

Computer Buying 101

Many people are intimidated when buying a computer, mostly because they don't understand everything that's being thrown at them during the process and they're afraid they will buy more/less than they need. This guide is designed to help our customers get setup with a new computer without feeling like they just got ran over.

The first part of this process is determining what your computing needs really are. Things to think about are who will use the computer and what they use it for. We'll break this down into popular uses and things you would want to look for in a computer to accommodate those needs.

Digital Video/ Digital Photography

This user has a camcorder or will be getting one in the near future and wants to be able to edit and burn home movies that will play in their DVD Player. Besides having a DVD recorder built into the computer the most important things are CPU, RAM, and Hard Drive Storage.

CPU – This is very processor intensive hobby and you should purchase a computer with the fastest processor in your budget, this ensure that you have few system lock ups and will also extend the useful lifespan of your computer.

Ram - Ram is also used in excess during video editing, we recommend at least 1 GB of Ram when purchasing a computer for video editing. This will ensure a smooth work flow in all aspects of your computer, not just video.

Hard Drive – Storage is going to determine how much you can keep on your computer before you have to burn it to DVD. You always want to have much more than you need in the event you have a few tapes to transfer and you don't have time to edit them at the moment.

Gaming

This user comes in a few varieties, ranging from the Hardcore to the Casual. The Hardcore gamer will want the best of the best, though he/she could get by and have a very satisfying experience with much less computer. The the most important things here are Processor, RAM, and Video Card.

CPU – Like the digital video customer, this customer has very processor intensive hobby and should get a fast processor though it's not as important for this customer because a lot of the computing is done on the video card.

Video Card – This is the most important thing for a gaming pc, it will go along way in compensating for other components that may not be as fast as you would like. This is where you want to invest a good portion of your budget to get the most bang for your buck. It should have at least 256mb of RAM and be DirectX 9 compliant. If the term DirectX compliant doesn't mean anything to you just ask the sales person in the store and they will help you out.

RAM – The minimum amount of RAM recommended for most games is 512mb though if it's in the budget 1 GB would make big difference in games that feature 3D graphics.

General Use

These users will spend time on the Internet, using a Word Processor or Spreadsheet, checking and writing email, and playing the occasional game of Solitaire. The good news for these users is that there really isn't a computer for sale right now that won't meet their needs. It really doesn't take much of a computer to run a word processor. Does this mean you should buy the cheapest computer possible? I would say that in most cases that is not a good idea simply because the more powerful computer you buy the more options are open to you down the road and in many cases you get what you pay for in terms of quality and customer service. Some baseline things to look for in the computer are a 2.8Ghz processor and 512mb of RAM.

What else do I need with my computer?

There are a couple of things you probably want to look at picking up when you buy your new computer.

1. Surge Protector/Battery Backup – A batter backup is not much more expensive than a plain surge protector and it provides protection from black outs and brown outs that would do serious damage to a computer.
2. Cables and Ink – If you're picking a printer with your computer you may need a USB cable if your existing printer is older than 5 years old, and you will want to pick up ink just because some manufacturers only provide a half full cartridge with a new printer.

Where to buy?

There are many places to buy a new computer, from Best Buy to Dell. InvisiMax now offers this very service to our customers through our relationship with Dell and other resellers we can provide a built to order solution for you backed by the manufacturer's warranty. If you have questions about our service or anything in this buying guide please call us at **866-745-6030**.