

Title:

Tips For Buying A Laptop

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Summary:

Laptop computers are essential tools for college students, business professionals and many more. As the capabilities, size and price of laptops continues to improve, laptop computers continue to represent increasing value for the dollar. But there are some important things to be aware of when considering a laptop. This guide will focus on some of the primary concerns.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Laptop computers are essential tools for college students, business professionals and many more. As the capabilities, size and price of laptops continues to improve, laptop computers continue to represent increasing value for the dollar. But there are some important things to be aware of when considering a laptop. This guide will focus on some of the primary concerns.

The first decision to consider when buying a laptop is whether you need a Windows, Apple or Linux machine. The majority will stick with a Windows machine. Those who have used Apple in the past, and are more familiar with Apple will have far more limited options, but are probably best off sticking with Apple. Linux users will need to analyze compatibility issues on Linux forums.

Assuming you know what operating system you are looking for, the next step is to set a budget, and determine whether you want a new or used machine. Used laptops represent a good value for machines in the \$600 - \$700 range and below.

If you don't think you need all the bells and whistles of a brand new system, buying a used system off of EBay or from a laptop refurbishing company can make a lot of sense. When scouring EBay, look for the "Power Sellers" who sell many used laptops, and make sure their customer satisfaction and return policies are solid. Do not be tempted to buy systems without enough horsepower just because

they're cheap. For the most case, anything below Pentium 3 is best avoided, as Pentium 3 machines can already be found cheap.

Once you have set your budget, determine the minimum memory configuration. I'd highly recommend setting 512 Mb as your minimum memory configuration. Stripping memory out of a computer is a common way to sell them at lower prices. But memory is often the weak link in personal computer systems, bringing the performance of the machine down significantly. Lots of memory is the great equalizer in computers, and many people fail to realize that a lower end laptop with lots of memory will often outperform a higher end one without the memory.

Once you have your memory needs and budget set, you can start to compare models for weight, ergonomics, and most importantly, screen size. Finding a size and weight that is acceptable to you is important, but finding the correct screen size should be your primary consideration.

Many people are excited by the larger screened laptops, but fail to fully appreciate the impact of resolutions. Most laptops come with a set with an ideal resolution, and switching to a higher or lower resolution can distort text. Some laptops with large screens are set at very high resolutions, making them difficult to read without eye strain. Some of the expensive laptops with 15 inch screens can therefore be more difficult to read and work on than laptops with smaller screens. 1024x768 should be an acceptable resolution for most laptop monitors. Avoiding larger screens with higher resolutions can save a lot of money, and deliver a machine that is just as easy to work on and read from.

Finally, there are networking considerations. By now, it does not make a lot of sense to purchase any laptop without WiFi wireless networking capabilities. Most new laptops will come with this standard, but with older and used laptops it is an item you need to verify. With the constant increase in wireless accessibility, a laptop without this capability is practically obsolete.