

Tech Bytes – Computer Hardware Guide

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The time has come and you are ready to purchase a new computer. With technology changing rapidly, shopping for a new computer can be quite overwhelming. First, you need to have an idea of what type of computer you want. Do you want a desktop or a laptop? What operating system, Windows or Mac? What programs or apps will you be running?

First, let's look at the hardware. Each computer has these basic components, processor, hard drive, memory, and graphics card. The processor is the brain of the computer. You may have heard it referred to as the Central Processing Unit (CPU). The processor connects to the motherboard and works with other components to process instructions between different hardware and memory components. You will find several options regarding which processor to get. For instance, a single core processor, which is just that, one processor. A dual core processor, two processors-in-one. A quad core processor, four processors-in-one. And an octa core processor, eight processors-in-one. The larger the core, the more programs you can process at one time.

When looking at hard drives, you'll see HDD (Hard Disk Drive) or SSD (Solid-State Drive). A quick breakdown is that typical HDD drives use plates and a read-write head to access the data from those plates. These types of hard drives are more common and are more affordable. An SSD drive is newer and uses memory chips similar to usb drives to store data. SSD drives are a bit more expensive and the storage size is typically smaller. If you are planning to purchase a laptop, it is highly recommended that you get a solid state drive in the event of the laptop dropping or getting banged around. Plus, solid state drives just perform better.



Random Access Memory (RAM) ranges in size, today's computers usually start at 4GB. This is the memory that programs use. The more you have the faster your system will perform. It is worth the extra money to invest in a larger amount of RAM. Especially, if you do a lot of work with graphics and videos.

Depending on how you plan to use the computer, will depend on the graphics card. If you're looking for a home computer to surf the internet and pay bills, then a high end graphics card is not necessary. However, if you plan to play a lot of games, or do video or photography work, a quality graphics card is worth the investment.

Now that you have a little more knowledge of the hardware, shopping for a computer should be a more pleasant experience for you. Only you know your budget and your computing needs. Do your homework and shop around for the best deal.

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