

Buying A Computer

Desktop vs. Laptop

Laptop Pros

- ◊ Portable
- ◊ Free Wifi
- ◊ Compatible with most computer accessories

Laptop Cons

- ◊ Often heavy
- ◊ Wifi not always available
- ◊ Hard/expensive to upgrade/replace parts

Desktop Pros

- ◊ Less expensive
- ◊ Easier to upgrade
- ◊ More powerful

Desktop Cons

- ◊ Always heavy
- ◊ No WiFi without special hardware

Netbook Pros:

- ◊ Perfect for college
- ◊ Lightweight and ultra-portable
- ◊ Works well with internet, email and word processing

Netbook Cons:

- ◊ No CD/DVD drive
- ◊ Almost impossible to upgrade
- ◊ Small screens
- ◊ Doesn't do well with games/video

WARNING!: Watch out for cheap devices which **LOOK like laptops**. They typically have **Windows CE (Compact Embedded)**.

Where to buy?

Online

- ◊ DELL.com
- ◊ HP.com
- ◊ TigerDirect.com
- ◊ CyberPowerPC.com
- ◊ iBuyPower.com
- ◊ AlienWare.com

Store

- ◊ Walmart.com
- ◊ Bestbuy.com
- ◊ Staples.com
- ◊ Frys.com
- ◊ **Local computer shop!**

What to buy?

BRAND NAME DOESN'T MATTER

4 Main Parts To Check:

- ◊ CPU/Processor
- ◊ RAM/Memory
- ◊ Hard Drive
- ◊ Video Card

Processor (CPU):

What to get depends on what you want to do.

- o Email, Internet searches & Typing/Printing:
Any computer will work! AMD-E, Intel Pentium B (\$250-350)
- o YouTube, Pandora Radio & Flash Games:
AMD A6 **or** A8, Intel Core i3, Any Quad-Core CPU (\$350-500)
- o Audio/Video editing, Advanced Photo Editing, Gaming:
Intel Core i5 **or** i7, AMD A10 (\$500+)
- o **NEVER BUY ANY OF THESE:** Celeron, Sempron, Turion, Atom

Check CPU speeds here: cpubenchmark.net

Memory (RAM):

- o 4GB DDR3 RAM (8GB or more for gamers)
- o DDR3 is the latest standard
- o Most RAM is dual-channel
- o Gaming computers may be triple-channel

Hard Disk Drive:

Hard drive sizes determine how much stuff you can save/install/download, etc.

Range in size from **160GB - 2000GB** (2TB)

File Types/Sizes (1GB = 1000MB):

- o **Text files:** less than 1MB
- o **Pictures:** 1-3MB
- o **Music:** 3-5MB
- o **Games:** 50-5000MB

Desktop hard drives are typically 7200RPM.
Cheaper laptop hard drives may be 5400RPM.

Video Card:

The Video Card processes/displays video on the display. It is a separate processor from the CPU.

- o Integrated Video means "no video card".
- o Dedicated/Discrete Video means "video card".
- o **Intel** video is always integrated video
- o **AMD & Nvidia** are the main manufacturers of video cards
- o If it doesn't mention a video card, assume integrated

Check video card speeds here: videocardbenchmark.net