Productivity Software

Productivity software is designed to improve efficiency and performance on the job and at home, and is the largest category of application software for individual use. Employment notices appearing in newspapers and magazines often identify required computer skills, such as word processing or spreadsheet expertise. Some employment notices even specify that an applicant must be certified in a particular application.

In-depth knowledge and skill in using productivity software applications can make a potential employee more valuable to a business, organization, or agency. Productivity software categories include:

Word processing: Used to write, format, and print letters, memos, reports, and other documents.

Desktop publishing: Used to produce newsletters, advertisements, and other high-quality documents.

Spreadsheet: Used to produce spreadsheets and manipulate financial and other numerical data.

Project management: Used to schedule and manage projects.

Presentation graphics: Used to create and display slide shows.

Computer-aided design: Used to create and edit detailed designs of products.

Personal-Use Software

When browsing computer stores, shoppers are likely to see numerous software applications designed for home and personal use. Among the many products available are applications for writing letters, making out wills, designing a new home, landscaping a lawn, preparing and filing tax returns, and managing finances. Software suites are also available for home and personal use, although sometimes the suites available for home use do not contain all the features found in business versions.

More than one-half of U.S. homes now include a personal computer on which a variety of software applications have been installed. Most application software programs are relatively inexpensive. Some vendors advertise popular word processing programs for as little as $99. Some popular personal-use software categories include:

Personal finance software: Assists users with paying bills, balancing checkbooks, keeping track of income and expenses, and maintaining investment records.

Tax preparation software: Designed to aid in analyzing federal and state tax status, as well as to prepare and transmit tax returns.

Legal documents software: Designed to help analyze, plan, and prepare a variety of legal documents, including wills and trusts.

Games and entertainment software: Designed to provide fun as well as challenges to users; includes interactive games, videos, and music.