What is an Operating System?

- The purpose of an operating system is to organize and control hardware and software in a computer system.
- An operating system enables many programs/processes/sets of instructions to run on the computer and often controls how they will run.
- The operating system gives programs access to hardware of the computer.
- A computer system can have any number of operating systems, but only one operating system can operate at a single time.

Common Operating Systems

- Windows Operating Systems developed by Microsoft
- Macintosh operating systems developed by Apple
- UNIX family of operating systems originally developed in the 1960s and 1970s by a group of AT&T Bell Labs, and has been evolving with numerous contributions from researchers and corporations (Includes the latest Macintosh OS X which is UNIX based)
- DOS (disk operating system) is a very simple operating system developed for IBM PC compatible computers. Today it only exists as the Command Prompt program that runs under the Windows Operating System. You can still simulate DOS operations through this program as if you were running the operating system.