

Advice on How to Buy a Computer

Written by Predrag Janković

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If you are into buying a new computer for your home or business and need some help in making a smart decision, you are at the right place. But knowing **how to buy a computer** requires, beforehand, answering a few important questions:

Buy a new computer or upgrade the old one?

If you have an old desktop computer and want to replace it with new one, you can choose, instead, to replace or add some components in order to increase performance and/or capacity of the old machine. This can be the only solution if you are on a tight budget but we don't recommend it unless the old machine was new two or three years ago or you are an enthusiast with experience and know exactly what you are doing. Otherwise, serious compatibility issues may arise when coupling new and old components. Therefore, it is usually much better to sell the old computer on eBay or via classifieds, add some money and buy a new one.

Should I buy desktop or notebook computer?

This is the first and most fundamental question you have to ask yourself. Notebooks, or laptops, are smaller and lighter and more versatile but cost about 50% more than their desktop counterparts for similar performance. They are mobile and are your only choice if you have to carry your computer from home to office and vice versa. They can be even more mobile if you choose one of the models from subcategory called sub-notebooks that can be easily fitted on your palm. On the downside, they are less comfortable for work but that can be easily overridden by connecting keyboard, mouse, speakers and even standalone monitor. If you are in the know and like to pick your new computer component by component, it is much easier with desktops. The same is true if you plan to do an upgrade at some point in the future. How to buy a notebook will be discussed in a separate article, so, from now on, we'll assume that you opted for a desktop.

What is the new computer going to be used for?

Now, it is crucial to define the use for the computer. There are four main groups: business, home, professional and gaming, and their prices are in the same order. Many a potential buyer is set back when being told that a computer suitable for his or her youngster to play games on is that at the end of the price list. The reason is that 3D games are the most demanding software. The newer the game, the more powerful machine it needs. Running CAD/CAM programs or manipulating video material is very demanding processes. But there is little sense in buying all that power if all you are going to use your computer for is word processing and sending and receiving e-mails. So, if you are a business user, you will be satisfied with a model from the top of the price list. If you are buying a home computer, however, and there are no kids around, you will probably do a little bit of this and a little bit of that. In that case, something from

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the middle of the price range will perfectly suit your needs. Unlike gamers who need a strong processor and a powerful graphics card, users from the third group depend heavily only on processor power, while an average graphics card can do a job.

Should I buy brand-name computer or custom built?

Then, you have to decide whether you want a brand-name computer or not. There are a number of very well-known computer manufacturers such as [HP Compaq](#) , [Dell](#) , [Fujitsu](#) , [Siemens](#) , [IBM](#) , to name just a few. They all offer many different computer systems suitable for wide range of needs. While these computers are usually of superb quality and well tailored, they are also quite expensive. The alternative, and, in our opinion, a better choice, is to buy from your local assembler. They sell at more reasonable prices and are more likely to be willing to custom-build the system. This way, the components you have chosen are those you will have in your computer.

I am ready to purchase: how to choose computer shop?

When you have answers to previous questions it's time to choose a dealer. Don't allow to be blinded by aggressive marketing. Advertisement space and time cost money and guess whose pocket it comes from. Small to medium sized shops with modest or no marketing campaigns tend to have smaller margins but are more interested in each customer's individual wishes and needs. If you can, ask some friends or colleagues whose opinion you trust for recommendation. Pay a visit to the shop and don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you need to be comfortable with your decision. While a salesperson is giving you advice, even if you are not an expert in the field and you don't understand every word, you can get an idea of how serious they are about their job. Visit their website. It doesn't have to be glorious, but if you find stale or sparse content or even no web site, choose another dealer.

We wish you good luck.