

Buying your next computer and choosing your software

Last month we covered buying a new computer and this month I thought it would be helpful to consider where to buy a computer and what software you might need to also consider installing on it. This article presumes that the buyer is buying the new computer for a particular reason and understands the basics of internet access and email.

There are many ways and places to buy a new computer system or laptop and once you have decided what you think you need, you then should be considering: where to buy it from, online or shop purchase, will it be new or refurbished and what additional software will I need on it to safely perform the tasks that I purchased it for. Again, this article will mainly focus on Microsoft as the operating system because this is where our expertise is.

Everyone will have their own preferred places and reasons for buying a device from a preferred supplier and more often than not, the purchase will be based on cost alone. However, it is worth also factoring in the service that you are likely to get when buying online or from a large retail outlet - sometimes it might be worth paying a little bit more and dealing with a local business; where you can phone them up and discuss any issues far more easily than if you bought a device from a business where you are maybe just one of thousands, but that is your choice.

Assuming now that you have already decided that you will either choose **Microsoft Windows 10** or the later operating system, which is **Microsoft Windows 11** – obviously, if you are still deciding which is best for you, then it will need to be discussed with an expert. However, the next stage is how to I protect my software and personal data and so you will need to consider an anti-virus and/or anti-spyware application. Then, you will need to consider how you will read office type documents and an entire array of other file formats, such as: spreadsheets, word type documents, presentations, videos, pictures, accessing websites, reading & writing email and many more.

When buying some 'off the shelf' computers they often come with pre-installed software packages that you don't need - often they are installed to create further revenue for the vendor – we refer to this as 'bloat-ware'. Also, it is worth wondering if some retail outlets sales staff have some kind of commission based incentive to sell certain brands – worth thinking about when listening to pre-sales advice!

Anti-virus and anti-spyware packages – these are packages that protect your computer operating system and personal data. The options here huge, but the biggest choice is often, should I pay for it or use the free versions and should I use the pre-installed applications?

Should I invest in **Microsoft Office** and if so, should I buy it outright or pay on a subscription basis and is there anything else that is either cheaper or free?

Email – should I use webmail or an application that downloads email onto my computer? What is available to me and what are the costs, but also, am I able to use it easily?

How will I browse the internet – which browser is best for me? There are various companies that produce software for browsing and here are just a few: Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and many others. The choice is always yours and it is impossible to say which one is the best, because everyone is different.

Just remember why you are purchasing the computer in the first place and will it run the way you want it to – if you are on a budget just remember not to buy something that is way more powerful than you need, but also not so inadequate that it fails to perform to the required levels for your own requirements.

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

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