

# How to buy a computer 15309

[Technology](#), [Computer](#)



Even though computers are a great technological bargain, you can still get burned, and it's best to have a plan before acquiring one. Many computer shoppers make these mistakes they, buy a computer, then they buy some programs, then they learn how to use the programs, then they learn about the computer itself. This is exactly backwards. I would like to take you through these four steps, in the correct order; learn a bit about computers, learn a bit about programs, select the type of programs you want, and how to choose a computer.

A computer is different from other machines because it needs a program to tell it what to do. Some companies make computers, while others write programs. This means if a certain kind of computer becomes popular, more programs will be written for it, and this will make the machine even more popular. Eventually one computer has become the standard. In the real world this computer is the IBM clone. In becoming the industry standard most programs are written for IBM's and you have a greater selection and diversity to select from.

Another popular computer model is Macintosh. So far, no company other than Apple makes this computer, generally because Apple prevents other companies from doing so. As you would expect, because only one company builds the Macintosh, it is more expensive than the IBM clone. On the other hand, many Macintosh owners find it easier to learn and use. I will focus my attention on IBM clone computers since they are the standard.

A computer has to do many tasks. It has to accept your inputs, either from a keyboard or a mouse, it has to do some processing, both logic and

arithmetic, under the direction of a program, it has to display its results, it has to keep some information temporarily in its memory, and it has to store information permanently on disk drives. When you shop for a computer, you will want to notice the size of the hard disk in gigabytes (10 or more recommended), the size and quality of the display screen (17 inch recommended), the kind of processor (Pentium III recommended), the amount of memory (128 megabytes recommended), the clock speed (100 MHz recommended), and the modem for getting on the Internet (56K recommended). The computer's clock keeps everything synchronized, and generally the faster the clock, the faster the computer can process information. I am giving you these details so you will generally know what to look and ask for when you finally go to purchase a computer.

In spite of what you may have heard, the computer's program is the real intelligence in the computer. Without a program the computer would be worthless. With a program, the same computer comes to life. Computers are used for a variety of things such as word processing, spreadsheets, email, internet surfing, and playing games, to mention a few. The word processing category now includes desktop publishing, which is using a computer to create flyers, banners, cards, even book manuscripts, with photographs and graphics. Spreadsheets, originally just an electronic ledger have the ability to make graph the results of their tables. The number of email letters sent in a year has surpassed the U. S. Postal Service for three years in a row. Internet surfing has the ability to bring information to the home or office inexpensively and efficiently. Computer gaming has enjoyed the fastest

growing segment of this industry for ten years, and it looks that this trend will continue for some time.

Before you actually buy programs or a computer, you should sit down at one, preferably with someone who knows computers and isn't trying to sell you anything. Perhaps you have a friend, who owns a computer, or you may go to the local college and take an introductory course about computers. The basics you need to know are how to run a program, how to use a keyboard, and how to save your work. Certainly the worst place to learn about computers is a computer retail showroom. My best advice is to become familiar with computers and programs before you visit a computer store, not while you are there. Another great source of information is to read some computer magazines. Eventually you will know which programs you want to buy, and which computer is able to run those programs.

Which brings us to the final decision, should you buy a mail order off brand computer, or a name brand computer from a retail store? If you place an order by mail, you will get a lower price, but you will have to set the system up yourself. If you shop at a retail store, you will pay a higher price, but you receive personal service and help installing it. If you choose this option, remember one thing the only reason for retail stores and prices is so you can see and touch the product you are buying. If it's in a box, don't pay retail. If you decide to shop at a retail computer store, you should be able to sit down at a computer like the one you are buying, and run the programs you are buying. Make sure to get a warranty on you new computer; it should cover parts and labor. And finally, however you acquire your computer, be

prepared for an adventure. You will soon wonder how you managed to get along without it.

Bibliography

None

Word Count: 908