for experience (as in "The Jimi Hendrix . . ." for those of you who were around back then). This version of Windows is certainly going to offer a new experience for those of you coming from earlier versions of Windows. Part of Microsoft's goal in this new version was to create a smoother, frictionless work environment. After many weeks of using this new product, I think it's safe to say that they've accomplished that goal. It's difficult to isolate any one new feature that provides for this new experience. It's really about the new interface in general, and how easy it is to tweak things to be as you want them to be.

Cross-Reference If you're an experienced Windows user and want some specifics on what's new in Windows XP, see Appendix B.

For those of you who are new to the game, let's start by pointing out that Microsoft Windows XP is a computer program. Specifically, it's a type of program known as an *operating system*, often abbreviated OS. You may have heard of some of the other operating systems out there, such as DOS, the Mac OS used on Macintosh computers, and Linux and UNIX, used mainly in large businesses.

One thing that makes the OS different from all other programs available for PCs is that an OS is *required* to make your system work. A computer without an OS is like a car without an engine. Turning on a computer that has no operating system installed leads to nothing but a message on the screen telling you there is no operating system installed.

One reason that an operating system is required on all computers is that it plays the important role of making all the things that make up a computer system — the screen, mouse, keyboard, the programs you use, the hard disk, and all that other stuff — work in harmony. And thankfully, it does all that in the background, without your even being aware of it. And without your having to know how it does it.

The operating system also provides the user interface for the computer. That is, it determines what you see on your screen and how you interact with those things. To that extent, learning to use your computer is really a matter of learning to use its operating system. In fact, learning Windows XP is probably the most important first step in learning to use your computer. That's partly because you need to learn to use Windows just to start any other programs you plan to use. In addition, many of the skills you acquire while learning to use Windows will apply to just about anything you do with your computer, be that word processing, making custom CDs, working with digital photographs, creating Web pages . . . whatever. So every moment spent learning Windows is actually an investment in learning to use your entire computer and all the amazing things that it is capable of doing.

You might be aware that Windows XP comes in several different flavors, two of which are *client-side* products: the Windows XP Home Edition, and the Windows XP Professional Edition. This book covers both those products. The differences between these two products are so few, they're barely noticeable. When they do arise during the course of this book, however, I'll be sure to point them out.

The other versions are *server-side* products, named Windows XP Server and Windows XP Advanced Server. This book doesn't address those products specifically, because they're not the kinds of products the typical computer user would ever get involved with. Rather, they're products that corporate network administrators and other highly technical computer professions use to build *servers* for the Internet and large networks.

If you're a newbie, and if I've already gotten ahead of you here with this client/server business, I apologize for that. Frankly, it's not terribly important anyway. All that matters at this point is that you understand that this book is for people using either Windows XP Home Edition or Windows XP Professional Edition. With that out of the way, we can get back to the absolute basics.

Hardware and Software Basics

For those of you who are new to computers, this section discusses some basic terminology. Computer *hardware* is the stuff you can see and touch; if you throw it off the roof of a building, it will probably break. Your basic PC consists of the hardware components shown in Figure 1-1. Each component plays some role in helping you use the computer:

- **Monitor:** The big TV-like thing. Probably has its own on/off switch as well as brightness, contrast, and other buttons for fine-tuning the onscreen display.
- **Screen:** The part of the monitor where all the action takes place — similar to a TV set screen.
- **System unit:** The main body of the computer. Houses the main on/off switch plus access to the floppy disk and CD-ROM drives.
- **Mouse:** Your main tool for navigating (getting around) and for making the computer do what you want it to do. I'll talk about mice in more detail in a moment.

- **Keyboard:** Laid out like a standard typewriter, the keyboard is used for typing and, in some cases, can also be used as an alternative to the mouse.

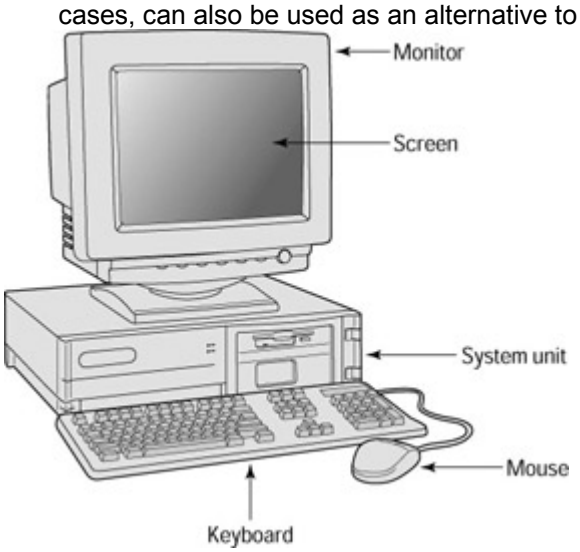

Figure 1-1: Basic PC hardware

Computer *software* refers to the somewhat invisible stuff that makes the computer do whatever it is you want it to do. Any program that you purchase or download, as well as any pictures, music, or other stuff you put "in your computer" is software. Software is information that's recorded to some kind of disk, such as a floppy disk, CD-ROM, or the hard disk that resides permanently inside your computer.

So with the basic concepts of hardware and software covered, let's start talking about how you use that stuff.

Mouse Basics

The one piece of hardware you need to get comfy with right off the bat is the mouse. To use the mouse, rest your hand comfortably on it, with your index finger resting (but not pressing) on the left mouse button, as shown in Figure 1-2. When the computer is on, you'll see a little arrow, called the mouse pointer, on the screen. As you roll the mouse around on a mouse pad or on your desktop, the mouse pointer moves in the same direction as you move the mouse.

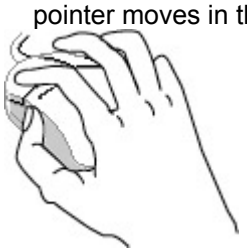

Figure 1-2: Rest your hand comfortably on the mouse, with your index finger near the button on the left.

The following list explains basic mouse terminology you need to know:

- **Mouse button (or primary mouse button):** Usually the mouse button on the left — the one that rests comfortably under your index finger when you rest your right hand on the mouse.
- **Right mouse button (or secondary mouse button):** The mouse button on the right.
- **Point:** To move the mouse so that the mouse pointer is touching, or "hovering over," some object on the screen.
- **Click:** To point to an item and then press and release the primary mouse button.
- **Double-click:** To point to an item and then click the primary mouse button twice in rapid succession — click click!
- **Right-click:** To point to an item and then press and release the secondary mouse button.
- **Drag:** To hold down the primary mouse button while moving the mouse.
- **Right-drag:** To hold down the secondary mouse button while moving the mouse.

Windows XP is geared toward two-button mouse operation. If your mouse has a little wheel in the middle, you can use that for scrolling, as discussed in Chapter 2. If your mouse has three buttons on it, you can ignore the button in the middle for now. I'll show you how you can get some hands-on experience using your mouse in a moment.

If you're a lefty, you can configure a mouse for left-hand use. Doing so makes the button on the right the primary mouse button and the button on the left the secondary mouse button (so your index finger is still

over the primary mouse button). Chapter 15 provides instructions for switching your mouse buttons around for left-handed use.

Starting Windows XP

If Windows XP is already installed on your PC, starting Windows XP is a simple task. Follow these steps:

Caution If Windows XP has not been installed on your PC already, refer to the instructions that came with your Windows XP package (or Appendix A in this book) for installation instructions.

1. If your computer has a floppy disk drive, check to make sure no disk is in that drive (see Figure 1-3). If you think a disk is in that drive, push the little button on the front of the drive to pop out the disk.

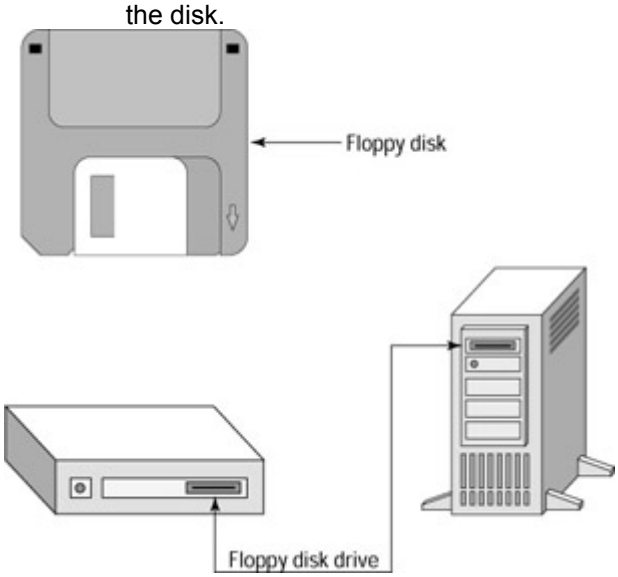

Figure 1-3: Remove any floppy disks from the floppy disk drive before turning on your computer.

1. Turn on all peripherals attached to your PC, such as your monitor and printer, and any other connected device that has its own on/off switch.
2. Turn on the main power on the system unit.
3. To ensure that your computer doesn't attempt to boot from a CD-ROM, open the CD-ROM drive and remove any CD that might be in there.
4. Wait a minute or so for your computer to boot up (start itself and load Windows XP for you).

You might see some weird, highly technical information whiz by on the screen. That phase of the startup is called the Power-On Self-Test (POST), and you can pretty much ignore it. What happens next depends on how your copy of Windows XP is set up. So just continue to read along and ignore anything that doesn't appear on your own screen.

Logging on

If your computer is set up to support multiple users, you'll first come to the Welcome screen, which looks something like the example shown in Figure 1-4. Just click your user name (or Guest, if you don't have an account on this computer) to proceed.

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