

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING A COMPUTER

<p>What type of processor (CPU)</p>	<p>The heart of your computer is the processor. There are several types of processors such as: AMD, Intel Core 2, Dual Core, and Quad Core. This is otherwise known as the CPU (Central Processing Unit) and is much like the brains for your computer, performing tasks and running calculations. Speeds today are measured in Gigahertz (GHZ). Older models were measured in Megahertz (MHZ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The higher the speed the faster it will perform its tasks. • You should also check your processor's cache - this is the amount of memory you have in your computer for short term storage during processing. A large cache will allow you to work and process bigger and more complex files without crashing your system. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Random Access Memory (RAM)</p>	<p>Random Access Memory is temporary memory your computer uses to run applications and data on your operating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more RAM the computer has the faster it will run. • Is the RAM expandable, can you buy more? • If you buy a 64-bit operating system, you will want a minimum of 4GB of RAM. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The new computer systems sold today are 64-bit systems. • A 32-bit system will only recognize 3GB of RAM so if they try to sell you more beware. (You will only find this on older models) 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Hard Drive Speed & Capacity</p>	<p>The hard drive is the destination for all of your files and data. This drive is also known as a hard disk drive or HDD. Hard drives today can be as large as 3TB (3 Terabytes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5400 rpm or 7200 rpm (rpm = revolutions per minute) • Solid State – no moving parts – this is all flash memory (expensive) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faster processing ○ Faster read/write 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Graphics Card</p>	<p>This is also known as your video card. Your graphics card or video card is what handles all your graphics, visuals and videos. Computer systems have a motherboard chipset that handles graphics, while others use a separate graphics card.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When deciding on graphics, you must focus on what you are using the computer for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If gaming or handling large graphics, you will want a dedicated video card. ○ To play video games and run complex multi-media applications, you will need a high speed AGP 8X video card with at least 128MB. ○ If using your computer for school, or surfing the web or social networking, the onboard video card should be sufficient for your needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Operating System (OS)</p>	<p>An operating system (OS) is software, consisting of programs and data that runs on computers, manages computer hardware resources, and provides common services to run application software. The operating system is the most important type of system software in a computer system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New computer systems come with Windows 7. • Older computers (used) will come with XP and Vista. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommend staying away from Vista (issues such as reliability, less secure and the systems ran slower.) • Find out what the minimum requirements are for RAM for the OS Software and ensure that the computer has sufficient RAM to run smoothly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remember 3GB RAM is maxed for a 32-bit system ○ 4GB minimum for 64-bit system 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Optical Drives</p>	<p>Optical drives retrieve and/or store data on optical discs like CDs, DVDs, and BDs (Blu-ray discs) which hold much more information than classic portable media options like the floppy disk. The most important consideration when choosing an optical drive is the type of discs that will be used with the drive as well as the function the drive will perform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the drive be used for both CDs and DVDs? Is Blu-ray support required? • Will the drive be used for read-only discs (ROM)? • Will the drive be used for recording (CD-R, DVD-R)? • Will the drive be used for rewriting (CD-RW, DVD-RW)? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Screen Size & Type</p>	<p>You will need a good monitor to get the most out of your computer. Deciding on which one you need will depend on several factors, such as application (what are you using it for?), how much room you have on your desk, and of course how much money you want to spend. Computer monitors these days range from 19-inch to 30-inch monsters.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Warranties</p>	<p>Most computer manufacturers will try to sell you extended warranty or a service contract. These warranties cover two years past the manufacturer's one year warranty. The majority of computers that need service today are caused by virus or spywares. If you know how to use the recovery discs, restore points and internet security software, those problems can be avoided easily.</p> <p>If you have small children or you will be traveling a lot with it, an extended warranty may be an option but make sure you ask some of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the warranty transferable? • Can repairs be performed at any repair shop located anywhere in the world? • Find out what's covered and what's not covered. • Make sure it is not reimbursement based warranty. For example, some computer repair shops require that you pay the bill and then send receipt to the original equipment manufacturer and wait for reimbursement. • Always read the fine print. For example, if you drop or break something there is no warranty. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Peripherals</p>	<p>You may want to purchase a couple of peripherals for your new investment such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surge protector – Highly Recommended – This item protects your new computer from power surges. You can find most reputable surge protectors under \$30. • Speakers - Speakers or headphones you use can make the difference between a simple experience and a high quality, professional entertainment experience. • Webcam – if you intend to chat online with a friend, the way you record your videos and put them on your computer matters. Make sure you research them before buying to ensure you get the quality you are paying for. 	
<p>Printers</p>	<p>Before you purchase a printer, do your research. Although there are cheap printers on the market, it isn't worth buying one if it does not deliver the performance you require. Whether it is for a business or personal use, knowing exactly what kind of printer you want will avoid disappointment later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inkjet printers are the primary printers in home use and in small offices. They deliver quality performance and high-quality printing output. The down side to inkjet printers is the high cost of the printer cartridges - this is where the company makes their money. • A multifunction printer or all-in-one device is a combination of a printer, scanner, copier, and fax machine. Some users may find this more practical since they do not have to buy two or more separate devices and they require significantly less space. This would be a good option for a college student. • The photo printers provide better quality photo printing. Although the ink cartridges tend to be more expensive and they usually contain an extra cartridge to provide the "neon" colors so popular these days, they deliver high quality pictures. For those who travel and use a laptop, the portable wireless printer is a good choice. 	
<p>Anti-Virus Software</p>	<p>In order to ensure that your computer runs smoothly you need anti-virus software. Anti-Virus programs provide real-time protection for your computer. They guard your PC against viruses, spyware, and malicious software. There are many brands on the market, but Microsoft Security Essentials is a free program to consider.</p> <p>Note: * Before installing Security Essentials make sure you remove any virus software that is pre-loaded on your computer as a demo.*</p>	
<p>Battery Life (Laptop Computers Only)</p>	<p>If you are purchasing a laptop computer, you need to check on what the battery life is. The lithium ion battery is the most common type of battery found in most notebook computers today. If you travel a lot, you may want a long-life battery, so make sure you check this out before purchasing a particular laptop.</p>	
<p>Research Before You Buy</p>	<p>Check various review sites for information on reliability and customer service ratings as well as warranty terms for the various manufacturers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://reviews.cnet.com/ 	