

## How to Buy a Notebook

Written by Predrag Janković

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Once upon a time laptops were heavy and chunky and bought only by those in desperate need for mobile computer or for extravagancy. They gradually got smaller since, and, at some point, somebody came up with the name notebook. Today, they have almost reached desktops in performance, while still getting better and better in ergonomics.

Prices dropped significantly as a result of LCD panels getting cheaper every day. **How to buy a laptop**

If you wonder how to choose a notebook, the fundamental decision you have to make is about screen size. If your computer has to be in your bag or on your lap wherever you are, and unless you are into bodybuilding, any conventional model will eventually get too heavy. In that case, we recommend an ultra-portable, that is, a model with screen size below 15 inches. For those in need of replacement for a desktop computer which will seldom be brought out of the house, bigger models offer more comfort and fewer tradeoffs. There are even models with screen diagonals beyond 17 inches, but, because of their weight, I wouldn't call them mobile computers. The truth is, notebooks are still more expensive than desktops for similar performance, but the difference is getting smaller every day. Chances are, in a few years, only hard-core gamers, professionals in certain areas and enthusiasts won't be using portables.

### Processor

In the battle for dominance on the market of processors for notebook computers, Intel is the clear winner over AMD. The later, however, tries to be present in the arena by lowering prices. As a result, notebooks with AMD processors can usually be found among best-buy items. Compared to those based on Intel, they definitely lack performance, but you are hardly going to notice it if all you will be doing is surfing the web, for example. In general, CPUs designed for notebooks are poorer performers than those for desktop computers. This is the result of lowering heat dissipation and power consumption. These factors are, obviously, of great importance and have impact not only on battery life but on comfort, as well.

### Memory

Although you can still find models with 1GB of RAM, avoid them. Such small amount is long outdated, which is probably true for other components of such computers, as well. Most notebooks have two slots for memory. However, there are those with only one, so be sure to check. RAM memory is getting cheaper and cheaper every day and adding an additional module is easy even for non-professionals.

### Hard disk

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Hard disks below 160GB are obsolete, and many laptops nowadays have 250GB or 320GB disks. If notebook is your second computer, that is, you already have a desktop at home or at work, smaller capacity may be enough because you can always copy your data. Bear in mind, though, that sooner or later any disk will be full.

### **Monitor**

LCD screens in notebook computers are usually with glare finishing. While this means better contrast and color rendition it also makes it difficult to work if a light source is behind you. Even if you work in darkness, your ghost image will always be before your eyes, but, since mat screens are not easy to find, you just have to get used to it.

### **To be continued**