

## Buying a computer?

What should you look for in a laptop or desktop?

1. Screen size is important if you plan to use it as a work computer you may need a larger 15 or 17" or use an external monitor with a laptop, For a Desktop computer consider a 21" or larger monitor.
  - a. 17" and larger laptops are not really designed to be packed around due to their bulk and weight.
  - b. 13" or smaller tend to be more challenging on older eyes, but are much lighter and more costly.
2. Operating system (OS) availability is limited to Windows 10 or 11, Windows 7 with a special order or possibly a MAC, if you're into it.
3. Processor speed is measured in GHz (Gigahertz) and anything above a 2.2GHz or faster is good enough for most everyday use. Anything lower, you will see significant lag in performance, especially later when you add programs and updates.
  - a. Intel and AMD use their own benchmarks for determining speeds and so either one will show the best reviews depending on who they paid to review them.
  - b. Intel does have three styles of Processors in the standard computer: I-3, I-5 and I-7. They can all boast the same speed (such as 2.4 GHz) but the way the processor handles the data stream is quite different. I-3 is a Vega, I-5 is a Malibu and I-7 is a Corvette 😊
4. RAM (Random Access Memory), measured in GB (Gigabytes) is more important than marginal speed (listed above). RAM is the best investment for your money. 8 GB or more is great, anything less is NOT recommended in today's world of computers. 12-16GB is best if the computer will accept it.
5. HDD or Hard drive is the storage device where all the programs and files are stored. Size will not be an issue for most casual users, but if you plan to take and store thousands of pictures and/or videos, you will need to make sure you have the space available.
  - a. Another type of HDD is called a SSD or solid state drive.
    - i. No moving parts like a traditional drive
    - ii. Cost is higher, though the prices have been dropping as of 2017
    - iii. An SSD will speed up your computer by 10 fold due to the design. 😊
    - iv. The standard SSD put into most computers is 500Gigs which is usually great for most people, especially now that cloud storage is readily available.
6. USB Ports, or lack of, should be looked at as well. At minimum 3 ports to run normal items such as mouse, keyboard, printer, camera, etc.

- a. Cheap laptops tend to have cheap touchpads and delicate keyboards. So if you buy a cheap model, you may need to invest in an external keyboard. A cheap laptop is under \$350.00.
  - b. A USB splitter can be used as an alternative.
- 7. Another option when selecting a laptop is the style. Conventional or 2-in-one, where they convert from laptop to tablet. These are designed to be portable and have a sturdier hinge system than lower-end laptops. Expect to pay more.
- 8. Touchscreens are pretty nice for some and not so much for others. Having a touchscreen adds about \$60-100 or more to the overall price.
- 9. Other items to consider:
  - a. Backlit keys are very nice for sitting where light is minimal.
  - b. Touch screens have an advantage over mice as you don't need to manipulate the mouse to where you want to go, just touch.

As a rule: Laptops will cost a couple hundred or more over a comparable desktop model, so it may be wise to decide where and how much time you will spend on the computer.

Let's talk about Antivirus for a moment: You don't need to buy or subscribe to a paid version EVER! Since windows 7, Microsoft has embedded their own program (Windows Defender) along with their security center. It works perfectly, will never bribe you for money and is just as good as any paid version on the market.

Bottom line: pick out the features that are the most important to you and do an internet search like at AMAZON, BEST BUY, COSTCO or your local stores and see what you can find, then compare that to other places that sell computers. Sometimes you can find a better deal at a local store, especially around the holidays.