

What to Look For When Purchasing a New Computer

Presented by:

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Laptop or Desktop?

- Laptops are small and portable. Can be used with battery for power, when you're traveling or even at different locations in your house (with wireless networking installed).
- Laptops have fewer upgrade options. Perhaps only memory and/or disk size can be increased. Be sure to look for every feature you may need.
- Desktops have more room for additional components, such as memory, additional disks, upgraded video board and sound board, memory card readers, and better optical drives.

Where to Buy?

- Retail Stores can offer packaged configurations at an attractive price. May be too integrated for upgrade flexibility. May use low cost components. Can be excellent solution for basic use.
- On-line Ordering can also offer packaged configurations at an attractive price and can also allow for custom configuration if desired. Can be excellent solution for a variety of uses.

Where to Buy? (continued)

- Custom Build can offer exactly the system capabilities you want, name brand components, and it's not always more expensive. Can be excellent solution for both basic needs and more complex requirements. May allow more options for future upgrades.

Warranty Considerations

- Warranty can be provided in several different ways. Check the type offered with your system before you purchase.
 - Hardware replacement only. No support for software problems and labor cost might be extra.
 - Mail-in warranty – You ship the unit to their repair location (at your cost).
 - Depot warranty – You bring the unit to their location.

Service Considerations

After warranty period, you pay for parts and labor. Check on their service policies and pricing.

- Mail-In Service: You ship the unit to their repair location (at your cost).
- Depot Service: You bring the unit to their repair location.
- In-Home Service: They send a technician to your home to identify and fix the problem.

Purchasing Checklist

- ❑ Vista or Windows XP software?
- ❑ Stand-alone or custom all-in-one motherboard?
- ❑ Name brand components or lowest cost components?
- ❑ Warranty and Service type? Mail-in, Depot, On-site
- ❑ High speed processor? Brand? Dual-core, quad-core, 64 bit?

Purchasing Checklist - continued

- Upgraded video board and video board memory for movies, gaming?
- How much main memory? Expandable?
- How big a disk? What disk interface? SATA or PATA (IDE)? SATA is newest.
- Network adapter? Wired only? Wireless?
- Analogue and/or Digital video display?

Purchasing Checklist - continued

- Multi-card reader for input from camera, PDA, etc.? What card types?
- USB-2 ports? How many? Front and/or back? You need more than you think.
- Is a “free” printer really a cost savings? Does it do what you need? Cost of ink cartridges, etc.
- Router needed for more than 2 PCs? What type? Wired and Wireless? Repeater?

Purchasing Checklist - continued

- Which Software Applications? Which Components of them?
- Microsoft Office has various versions. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Outlook, Access, etc. must be specifically identified and ordered.
- Can your existing software applications be run with the new Operating System?

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