

Computer Tips

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Michael's Computer Services

Buying a New Computer—Part 3

One dilemma some customers face when buying a new computer is should they buy a laptop instead of a desktop computer. Below are some pointers we give to customers to help them decide.

A laptop will be much more portable, but you'll generally get more for your money (a faster computer) if you buy a similar priced desktop computer. Also, a laptop is more compact than a desktop, and for some is more difficult to use. Laptops are ideal for those travelling, or who need to commute between work places; but if you are planning to use your new computer at a desk most of the time, we usually recommend a desktop PC.

When purchasing a laptop you need to bear in mind that many components within laptops are not upgradeable - so it's really important to identify what you need and will use the laptop for, before you start shopping.

When you buy a laptop, a choice you need to make is: do you want a small-screened laptop (more portable) or would you prefer a large-screen laptop? A small laptop means a smaller screen and more cramped keyboard, but easier to carry around; while the large-screen laptops are heavier but have a more comfy keyboard and easier-to-read screen.

Laptops also have the two main brands of processor, AMD and Intel. Laptop processors are specially designed to balance the best performance with great battery life. This means laptop processors are generally slower when compared to the counterpart desktop processors. Laptop processors are indicated with an 'M' (for Mobile) in the CPU type. Laptop processor speeds are indicated in Ghz (1.6Ghz, 2.2Ghz, etc), so go for the highest number Ghz you can afford.

There are many brands of laptops available on the market. We often get asked what is the best 'brand' to buy. While some brands do stand out above others, we always say, the more you spend, the better the laptop. Even within the best brands, there are cheaper models as well as business or professional models. If your budget can afford it, go with a business range laptop, as these are designed with better components. If you do go with a cheaper laptop, see if there is an extended warranty available, as this will give you peace of mind later on.

New laptops will be sold with Windows 7, which needs at least 2GB of RAM to function correctly. If you can afford to spend more you should get a laptop with 4GB or more of RAM. Also check that the laptop you are considering comes with at least a 4 cell battery. The cell count indicates the size and capacity of the battery.

Finally, make sure any existing software and hardware you own will work with your new laptop. You won't be able to take it back just because you can't use a particular program.

To be continued...

Computers



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