

How Do I Choose The Right Computer For Me?

As computers have become a 'Scouting tool', like knives or tents, this brief summary, courtesy of Future Shop, might be valuable to some of our Scouting members.

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First, evaluate your needs.

Choosing the perfect computer can be a challenging task, with so much selection on the market today.

The task can be simplified, however, by first carefully evaluating your needs. Are you a mobile business person? A gamer? Do you want something with which to manage the family's finances?

The first decision to make is whether to purchase a [Notebook](#) or [Desktop](#) computer. Notebooks are usually more expensive and not as easy to upgrade, but can be an excellent choice for the mobile user.

Next, make a list of the [software](#) programs you want to run. Each software package comes with minimum and suggested hardware and memory requirements. It is wise to match or exceed these suggested requirements when choosing your computer.

Software needs determine hardware choices.

There are four basic types of software applications.

Operating system: All computers from Future Shop come pre-loaded with Windows.

Gaming software: If gaming is your top priority, look for a model that has a very fast processor and a graphics card.

Business software: You will require a lot of RAM, to make multi-tasking possible without running out of memory.

Internet applications: You will need a large hard drive, lots of RAM, a fast modem and a built-in network interface card.

When making your hardware choice, make sure you reserve the potential to upgrade by allowing for a large hard drive, room for more memory, extra

expansion slots and USB ports.

A computer's main components: speed, memory, and power.

Speed: the computer's CPU or Central Processing Unit is measured in MHz or GHz. This determines how fast the computer processes information. For example, a Pentium 3 1.0 GHz is slower than a Pentium 4 with a 2.0 GHz. Although there are other ways to increase the speed of your computer, changing the processor usually means changing the motherboard, so this is a big consideration to make.

Memory: There are two main kinds of memory. The hard drive is a computer's permanent storage, measured in GB. This is where all of your programs and files are stored. Random Access Memory, or RAM, is a computer's temporary memory. The larger the RAM on your computer, the more programs you can run at one time.

Power: The larger and more powerful the motherboard, with lots of slots for expansion, the faster your computer will operate.

With these main components in mind, use your list of software needs to determine which computer is best for you.

And whenever you're not quite sure - go for bigger and faster. For instance, if you're not sure whether you need a 30GB hard drive or a 40GB hard drive, choose the larger one.

Murphy's Law states that as soon as you purchase your computer, some exciting new software will come on the market, and it will need more speed, more RAM and more storage space!

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