

"How To Buy The Perfect Computer"

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings,

My name is Dan Preston and I want to thank you very much for taking the time to sit down and read my book.

I have been "playing" with computers for several years now and have grown to enjoy tinkering with them whether they are working at the moment or not.

I currently own 3 computers of my own, but would love to have more if I had the room for them. I truly enjoy solving computer problems when they occur, but do resort to hair pulling when I run into those stubborn ones from time to time. **J**

Whether you're looking to be a first time buyer or maybe you're just someone that is looking to upgrade to

a modern and more dependable computer system this manual has been designed for the novice person in mind and to aid in making you aware of the various routes that can be taken when you decide to make that computer purchase.

This is not a manual that will go in depth as to the various components that go into making a computer because it would be outdated within a month of the release due to the constant changes in technology.

However, I will point out a few well written books at the end of this manual that I recommend which can help you learn more about what makes a computer "tick".

Also, please keep in mind that this manual is a tool for learning so just take your time and study the information that is provided for you and hopefully your new gained wisdom

will prove to be a valuable tool for your next personal computer purchase.

I'll try not to go deeper into any subject anymore than is necessary because I don't want to confuse anyone (like myself J), but I do find much joy in teaching others.....so watch out!

Enjoy!



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Your Options

When you have decided that it is time for you to make your very first purchase or upgrade the existing computer in your home to something with a bit more computing power you are left with **three** basic options.

The options available are:

- 1) Purchase a "Brand Name" Computer
- 2) Purchase a "Clone" Computer
- 3) "Build Your Own" Computer

Now that you know what the three options are I will take you through each one individually to explain the *advantages* and *disadvantages* of them

which should get you thinking as to the route that is best for you to follow.

Note: Keep in mind that the following examples include, but are NOT limited to the Advantages/Disadvantages that I outline for you.

Brand-Name PC

A "brand-name" computer is one that is manufactured by a company that is recognizable by name.

Some Advantages/Disadvantages of brand-name computers include:

Advantages:

1) Customer Support- If you are experiencing problems with your computer you will have the option to contact a representative of the company that you purchased the PC from to get help in solving your problem.

This alone is probably the best reason to buy a brand-name computer.

2) Warranty- Having a warranty is always nice since it acts as a type of security blanket for you.

In the case that a part on your computer should fail you should be able to get the item fixed at no charge just as long as the warranty has not expired.

Read and understand a company's warranty policy **BEFORE** you purchase a computer from them.

This way you'll have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in case a problem should arise.

3) Pre-installed Software- Many companies will include software packages that are all set up and ready to go for you on your computer.

Although, a disadvantage of buying a brand-name computer with software

pre-installed is that you usually end up with more than fits your needs and usually just results with the wasting of space on your storage device.

4) Additional Support- Most brand-name computer companies are also able to provide you with web sites that may provide you with current software updates, user manuals, or basic troubleshooting help.

Disadvantages-

1) The use of Proprietary parts- the term Proprietary refers to products that are unique to an individual company and that company only.

So if a part was to malfunction on your computer after warranty and you needed to replace it you could not just go to your local computer store

and purchase any old part even if it was intended for the same function as the item that failed.

You would be forced to buy the exact same item that came out of the computer or else the computer would more than likely cease to function correctly.

Having to buy proprietary parts usually involves the need to place an order which means you'll have to wait for the part to arrive or you'll have to send your computer into the company or an authorized dealer of that company for repairs.

People with a home based business would probably not be too happy with that situation at all.

2) Integrated/On-board parts- In the computer world when you hear the word integrated or on-board it means that a particular part such as the modem or sound port where you plug in your

speakers, is built-in or part of the computer main board (Also known as the Motherboard).

This means that if any of these items should fail, you can't just remove them from the computer and replace them with a new part. They are usually soldered directly to the main board and are stuck there.

Although, some computers do provide a way to disable a malfunctioning device which will allow you to install your own store bought device to take the place of the broken part.

From a computer technicians point of view this is not always easy to do. It just depends on what brand of computer you currently have. Meaning some are easier to work on than others.

Clone Pc

This type of computer is exactly as its title states. It's a clone or a copy of its brand-name counterpart with the exception that instead of company specific or proprietary parts, the items used to make a clone computer are from *several* different companies instead of only one.

Let's say that if you were to go to a local company that builds "clone" computers, and you tell them what you need, chances are they don't use parts that are specific to only that type of computer like the brand-name computer companies do.

This is a good thing because it means that they will probably use components that are interchangeable with many different brands and are easy to come by if needed.

Some Advantages/Disadvantages of
Clone computers include:

Advantages:

- 1) Cost- compared to brand-name computers the clone will generally be easier on your pocket book when purchasing one with similar features as its brand-name counterpart.

This is most likely due to the money that is saved by not offering the high-end customer service.

Although, that may not be the only reason for the lower prices.

- 2) Easily Accessible Replacement Parts- Since the computer was

built with parts that are not any one company specific you can buy parts for the clone computer that can be used even if the brand is different from the one that was in the computer when you originally bought it.

Note: Before you buy any parts, it is necessary to make sure that the replacement parts are compatible with your particular computers system requirements.

Either consult the manual that should have come with your computer or get help from a knowledgeable friend or salesperson.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Warranties- Unless you purchase a service plan you will typically not have as an attractive warranty

as you would with a brand-name computer company.

Whatever you do just make sure you understand how long the warranty is for and as to what kind of repairs the warranty covers before you make the purchase.

- 2) Customer Support- With brand-name computer companies you are usually provided with a 24-hour toll free number that you can call if you have questions or concerns with your computer.

Clone computers are more than likely not going to have a 24-hour help service, but rather you will be forced to only be able to call during regular business hours.

Also, it is more than likely that there will not be any one website that you can go to in order to find out information concerning

troubleshooting questions you may have.

For service it may be necessary to take the computer back to the store that you bought it at or you may have to do some research on the individual parts that went into the computer and visit the manufacturers website for troubleshooting tips.



Build Your Own Computer

As the name states, with this type of approach you will put together your very own system from scratch.

During this course of action you will be responsible for buying each individual part and assembling it all together with the goal of having a fully functional and trouble free system when you're finished.

Personal Note: This is by far my favorite and most rewarding course of action when concerning computers! J

Some Advantages/Disadvantages of Building Your Own computer include:

Advantages:

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- 1) Opening all those boxes with the various components that you have bought and then assembling them to produce an end product can be quite a fun and enjoyable experience.

- 2) The knowledge you will gain from researching the parts you will need to buy and studying all the documentation that comes packaged with the components is worth a bundle all in its own.

If you have a chance to learn something new.....DO IT!

- 3) If you buy a pre-built computer it is more than likely to have pre-installed software already on the system. This would result in you not getting the actual CD's or manuals that belong to these programs which would be needed if you were wanting to reinstall a

program that has become corrupted and ceases to function properly.

If you build your own computer you will be responsible for purchasing your own parts and in return would be provided with all the needed manuals and CD's that belongs to each device or software package.

- 4) When buying your own parts as individual components you are in control as to what features and what brand is unique to each.

Disadvantages:

- 1) If you are in a hurry to get a computer up and functioning this may not be the best route to take because this process can take a considerable amount of time especially if this is your first time doing it.

If you already have a computer that works and you would like a second computer to possibly use in a different room or to simply replace your old and outdated current machine and are in no real hurry to do so, then build your own for the experience.

- 2) If you are concerned about having a warranty or service plan it would probably be best to seek out a computer that is already assembled.

The parts you purchase may have a warranty, but the assembled PC would not.

- 3) When you purchase a pre-assembled computer the parts used to put together the complete system have been tested for compatibility with one another.

If you decide to build your own system you may run into components that don't get along or just won't function in the presents of other devices you have purchased.

It is a good idea to only buy parts of name brand origin to help eliminate or reduce such a problem.

- 4) I hate to say it (and some people may disagree with this J), but if you plan on building a computer for the very first time, unless you have accessible connections to an experienced friend, experienced technician or service center you can contact just in case you encounter problems you cannot figure out on your own, building your own computer may not be the best decision.

Don't let me keep you from trying
though!

It is my biggest wishes that such
an experience of building your
own computer would prove to be an
enjoyable one.

I would feel bad to see anyone
get frustrated and quit with
something that can prove to be
such a rewarding opportunity to
learn!

Things to consider

Now that you should be a little more aware of the three choices you have for obtaining a computer, I will now briefly give you a few questions you should ask yourself before making any kind of purchase to help you make a wise buying decision.

These may even be some questions that a salesperson may ask to help you with your purchasing decision.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE PURCHASING A COMPUTER

- 1) What is the intended purpose(s) of the computer?

Will the purpose be to play games, surf the internet, or both?

Depending on what you intend to use the computer for will greatly affect what the system should be equipped with as far as hardware and software programs are concerned.

If you plan on using your computer for modern day video games you will most definitely need a high powered video system, fast computer processor, adequate hard drive space, plenty of memory (RAM), and decent sound output.

If you plan to just use the computer for word processing or internet surfing you should be O.K. with a lower-end computer system.

I personally would go for a high-end system to start with even if I intended to just use the computer for surfing the internet

or typing letters in a word processing document so that just in case I happen to find a particular program that I like, but requires a computer with the capabilities to run high-end programs, I won't be forced to update sooner than I really want to.

- 2) If you plan on buying a "clone" or "name-brand" computer you may want to know what software comes preinstalled on the system.

Knowing what software programs are included preinstalled can either eliminate the need for you to purchase any additional programs to fit your needs or you may have to purchase a program that you want to have access to.

Note: The software that generally comes preinstalled with "brand-name" or "clone" computers isn't always high quality software,

which may cause conflicts when you try to install software that is of high quality. So watch out!

3) How good is the documentation?

Knowing that you have access to well written and easy to understand manuals can prove to be a great asset if you require help with minor troubleshooting or proper system set up.

Documentation is a must if you plan on building your own computer!

4) What is the warranty or return policy?

Just like when buying a car or any other high priced piece of equipment you want to pay close attention as to what is and is

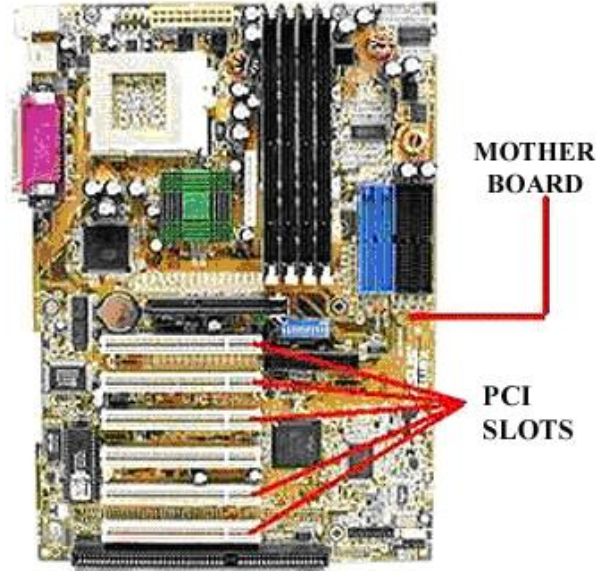
not covered by the warranty and exactly what parts are excluded from coverage if any.

You will also want to find out what the exchange or return policy is just in case you end up with something that just doesn't perform as expected and possibly be able to get your money back if a problem occurs.

5) Is there any room for expansion?

When purchasing a computer it is a wise idea to make sure that your computer's "main board" (a.k.a. mother board) has plenty of open expansion slots in case you decide that you would like to add on a particular device to the system.

One of the main types of expansion slots found on a "mother board" would be what is known as a PCI slot.



*Just in case you don't know what a PCI slot looks like I have included the above picture to point it out to you.

For example: Lets say that you purchase a computer and at the time it comes equipped with everything that you want, but then one day you decide that you would like access to the internet with use of a modem.

In order to install that modem your computer's mother board will require an empty PCI slot.

If you don't have an empty PCI slot to accommodate the modem, you will be forced to either get a new mother board installed on your computer that has more slots, remove an unused or seldom used device from the computer, or forget about using the modem.

When looking at computers, I always look for the ones with at least 4-5 PCI slots. This way I know I'll have plenty of room to expand my system features.

A FEW LAST WORDS

Before I end the lesson on how to purchase the perfect computer I wanted to say that no matter what plan of attack you take, whether you buy a brand-name, clone, or build your own system just make sure you get what you want by doing research and asking lots of questions both to yourself and to the sales person if you decide to get assistance with making the right purchase.

CLOSING

I am glad that you have made it to the end of your lesson.

I truly hope that you have found this book to be of great value, but more importantly as an opportunity to learn.

Until next time, I want to wish you all the best and may you never stop learning!

Thank You!



Dan Preston

P.S. If you feel that this book was useful or helped you in any way I am always happy to accept donations in any form to help keep this book and all the other information I provide free of charge and available to all others who seek computer help.

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Valuable Resources

*If you are new to computers or even if you are not and you need a reliable source to help answer your computer “how-to” related questions I recommend visiting the Newbie Club at <http://www.newbieclub.com/?infoheaven> .

*Learn a valuable skill and get an in depth explanation of the various computer components by reading “**How To Build Your Own Computer**” Get details at <http://infoheaven.bravepages.com/PC%20BUILDER/index.htm>



*If you would like to learn how to take care of and possibly greatly extend the life of your computer, get your copy of “**How and Why To Care For Your Computer**” today at:

<http://infoheaven.bravepages.com/DansEBOOK/index.htm> (Written by me)



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Contact Me

MY CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any other computer or even non-computer related subjects you would like me to write about please feel free to email me at: glowboy70@hotmail.com.

*For more information packed digital books and a tour of my web site please visit: <http://infoheaven-digital-books.com>

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Email glowboy70@hotmail.com for questions.

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