

This week's article is Buying a PC.

## **First Steps**

Before beginning your search for your new computer decide if you want a desktop PC or a notebook/laptop PC. Desktops are more powerful but notebooks are portable. You will need to decide how much you want to spend and what you will be using the PC for. If you are only going to browse the Web and send email, you won't need a powerful system.

Read up on computer buying advice in magazines or just talk to your friends, relatives and co-workers about what make of PC they use, where they bought it and their experiences.

## **Where To Buy From**

Large Computer stores may seem the most obvious place for first-time PC buyers but although they do offer some advantages (such as being able to see and touch example PCs and get an idea of the size of the screen) they are not always good value and you may find yourself spending more than you need to.

Often the sales person will also try to sell you warranty packages. These may provide some peace of mind, including things like health checks and repairs, but if you look after your PC and keep your security software up-to-date, you will most likely never use the service and will have paid a lot of extra money for nothing.

You could try small local computer shops who can often put together a PC package to suit your exact needs, though you may find the price a lot higher than the standard packages offered by high-street stores. For first-time buyers a standard package often seems far simpler than trying to figure out the specific types of components you need.

Buying online is often the best option; though obviously you need to find some way of getting on the Internet (on a friend's PC or at your local library) and then begin the process of searching for online stores and comparing packages and prices. As with any large purchase you make, you will want to be cautious and have all the facts in front of you before you make a decision.

## **What to look for**

Often when reading about PC packages you will be confronted with a huge list of specifications which will mean nothing to you if you don't have much knowledge of computer hardware. Some companies may try to confuse you with technical details, hoping that by mentioning large enough numbers you will think the PC is better than it really is.

Computer specifications change all the time, and your needs will determine what size or speed components are appropriate for you.

Check next week's article with some tips on what to look for.

Hometown Computer Services hope you have enjoyed this weeks computer article. Please call/email anytime if you have questions. Our store has closed. We will handle any computer and web related services from my home.