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Computers to boot up in seconds, not minutes

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

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2nd October, 2010

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

A big and welcome change could be coming to PCs. The time spent waiting for our computer to boot up could soon be cut to seconds instead of the minute or three we currently have to wait. This is good news for people who pull their hair out at the length of time it takes for a PC to start. How will this happen? There will be an update to one of the most basic pieces of start-up software – the Bios. This does all the groundwork and prepares the Operating System. It is an old piece of technology that has never caught up with the power and speed of today's computers. Its replacement, the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI), should be on most PCs by 2011. The UEFI is more flexible and much faster than the Bios.

Mark Doran, head of the group overseeing the development of the UEFI, explained the benefits to the BBC: "At the moment it can be 25-30 seconds of boot time before you see the first bit of OS sign-on. With UEFI we're getting it under a handful of seconds," he said. Mr Doran said that the technology is developing very quickly, saying: "In terms of boot speed, we're not at 'instant-on' yet but it is already a lot better than the conventional Bios can manage and we're getting closer to that every day." The UEFI is expected to save companies around the world billions of dollars. When time is money, having to wait minutes to start work after turning a PC on costs industry a fortune. Home users will also say goodbye to tapping their fingers on their desk.

WARM-UPS

1. COMPUTER START-UP TIME: Walk around the class and talk to other students about computer start-up time. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

welcome change / waiting / updates / basic software / operating system / flexible / development / benefits / technology / 'instant-on' / conventional / a fortune

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. MY COMPUTER: How can you make it better? Complete this table and share what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share again... and again.

	Problems now	What I'd like
Boot-up time		
Speed		
Software		
Screen		
Keyboard & mouse		
Operating System		

4. NO PROBLEM: Students A **strongly** believe computers will be without problems in the future; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. WAITING: What's worse? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the things you most hate waiting for at the top at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- The computer to start
- A web page to load
- A download
- A document to open
- The computer to wake up from sleep
- Games to load
- A e-mail to send
- Shutting down

6. COMPUTER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'computer'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Computers will soon be ready to use seconds after turning them on. T / F
- b. The article suggests bald people will be happy with this news. T / F
- c. A basic bit of software needs to be upgraded to make PCs boot quicker. T / F
- d. Current boot-up speed is because the computer has to prepare the OS. T / F
- e. A development group member said boot-up time will take 25 seconds. T / F
- f. The member said computers will never be instantly on. T / F
- g. The time saved in booting up will save industries billions of dollars. T / F
- h. Home PC users will no longer have to tap their fingers on their desk. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. welcome | a. fundamental |
| 2. boot up | b. traditional |
| 3. basic | c. hoped for |
| 4. groundwork | d. encouraging |
| 5. flexible | e. a huge amount |
| 6. overseeing | f. adaptable |
| 7. handful | g. start |
| 8. conventional | h. a few |
| 9. expected | i. preparation |
| 10. fortune | j. supervising |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. A big and welcome | a. of start-up software |
| 2. time spent waiting for our computer | b. that every day |
| 3. the minute or three we currently | c. to boot up |
| 4. one of the most basic pieces | d. a fortune |
| 5. more flexible and | e. change |
| 6. head of the group overseeing | f. on their desk |
| 7. we're getting it under a | g. the development |
| 8. we're getting closer to | h. have to wait |
| 9. costs industry | i. much faster |
| 10. tapping their fingers | j. handful of seconds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A big and _____ change could be coming to PCs. The time spent waiting for our computer to boot up could soon be _____ to seconds instead of the minute or three we currently have to wait. This is good news for people who pull their _____ out at the length of time it takes for a PC to start. How will this happen? There will be an update to one of the most _____ pieces of start-up software – the Bios. This does all the _____ and prepares the Operating System. It is an old _____ of technology that has never caught up with the power and _____ of today's computers. Its replacement, the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI), should be on most PCs by 2011. The UEFI is more _____ and much faster than the Bios.

piece
hair
groundwork
cut
flexible
welcome
speed
basic

Mark Doran, head of the group _____ the development of the UEFI, explained the _____ to the BBC: "At the moment it can be 25-30 seconds of boot time before you see the first bit of OS sign-on. With UEFI we're getting it under a _____ of seconds," he said. Mr Doran said that the technology is developing very quickly, saying: "In _____ of boot speed, we're not at 'instant-on' yet but it is already a lot better than the conventional Bios can manage and we're getting _____ to that every day." The UEFI is _____ to save companies around the world billions of dollars. When time is _____, having to wait minutes to start work after turning a PC on costs industry a _____. Home users will also say goodbye to tapping their fingers on their desk.

expected
handful
fortune
overseeing
closer
money
benefits
terms

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

A _____ could be coming to PCs. The time spent waiting for our computer to boot up _____ seconds instead of the minute or three we currently have to wait. This is good news for people who _____ the length of time it takes for a PC to start. How will this happen? There will be an update to one of the most basic _____ software – the Bios. This does all the groundwork and prepares the Operating System. It is an old piece of technology that has _____ the power and speed of today's computers. Its replacement, the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI), should be on most PCs by 2011. The UEFI is _____ faster than the Bios.

Mark Doran, head of the group _____ of the UEFI, explained the benefits to the BBC: "At the moment it can be 25-30 seconds of boot time before you see the _____. With UEFI we're getting it under a handful of seconds," he said. Mr Doran said that the technology is _____, saying: "In terms of boot speed, we're not at 'instant-on' yet but it is _____ than the conventional Bios can manage and we're getting closer to that every day." The UEFI is expected to save companies around the world billions of dollars. When time is money, _____ to start work after turning a PC on costs industry a fortune. Home users will also _____ their fingers on their desk.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'welcome' and 'change'.

welcome	change
----------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• spent• hair• basic• prepares• old• 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• head• bit• handful• manage• time• desk
--	---

STUDENT COMPUTER START-UP TIME SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

Write five GOOD questions about computer start-up time in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

COMPUTER START-UP TIME DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'computer'?
- c) Are you happy with the speed at which your computer starts?
- d) What's the best thing about your computer?
- e) What do you do while waiting for your PC / Mac to boot up?
- f) How could you use this time more productively?
- g) Why has it taken 20-25 years for developers to address the length of boot-up time?
- h) What makes you pull your hair out?
- i) Will a faster boot-up time change your life?
- j) What other things on your computer would you like to be better?

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COMPUTER START-UP TIME DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of changes in technology?
- c) What's happening inside the computer before you see your desktop?
- d) How happy would you be with 'instant-on' and why?
- e) Do you think a faster boot-up time will really save companies money?
- f) What makes you tap your fingers on the desk / table?
- g) How much time do you need to start up in the mornings?
- h) How much better have computers got in the past few years?
- i) Would you like an 'instant-on' button for web pages?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Mark Doran?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1010/101002-computers.html>

A big and welcome change could be (1) _____ to PCs. The time spent waiting for our computer to boot up could soon be cut (2) _____ seconds instead of the minute or three we currently have to wait. This is good news for people who pull their (3) _____ out at the length of time it takes for a PC to start. How will this happen? There will be an update to one of the most basic pieces of start-up software – the Bios. This does all the (4) _____ and prepares the Operating System. It is an old piece of technology that has never caught up (5) _____ the power and speed of today's computers. Its replacement, the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI), (6) _____ be on most PCs by 2011. The UEFI is more flexible and much faster than the Bios.

Mark Doran, head of the group (7) _____ the development of the UEFI, explained the benefits to the BBC: "At the moment it can be 25-30 seconds of boot time before you see the first (8) _____ of OS sign-on. With UEFI we're getting it under a handful of seconds," he said. Mr Doran said that the technology is developing very quickly, saying: "In (9) _____ of boot speed, we're not at 'instant-on' yet but it is already a lot better than the conventional Bios can (10) _____ and we're getting closer to that every day." The UEFI is expected to save companies around the world billions of dollars. When time is money, (11) _____ to wait minutes to start work after turning a PC on costs industry a fortune. Home users will also (12) _____ goodbye to tapping their fingers on their desk.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) comes | (b) came | (c) come | (d) coming |
| 2. | (a) at | (b) to | (c) from | (d) by |
| 3. | (a) hair | (b) teeth | (c) eyes | (d) fingernails |
| 4. | (a) groundwork | (b) ground | (c) grounded | (d) grounds |
| 5. | (a) at | (b) by | (c) with | (d) on |
| 6. | (a) have to | (b) should | (c) has | (d) ought |
| 7. | (a) overseeing | (b) overseer | (c) oversee | (d) oversees |
| 8. | (a) byte | (b) bite | (c) bitter | (d) bit |
| 9. | (a) termed | (b) terms | (c) terming | (d) term |
| 10. | (a) charge | (b) cope | (c) guide | (d) manage |
| 11. | (a) have | (b) has | (c) having | (d) had to |
| 12. | (a) say | (b) tell | (c) speak | (d) voice |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about computer start-up times and the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI). Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. COMPUTER DEVELOPMENT: Make a poster about computer development from the past to today (and the future). Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NO HAIR: Write a magazine article about someone who pulled all their hair out because of waiting so long for their computer to start up. Include imaginary interviews with this person.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of a computer company. Ask him/her three questions about computers. Give him/her three suggestions on how to improve them. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. welcome | a. encouraging |
| 2. boot up | b. start |
| 3. basic | c. fundamental |
| 4. groundwork | d. preparation |
| 5. flexible | e. adaptable |
| 6. overseeing | f. supervising |
| 7. handful | g. a few |
| 8. conventional | h. traditional |
| 9. expected | i. hoped for |
| 10. fortune | j. a huge amount |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. A big and welcome | a. change |
| 2. time spent waiting for our computer | b. to boot up |
| 3. the minute or three we currently | c. have to wait |
| 4. one of the most basic pieces | d. of start-up software |
| 5. more flexible and | e. much faster |
| 6. head of the group overseeing | f. the development |
| 7. we're getting it under a | g. handful of seconds |
| 8. we're getting closer to | h. that every day |
| 9. costs industry | i. a fortune |
| 10. tapping their fingers | j. on their desk |

GAP FILL:

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Mark Doran, head of the group **overseeing** the development of the UEFI, explained the **benefits** to the BBC: "At the moment it can be 25-30 seconds of boot time before you see the first bit of OS sign-on. With UEFI we're getting it under a **handful** of seconds," he said. Mr Doran said that the technology is developing very quickly, saying: "In **terms** of boot speed, we're not at 'instant-on' yet but it is already a lot better than the conventional Bios can manage and we're getting **closer** to that every day." The UEFI is **expected** to save companies around the world billions of dollars. When time is **money**, having to wait minutes to start work after turning a PC on costs industry a **fortune**. Home users will also say goodbye to tapping their fingers on their desk.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a