



Version 5.0

New Computer Checklist

This checklist is to help you make sure you don't forget a certain feature you might need in your new computer and avoid costly surprises. If you're not sure what this all means, just ask. If you need a lengthy conversation on this, consultation charges may apply.

HARDWARE

- 1 Notebook or Desktop?** Notebooks(Laptops) are more prone to being dropped, lost, stolen and overheat. Desktops have more expandability and are solid work horse computers. Points through to #6 are focused on notebooks but can apply to desktops too.
- 2 Screen size:** Bigger is better. More space to work with. If you are looking at a notebook, a larger screen is easier to read, but it's also heavier to carry around.
- 3 Finger print reader? Web cam?** If you need it, make sure it comes with it. Finger print readers are good for security instead of remembering a complicated password. Web cams are good for video conference calls for business or just a personal Skype call to a friend.
- 4 Keyboard:** Standard keyboards here are U.S. English but you may find French/Bilingual which looks different. There is no Canadian. Number Pads on notebooks shift keyboard to left and so your keyboard will not be centered which annoys some people, but if you want the number pad, that's the way it is.
- 5 Mouse:** With notebooks, a touchpad can get in the way when typing and cause the mouse to jump. Maybe you prefer a laptop with a TrackPoint (Little dot in middle of keyboard)? Regardless, you can always connect a USB or Wireless mouse.
- 6 DVD / BluRay:** CDs and DVD are not standard on laptops 14" or less. BluRay cost more and not standard on any notebook or desktop(tower). Unless you have the need to play BluRay movies or burn stuff to disk larger than 8.5GB, you don't need BluRay.
- 7 Custom Built Desktop versus Store bought brand name.** Store bought is typically cheaper but custom built gives you more options. We don't put crapware on the computers we build like brand names or other techs custom builds. Custom built normally means faster warranty repairs when needed and doesn't require shipping anywhere. With a custom build you can choose from what type of drive, how big, how many and how much memory, type of video card and more. Store bought, you buy it as is and pay extra later if necessary.
- 8 Processor:** Gamers and programs requiring complex calculations, go for the Intel i7, otherwise, Intel i5 is all you need. You wouldn't notice the speed difference with Intel i7 doing basic tasks unless it's for gaming or high end processing functions. Please note that with each CPU you could get DualCore or QuadCore. QuadCore is much better for multi-processing, but alot more expensive too. Usually they are DualCore.
- 9 Memory:** 8GB is the standard minimum to function efficiently. Your computer will always take full advantage of any extra memory you have. The more RAM you have, the less time the CPU has to go back and forth between RAM and hard drive. 16GB is great for the average person but you might need more if you have tons of stuff open all at once continuously.

- 10 **Hard drive:** 1TB is generally the smallest size HDD (Hard Disk Drive) you can buy, but there are smaller SSDs (Solid State Drives). How much space do you need? Also, how important is the space versus the speed of your computer? For an extra small fortune you can get an SSD which has claims of being 10x faster than a standard drive depending on the operation at that time. Currently a 240GB SSD goes for about the same price of a 1TB(1,000GB) regular drive. A 500GB SSD is about double that price.
- 11 **Internal card reader:** For reading memory cards from Cameras and Blackberrys, iPods, etc.
- 12 **Video card:** Built in is acceptable unless you're a gamer/graphics designer. Is VGA quality good enough? A DVI port is better or HDMI which is the best.
- 13 **Wireless:** Do you need wireless or cabled network / Internet? Laptops all come with wireless now and some desktops do, but if it's a desktop, be sure to request a wireless card.
- 14 **USB Ports:** How many do you need? Count the devices you use now that are USB and add a bit more for growth. You can always add a USB hub later if you need more. USB 2.0 is standard and fine for keyboards, mice, and other USB 2.0 devices. USB 3.0 is faster for USB 3.0 devices such as external hard drives, flash drives, data transfer cables. USB 3.1 is latest.
- 15 **Firewire Ports:** This is ancient and extinct, most likely you don't need it unless you have a FireWire device still. If so maybe time to replace that device.
- 16 **Floppy drives:** Extinct. Not used anymore, switch to USB flash drives. If you really need floppy, you can get an external USB floppy.
- 17 **Parallel ports:** If you are still using a printer that requires this port you should replace your printer to something more modern that uses either wireless or USB. It will be much faster than this ancient technology.
- 18 **Com ports:** Also ancient and very rarely used for special circumstances. If you need this for connect to consoles you would know, otherwise upgrade your device to new technology.
- 19 **New or used?** 2 months warranty with used but save a lot of money upfront, vs. 1 year warranty with brand new? Used also has older generation CPU and memory but still the same type and fast. Used can last just as long if not longer than brand new and they come with the latest Windows 10.
- 20 **Weight of laptop:** If you travel a lot you might want a thin light weight laptop. Please note usually those thin ones don't have DVD drives or Ethernet ports for network cables.

SOFTWARE

- 1 List all the **software programs** you use and the version number you have. Are they compatible with the new operating system you will be getting on your new computer? You may need to upgrade some of your software. Also is your printer compatible? Install and run Belarc Advisor which is free and gives you a full inventory.
- 2 Windows 10. **64bit or 32 bit?** 64 bit is faster and standard now, but not compatible with some ancient programs. Going through your list you created from point #1 in the software section, see if compatible with 64 bit Windows. Note that 32bit is limited to 3GB RAM total.
- 3 Windows 7 expired January 14, 2020. Windows 8 extended support expires January 10, 2023. Windows 10 claims to never expire and will continuously upgrade as a service.