

November 2011 Extra Edition Newsletter

Holiday Buying Guide

Since I am asked frequently “what computer to get” I am issuing my first Holiday Buying Guide, and also a tip about where to get the best Windows computers.

Check out my new Medical Office Systems Blog - <http://medofficesystems.blogspot.com>

Microsoft Improves the Out-Of-Box-Experience

One of the major reasons Apple can deliver such a quality product is that Apple controls the entire process – hardware, software, and configuration of the machines they sell, including the purchasing experience at their own stores. If you want an Apple computer, you pretty much have to get it from Apple, there are few 3rd-party retailers authorized to sell Apple products.

In comparison, Microsoft does not have control over any portion of the delivery process for Windows computers once their software leaves the building. However, they have made a small step towards that goal. Late last year, Microsoft opened several retail outlets in major cities. Along with the retail stores, Microsoft introduced what is called the “Microsoft Signature” brand. This brand is an attempt by Microsoft to deliver best-quality computers that have been optimized for Windows, and eliminate the single biggest complaint of PC buyers: pre-loaded “Trial” software.

The “Trial” pre-loaded software is typically CD-Burning software, Music players, various Anti-virus programs, Games, and the like. PC manufacturers, desperate to make a profit, typically accept a commission from software publishers to put trial versions on the PC as a pre-load. The theory is the user will see it, try it, and buy it. In my experience, 99% of pre-load software is junk, and I end up removing it. Worse, some of the pre-load stuff ruins the experience by presenting multiple pop-ups upon first use and “buy me” nag screens

The Signature brand works like this: Microsoft purchases popular brand computers direct from the manufacturers, and loads it with a clean, customized and optimized version of Windows specifically for that model of PC. When the purchaser first uses the machine, there is one “I Accept” window, and that’s it. Simple, no hassle, and no junk stuff to clog up the machine and then remove. Currently, Acer, Asus, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, Lenovo, Sony and Toshiba computers are available, with more soon to arrive.

If you really want a custom build, Microsoft will load whatever software/hardware you specify prior to delivery, and you can have it shipped to your home or to the local store for pickup.

The Signature brand computers are available only direct from Microsoft. In the Chicago area there is one Microsoft store in Oakbrook Center Mall, or you can shop online at: <http://store.microsoft.com>. **If you want the best Windows computer experience, this is the way to get it.**

Medical Office Systems, LLC

Holiday Computer Shopping Suggestions

Of the hundreds of available computers in each category, I endeavored to stay in the middle-of-the-road regards specifications and capabilities. Therefore each of the suggested computers listed below represents what I consider the best value – price/performance ratio. None of the models represents the highest price nor lowest price in any category. Use this guide as a starting point for your computer shopping. Note that I have only specified the Microsoft Signature series computers, you may find the same model at other retailers for a lower price, but it will have a lot of pre-loaded software.

Laptops/Netbook/Tablet

Windows Desktops: Microsoft Signature Series http://store.microsoft.com		
Usage	Model	Comments
Basic Netbook:	ASUS Eee PC 1015x	A basic netbook for \$249
Basic Laptop:	Lenovo G560, Model 0679-ALU	15.6" Widescreen, a bargain at \$399
Mid-Range Laptop:	Dell Inspiron 15RN-3059DBK	15.6" Widescreen, \$599
High-End Laptop:	HP E17-1191NR	17.3" Widescreen, \$1499
Ultra-Fast Laptop:	Sony VPCZ21BGX	Core i7 Processor & 12 hour battery! \$2499
Apple Desktops: www.apple.com		
Usage	Model	Comments
iPad:	iPad2	32GB Storage, No 3G service: \$599
Apple Basic Laptop:	MacBook Air	11" Widescreen, 64GB Hard Disk, \$999
Apple Mid-Range Laptop:	MacBook Pro	15" Widescreen, \$1799
Apple High-End Laptop:	MacBook Pro	17" Widescreen, \$2499

Desktop/All-In-Ones

Windows Desktops: Microsoft Signature Series http://store.microsoft.com		
Usage	Model	Comments
Basic:	HP Pavilion P7-1106	1 TB Hard Disk, 6GB RAM, Core i3 CPU, \$599
Mid-Range:	Dell XPS 8300	1 TB Hard Disk, 6GB RAM, Core i5 CPU, \$699
All-In-One:	HP TouchSmart 520-1038	1 TB Hard Disk, 4GB RAM, Core i3 CPU, \$699 Plus 23" Flat Panel
Apple Desktops: www.apple.com		
Usage	Model	Comments
Basic:	Mac Mini	4GB RAM, 500GB Hard Disk, \$799
Midrange:	Mac Pro, Quad-core	3GB RAM, 1TB Hard Disk, \$2499
All-In-One:	iMac 21.5"	21.5" Widescreen, 4GB RAM, 1 TB Hard Disk, \$1499

Please call me if you wish to have a more specific suggestion based on your needs, and Happy Shopping!

-John Becker