

PC Tech UpTime, Inc.

Computer Repairs & Services

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June 2017 Tips & Tricks



WHEN IS IT TIME TO REPLACE MY COMPUTER?

INTRODUCTION

This is the age old question about whether you should be tuning-up your PC, or buying a new one! I hope this newsletter helps give you enough insight so you can make an informed decision.

Most likely your choice will be based on your budget, and understandably so! Sometimes though you will have a performance need to meet. The bottom-line is the total cost; This means what the computer costs you in your valuable time, the initial purchase cost, software cost and setup, and the repair costs over the ownership period.

An important fact that consumers rarely ever realize is that many manufacturers select specific software that performs the fastest on their brand computer. They want you to believe that the bargain basement price they charge is giving you a computer that will satisfy your information demand for both the Internet and email.

The problem comes in after you buy it when you...the user installs various new software for printers and other things. At that point it slows down and the user may think it's bad software instead the opposite is true a low-end computer has a very limited speed endurance. Ultimately all software is not created equal, and if manufactures install only software that makes their computer seem to run quickly, and makes sure that nothing is installed to makes the computer appear slow that you will buy it thinking your got your moneys worth.

The wise choice is to buy a computer with specifications that actually make it to function very well. There are several levels of computer speed. Generally we are tempted by the statements: **Good, Better, Best**, when we buy something! We all hope that those words are true and are a good value that benefits us.

ABOUT BUYING NEW

“GOOD”

All computers are called GOOD! The real question you must ask yourself is ...GOOD for who? A regular PC computer purchased at a price between \$299 to \$499 normally have either a single core processor made by Intel, or AMD, or maybe a dual core i3 or AMD dual-core. Just know this: That the only one ultimately that this price range is making happy is the manufacturers. They push them under the guise that it has a lower power consumption, and they are economic to own. They did not lie! A two cylinder uses much less gas than a V6 or a V8 engine.

Don't be lost in the smoke screen about processor speed either. Here is an example for you: A Celeron processor running at 3.0 GHz., and an identical computer with a Pentium at 2.0 GHz., seems to show that the Celeron will be faster...right? The real news is that the Pentium running at 2.0 GHz. will runs circles around the Celeron 3.0 GHz. It's very similar for all levels of processors...the speed cannot be compared. The brand an model are more important than the speed quote! If vehicles were sold under the same marketing ploy, and all speedometers were reading 60MPH as they go down the road, the actual speed they would be doing is 20, 40, or 50 MPH. This is an issue that one day will be addressed in a court of law as fraudulent marketing! And they all know it!

“BETTER”

This level will likely give you the best stability and performance for your money. They will cost between \$599 to \$899. The best processor candidate here is the Intel i5 processor with a Quad-core CPU. It has less battery life than an i3 but that's because you get so much more done in much less time.

“BEST”

These computers are the performers that don't give a slow computer a break. The boot-up, the operation of software, and all other operation are fast. Even on the base models these computers save you time in everything you do. On the high-end machines they add important features like solid

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state hard drives-that really boost the computer speed even further, high RAM memory levels, and large video-card memory that can make the visual ultra smooth, and have very high resolution clarity. A solid state drive can easily add a minimum speed boost of at least 25%. Not everyone needs a "Best" range computer, so be sure you really have a need for all that speed!

CONSIDER THIS:

Your most valuable possession in life is your time! Time Loss is the worst kind of bankruptcy you can experience. You must consider the value of your time before choosing a computer. Business owners really need to be on top of efficiency for their business. Below is a general example of a cost analysis based on time, not of a specific computer. This shows how lost time can add up. Let's use just a simple speed loss from either performance, or a maintenance issue.

First off let's use some basic conservative values that you can adjust to fit your own usage levels to see what time you're throwing away.

3 hours of computer usage per day.
5 days a week. (You may use yours more days a week)
50 weeks (Let's say you take two (2)weeks of vacation, without any computers.)

1). If a computer loses 5 minutes an hour because of it's poor performance, or maintenance condition!

Five (5) min.s 5 X 3 hrs. = 15 min.s per day- LOSS
Five (5) days 5 X 15 min. = 75 min.s a week- LOSS
Fifty (50) wks. a year: 50 X 75 min.s a week = 3750 min.s a yr, or 62.5 hrs a yr. LOSS.

So, a simple slow down of only 5 minutes and hour will cause you to lose almost 62.5 hours at year! Now, if the life expectancy of a computer is approximately 3 years then you can lose 187.5 hours of your TIME over a three year period. But, if a computer is an entry level type computer, or one that is suffering because of lack of maintenance, and or viruses and possibly software conflicts the five minute time

loss is a very low estimate.

I have timed some computers that were losing nearly one month of time per year (That is 4.17 weeks X some given loss). Some of that time loss is likely related to hardware that is just worn out.

This time loss value is based on a 40 hour week, so this example is only about a week and a half loss per year. You can easily see that more hours of usage and more days used could easily push the time lose much higher. Then if the actual sluggish performance is worse, even by 2 to 3 more minutes an hour the effectiveness of the computer is greatly reduced. For a business this could be like giving all their staff an extra week or two of paid vacation!

OK so much for the time loss analysis!

NEXT...

Just like if you were using a Map to find your way to a destination...first you must know where you are at to learn how to get to where you want to go!

OK...what are the financial mechanics of fixing up your computer, and that of buying a new one. Here are a series of questions and comments that can help you decide.

- How old is your computer? (The age of the PC can tell you whether physical wear could make a repair a waste of your hard earned money. That's usually between 3 to 4 years old-Max!)
- What operating system is installed from the factory (ie. Windows XP, Vista, Win.7, 8.0 or newer. This can also dictate if that system is safe and secure, and still offers updates. Outdated systems may have bugs that may never be fixed. Opening the door to new \viruses etc.)
- How much RAM does your current computer have installed? (Less than 4.0 GB get rid of it)

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- What processor do you have installed? (Dual processors will run Windows 10, but they just get by. Under any heavy load they normally slows to a snails crawl.)
- What type of hard drive do you have inside your computer...(The speed in RPMs, the age, and manufacturer can reflect on a successful upgrade or a failure! Hard drive speeds of 7200 rpm are 133% faster than a 5400 rpm. The 5400 rpm are common in laptops in the low to middle speed bracket.)
- Is it a brand name manufacturer that has a reputation for the fewest breakdowns, such as HP or Dell! If you want to spend many hours each year learning to understand Tech Support from India. Then by all means buy the cheapest computer made in both manufacturer and price range. You will have lots of opportunity to listen to them, and waste hours of your time getting them to repeat things enough times so you can understand what the heck they're saying. Just about all tech support today is contracted to India. I lean towards buying a brand that will breakdown far fewer times. It just makes logical sense.
- If it is a laptop, and it has been used directly on the users lap....yeah I know that sounds dumb right? But 80% of manufacturers save money by allowing designers to do a very **sloppy job** engineering where the cooling intake vents are located. Check out the bottom of your laptop. By them placing the vents exactly where your legs will be under the laptop it is almost "Planned Obsolesce". All that means is that they know under normal use of a poorly designed laptop will cause premature overheat issues so you'll have to buy another computer in a relatively shorter life time expectancy! Does that make you as mad as it does me?

- Desktops and laptops have different design failures, and whether those failures are built-in on purpose, or just cheap lazy engineering. This is something you should be aware when deciding to rebuild or buying a new computer. Look at the air intake vents. Are they packed with dust? Both processors and power supplies are vulnerable to overheat problems. Now both include overload breakers that reset for an overheat condition. Every overheat event for a processor or power supply lowers their effectiveness for both speed and endurance against future overheat issues.

OPERATING SYSTEMS:

Since software is contingent on compatibility with the system that it runs on, and whether or not that system has all the latest security and bug fixes installed.

A professor once said in a programming class that it is practically impossible to make software fool proof. Basically because users sometime do things that software writer had no idea they would do. The prevention code that makes a computer look smart may take as few as 3 and up to hundreds of lines of code to catch incompatible input.

As a Microsoft Partner for many years, and being involved in System Beta testing what has become abundantly clear is that the Windows version system designers constantly scramble where things are located. I guess if you can't create a better system confuse the user and make them think the Windows engineers actually have created something special.

Even the technicians get so ticked off trying to find controls from one version to another. Software makers get frustrating as well. Software installers have specific locations to place needed files to run their software. Every new system tends to change the name and location of these folders and files. A piece of software that ran well on Windows XP usually fails because of this very reason, and generally this is the cause of most software installer Failure.

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This was particularly common in Windows Vista when it hit the market in 2007. This again became a problem in Windows 7, 8, 8.1, and finally in Windows 10 things are somewhat bearable. It seems insignificant to many, but this particular problem didn't need to be! So therefore this must have either been from poor programming, or it was planned on purpose.

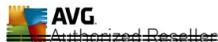
The easy answer is to buy new software for just about every new system. But, people are resistant to change. I don't blame them a bit. But installing old software on a newer computer system is like pointing a gun at your foot and pulling the trigger repeatedly, hey you might miss and not damage your foot. That is about what it's like installing old software on a new computer. There is a chance it might just run well for one day. Then ole Microsoft updates your system and BAMMMM that software no longer works, or worse it prevents that system from booting up at all.

Conflicts are usually harder to resolve than a virus. The more time it takes to fix the problem puts you deeper and deeper in a hole financially. Basically if your computer cost \$500 three years ago and it has all the install disks and runs average it could be worth only \$50 to \$75. I'm not saying you won't find someone who will pay more. I saying that putting anymore than that into it to fix or upgrade it is an economic waste.

I have ever taken high-end computers and rebuilt them. They usually run very well, but at a parts and labor cost of several hundred dollars even this pushes the envelope! You must make the final call.

A last note is what to do when an older computer has valuable data on it, and you decide updating is not in your best interest. That is not a problem that information can be salvaged so long as the hard drive on that computer still spins.

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