

## **Buying a new computer**

Choosing your next computer can be a very daunting task – I will try to assist you with some pointers and general advice in this article. But, this article will mainly focus on Microsoft as the operating system because this is where our expertise is.

I suppose that the first thing that you might wish to consider is; will it be a laptop or a desktop computer? To answer this question you need to ask yourself where will I be using the new computer and does it need to be portable? If the computer needs to be portable, then the next question is, how portable and should I be considering a laptop type of device or a tablet – maybe, I could even simply use my mobile phone? But, if it does not need to be portable, then a desktop computer might be a good choice.

Desktop computers which also includes 'All-In-One' computers, certainly have their benefits, however, portable devices also have their benefits too. A desktop computer can easily be made to your own specifications (except All-In-One's) and then afterwards can be upgraded without too much fuss. This is not always the same for 'off the shelf' desktop computers where you buy them pre-constructed and certainly not the same for most laptop computers.

The other very important question that needs serious consideration is the operating system (Microsoft, Apple, Linux, Google and Android – there are others too). To answer this question really needs the buyer to understand which operating system they are most familiar with, how much does it cost and what am I planning to use the computer for. Then there is the now relevant question – "do I buy Windows 11 or Windows 10?"

So, when you consider buying any computer and noting the points above, you should then consider: internal storage size and speed, computer speed (CPU), RAM size, graphics ability (high resolution games, graphics design or video playback), auxiliary ports (what do I want to attach to the computer), wifi, Bluetooth and software packages that you might want installed.

In most cases people simply go for the easy option and buy an 'off the shelf' device and then add some software packages to their purchase – all seems well for some time and then either they want a repair or they want an upgrade. If you buy an 'off the shelf' computer, sometimes replacement hardware costs are determined by the manufacturer and can be expensive or if you are lucky, you might be able to have a cheaper, generic item fitted, which often costs less. Quite often you will be unable able to have a better graphics card or more RAM fitted, because maybe they do not fit or there is not enough space inside the computer case.

The other consideration is having a computer built specifically for you - then at least you can be confident that the machine will suit your needs, because presumably you discussed this with a competent system builder before the computer was build. The custom built computer might cost more than an 'off the shelf' computer, but you should be able to buy with more confidence – plus, any upgrades or repairs should cost less!

There are many things to consider and I hope that this article has at least presented you with some assistance before you buy your next computer.

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