

Advice on Taming Unruly Computers – July 2007

Seven Rules to Follow When Buying a New Computer – [Revised because technology constantly is changing]

An email from one of our radio listeners asks “I’m thinking of buying a new computer, can you give me some guidance? The ads are confusing and very it is very had to compare.” - (Bill from Lebanon) Bill is just one of the people who have asked us this question; this is one of our most asked questions that we get. “How to Buy a Computer” has been a topic more than once on our radio show.

First of all we recommend an Intel Core 2 Duo for desktops. If you are buying a notebook, we recommend the Centrino Pro that integrates the processor with wireless networking and more memory on the chip to speed up processing. The Centrino Pro also has a special feature built into it allowing it to use less power than traditional chips. Less power use equals less heat produced thereby increasing battery time; both of these benefits are important with laptops.

Celerons are used on budget computers. Intel manufactures both the Core 2 Duo and Celeron Dual Core processors. The Intel Core 2 Duo will work faster than the Intel Celeron Dual Core because the Core 2 Duo has more memory on its chip (this type of memory is called “cache,” and increases the cost). The Intel Celeron Dual Core will be less money. In our opinion, the money you save with a budget computer may not be the best investment. The service life a budget computer is about 2 years at most.

Second, we recommend Windows VISTA Home Premium for most all home users and VISTA Business for business users. VISTA Business is designed for organizations that have a Microsoft network with a domain. Home networks will work fine with VISTA Home Premium. Budget computers will perform best with Windows VISTA Basic. VISTA Ultimate provides all of the features and functions of the operating system; power users may opt to purchase it.

Third, your new computer should have at least 1GIG of RAM to run Windows VISTA. Anything less will slow down your system when it works on multiple tasks. We tamers suggest getting 2GIG of RAM to get the most out of Microsoft VISTA.

Fourth, we recommend for desktops a minimum of a 100GIG hard drive and suggest getting a 250GIG hard drive especially if you are going to do digital photography, music, and video. For laptops 80-100 GIGS is fine. It makes good sense to keep your personal data on your hard drive as long as you back it up on a regular basis. Hard drive storage has come down in price and we tamers think when it comes to hard drives, bigger is better so that you’ll have enough space for storing your pictures, movies, songs, and data.

Fifth, we suggest a CDRW drive so that you can copy data and music to CD’s. This is a drive that permits you to write audio and data CD’s. A CDRW is a cost-effective backup device as well. Consider a DVDRW so that you can write DVD’s and CD’s with the same

drive especially if you plan to do video, audio or have large amounts of information to write and save.

Sixth, this rule is often overlooked by computer users, yet it is an important one. When you buy your new desktop computer include a UPS backup unit to protect your computer from electrical surges and brownouts. UPS means Uninterrupted Power Supply. A small UPS is about \$60 and it is well worth the money. An inexpensive UPS is better than the best surge protector and also permits your computer to automatically shut down when there is a power loss protecting your operating system and data from loss. Laptops are automatically protected with their external power supply. You can get an in-line surge protector for your laptop power supply that can save it when the electricity isn't stable.

Seven, buy your next computer from a store that includes setup and service so that you will enjoy computing immediately. Often people try to do the setup and installation themselves and they spend hours and often end-up with an unprotected computer that can be easily compromised while on the Internet. An unprotected computer is “red meat” on the Internet for viruses, Trojans, and spyware infections.

Here is a summary of our seven rules to follow when you buy a new computer:

1. Intel Core 2 Duo for a desktop or Intel Centrino Pro for a notebook/laptop, budget computer with a dual-core Celeron
2. Windows VISTA Home Premium for home use; Windows VISTA Business for businesses and Windows VISTA Basic for budget computers
3. 1 GIG of RAM at a minimum – better 2 GIGS
4. 100 to 250GIG hard drive for desktops, and 80 to 100 for laptops
5. Definitely include a CDRW and consider a DVDRW to write DVD's
6. Buy a UPS backup unit – this is important!
7. Get setup and service with your new computer from a dependable computer store like the Computer Tamers

If you follow these seven rules, you will be happier with your new computer and it will serve you for many years to come.

Allen is one of JASAsolutions' Computer Tamers heard every Wednesday after the 5 o'clock news on WILI AM 14 and you can learn more about getting your unruly computer under control by visiting www.TheComputerTamers.com and explore the free information compiled there for you. Be sure to visit the Computer Tamers sales and service center at 75 Bridge Street in Willimantic to learn more about buying a new computer.

Unruly and slow computers beware, the Computer Tamers are here!