

# COMPUTER FRIENDS Pty Ltd

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## 5 Things You Should Check Before You Buy A New Computer

I'm writing this note because of the increasing number of instances where we find that a customer has spent good money on a new PC or notebook which needs to be rebuilt or upgraded before it is even used the first time. Yes that's right – **we sometimes need to rebuild and upgrade brand new PC's**. It costs the owners hundreds of Dollars and it's entirely unnecessary.

There are some amazing deals on PC's these days, but these "headline" deals can turn out to be very expensive indeed. Very often users need to spend hundreds of Dollars upgrading their new computer because they have been incorrectly specified in the first place.

**It's much cheaper to get the specification right on day one, rather than having an upgrade performed in the workshop at a later date.**

To make sure that you avoid this trap when buying a new PC make sure that you check these 5 things:

- 1. Get the right processor for the job.**

The processor is one of the most important factors that impacts on the speed of your PC. Low cost PC's usually have Celeron, or non Intel processors to save money. The Celeron processor is a normal Intel processor that has been deliberately "crippled" for the entry level market. The Celeron is fine for internet browsing or light home use, but it starts to struggle when you have multiple applications running. To get good performance from your new PC you should specify an Intel Core 2 Duo, or Core 2 Quad processor. Processors are expensive to upgrade, so this is the most important decision that you will make on the specification of your new PC. On some PC's the entire motherboard will need to be replaced just to upgrade the processor. The average cost of upgrading a processor is between \$350 and \$700 including parts and labour.

- 2. Get enough memory**

The second most important factor determining the speed of your PC is the amount of memory. Although memory can be relatively inexpensively upgraded it's still cheaper to get the initial specification right, than it is to upgrade later. These days you should specify a minimum of 1GB of memory or 2GB if you want to use all of the new Windows Vista features. The average cost of upgrading to 1GB of RAM would be approximately \$90 to \$190 including parts and labour.

- 3. Buy an extended hardware warranty**

Most "off the shelf" PCs and notebooks on offer on the Internet or in a shop only carry 12 month warranty. Many hardware manufacturers provide manufacturer's warranty

extension to three years at a quite low price. We always suggest that you take the extended warranty, but for a great deal you must purchase it with the PC. A three year extended warranty for next business day onsite maintenance, can be as little as \$120 (desktop) - \$300 (notebook). Make sure that the contract includes next day onsite service. It's much more expensive to purchase the maintenance contract annually, or to have a PC repaired on an ad hoc basis. **(By the way, our PC's come standard with a 3 year manufacturer's warranty)**

4. **Get the right version of Windows**

There are various different versions of Windows – no longer just XP Home and Professional, but there are 5 (yes, five!) versions of Vista. Not all are suitable for business use. For example Microsoft Windows Home versions cannot be added to a network domain. This is a deliberate limitation that has been built-in to the software by Microsoft to distinguish between home and business use. You should specify Microsoft XP Professional or Microsoft Vista Business – these are the 2 that can be attached to a network. If you don't specify it with your PC upgrading to these versions will cost you approximately \$400 for the software and labour.

5. **Ensure that you have a full suite of security software**

Quite often PC's come with some kind of security software. The security software should include both anti-virus and anti-spyware – sometimes anti-spyware is not provided. If you intend to attach the PC to an existing network and you already have a security software standard across the network, such as the Trend Micro Client Server Messaging Suite we recommend with a Small Business network, ensure that your PC comes without any security software on it otherwise it will conflict with the existing security software. Some of the common security packages such as Norton are very difficult to remove. It will require an engineer to do the job. You should budget between \$50 and \$100 to remove any unnecessary security software. Best not to install it in the first place.

If you are in any doubt, please call us and we'll be glad to advise you. If you want to purchase hardware: **We are competitive, provided that you compare "Apples with Apples"**. We do not compete against the cheap systems. Besides ensuring that you get the correct equipment right up front, reliability is our major concern – it is always painful if your computer does not work. Even more so if it fails intermittently.

Best regards.

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