



CAPACITY

a periodic newsletter of the Gamaliel Department of Communication.

Things to think about before buying a Notebook Computer.

The best value on notebooks is found about two-thirds of the way up the price scale. The difference between the fastest processors and the high middle processor probably is not detectable.

There are three main CPU processor chips being sold today. If you can afford it Intel Pentium processors work very well. But any of the big three will serve an organizer well. What is important that the computer be able to run the newer software for three or more years.

The price is driven downward by weight. If less weight is important, you will pay more.

How you intend to use your notebook is still the most important question. For word processing, personal finance, and surfing the Web, almost any new system will work well.

It seems works best when the computer is designed for the operating system. It is usually better not to change the operating system in midstream.

The office of communication recommends Microsoft XP professional. This operating system seems to have fewer crashes, networks well, and has good graphics capabilities. That will be important if we can find a good way to do teleconferencing at a reasonable cost.

Our current software recommendation is Microsoft Office XP professional or higher. People who work in our Chicago office use this software.

Affiliates should purchase software from Techsoup for their paid staff and their volunteer staff. It costs just over \$50.00 to equip a new computer.

Do you math home work. You will save money if you buy a system with only the operating system installed. Use your connection with Tech Soup to save hundreds of dollars on software.

Our current memory recommendation is for 512 mb of RAM. Random access memory is relatively inexpensive right now. This allows you to easily work with several programs at the same time as well as making your internet and network connections more efficient. The more graphics intensive your work the more RAM is necessary.

The size of the hard drive is driven by how graphics intensive your work is. If you run Adobe programs such as InDesign, PageMaker, Illustrator and Photoshop or you intend to edit movies you need as much hard drive space as you can afford. Otherwise 30 GB to 40 GB is probably enough.

If you are going to burn CD's for use on a device other than another computer you will need to check the format of the other device.

ca-pac-i-ty \kə-'pās-ət-ē, -'pas-tē\ *n, pl -ties* [ME *capacite*, fr. MF *capacité*, fr. L *capacitat-, capacitas*, fr. *capac-, capax*] (15c) **1**: legal competency or fitness **2 a**: the potential or suitability for holding, storing, or accommodating **b**: the maximum amount or number that can be contained or accommodated (a jug with a one-gallon ~) (the auditorium was filled to ~) — see METRIC SYSTEM table, WEIGHT table **3 a**: an individual's mental or physical ability: APTITUDE, SKILL **b**: the faculty or potential for treating, experiencing, or appreciating (~ for love) **4**: DUTY, POSITION, ROLE (will be happy to serve in any ~) **5**: the facility or power to produce, perform, or deploy: CAPABILITY (a plan to double the factory's ~) (stockpile of intercontinental missiles... of a sophistication that would insure a second strike ~ — Pierre Salinger); also: maximum output (industries running at three-quarter ~) **6 a**: CAPACITANCE **b**: the quantity of electricity that a battery can deliver under specified conditions **capacity** *adj* (1897): equaling maximum capacity (a ~ crowd)

Screen size is personal preference. The wide screen may be useful if the road warrior wants to watch a good DVD's movie at the end of the day.

A good padded case extends the life of the computer.

Extended warranties can be good. Warranties tend to be very profitable for the seller. If a computer is going to fail it will probably fail within the warranty period. Warranties are not normally recommended for desktop computers, but laptops get banged around and so it may be good to have extra protection.

Travelers may want to consider a second battery and a second transformer.

A second battery may save you if you run out of juice on a long flight. There aren't very many 110 outlets on airlines. Of course you will have to remember to charge the batteries before getting on the plane!

The second transformer will be useful to people who do not travel overnight. A second transformer means that you can leave one transformer at home and the other at the office. If you travel overnight then you need to carry your transformer so you can recharge your battery.

If you work on more than one computer a memory stick is a good idea (get the largest capacity you can afford.)

Some people prefer a mouse rather than the built-in pointing device (\$10 to \$50).

Others find a car/plane adapter useful (\$100.00). Make sure the option is available on your flights. If you travel with others by car, you may find an inverter that converts car power into AC power very useful (approximately \$75).

Universal transformers that power multiple brands of laptops as well as cell phones are also coming on the market (approximately \$125).

If you take digital pictures and there is not a compatible card reader built into to your computer, it is a good idea to buy a USB compatible card reader compatible with your camera (\$20.00).

Sometimes you can find a "Buyers' remorse" notebooks-systems purchased by someone else and then returned after just a week or two—that may be the best deal. They should be perfect mechanically, include all the necessary documentation, and come with a full warranty. Often these systems are discounted as much as 20 percent. Check web sites of major computer manufacturers for returned or refurbished.

If you also need a printer, check to see whether one comes as an option. HP and Cannon make very good traveling printers.

If the notebook comes with a rebate offer, send in the coupon once you're sure you are keeping the machine. Bug them if your rebate does not come!

Beware of low price offers conditioned on signing up for several years of online service. Odds are you will pay for service you could purchase less expensively.

It always pays to shop around when you know what you want.

If you shop online, telephone to see whether a sales representative has a different, cheaper pricing sheet.

If you shop by phone, go online. If you shop in person, ask whether any specials might be available, such as a longer warranty at the same price (two years instead of one).

Sometimes the representative can throw in a high-margin accessory, such as a bag or security cable, as a clincher.

This is a good time to purchase a laptop. You can purchase a good laptop these days for less than \$1,000.00. You can purchase a very good laptop for around \$1,500.00.