



More Power To Succeed As You Go Back To School

Buy A PC, Save On Taxes in 2009/2010

Here's some great news for our customers who want to cut the costs of sending their kids to college. Under the new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Section 1005), taxpayers who buy PCs for their



children in 2009 and 2010 can claim those desktops, notebooks, netbooks as qualified higher

education expenses. The act defines computer-related qualified expenses as any expense incurred for buying any computer technology and equipment, as well as internet access and related services as long as the equipment and technology is used by the student and the student's family during any of the year the student is enrolled at an eligible educational institution. Tuition costs have skyrocketed, so this is a welcome relief. The tax break is only in effect through 2010 so if you already have a kid in school or will start in September, start shopping soon. Veterans may want to

wait on a computer purchase until the start of fall semester this year. Going into effect in August, Veterans can use payments from the new GI bill to purchase a computer with a tax write-off.



Gamers be advised; do not attempt to buy an amped-up gaming machine and gaming software and try to write it off unless the game software "is predominantly educational in nature."

Which Type Of Computer Will Help You Succeed?

You may have a good computer already, but is it capable of running the software you want to run? A simple upgrade to your existing computer may give you exactly what you need to succeed in school, business, or gaming. Start by looking at the software you want to use. The package usually lists either minimum or recommended specifications for your hardware. Minimum means exactly what it sounds like; it is just enough and it will run but maybe not as well as you'd like. Get more than the minimum or the next software update may leave you behind. If it's time to buy a new computer then it's still

wise to begin with the software you want to run and know what you'll need. Once you know what hardware specifications you need there are still other factors that go into finding the right computer. Do you get a desktop tower for more power, or would a laptop or netbook better suit your needs for portability? There are benefits and drawbacks to each system. Desktop towers are, in general, more easily upgraded, but not all are created equal. For example, a desktop motherboard with 4 RAM slots is more upgradeable (and more expensive) than one with 2 slots. Also, upgrading your

graphics card may be limited by your motherboard or power supply, so think about future upgrades when making your initial purchase. If portability is a must, then a laptop or netbook may be the best option. Portable computers are not as upgradeable as towers, so get one that already has more than enough power to do what you need to do the job. Portable computers are more likely to get bumped around so get a good protective case. If your taking it everywhere you may want to buy an extended accidental damage warranty. Not every manufacturer offers one, but they can be a lifesaver.

More Power Computers, Inc.

Serving The Lower Columbia
Region Since 1994.

How Can The
American Recovery
and Reinvestment
Act of 2009 Help
You Get A New
Computer?



Which Computer Is
Right For You Or Your
Student Going
Back To School?

- > Tower
- > Laptop/Notebook
- > Netbook

Your TOTAL IT solution since 1994!



What Is A Netbook ?!

A netbook is made primarily for use on the internet, thus the name netbook. It is an inexpensive alternative to standard notebooks or laptops. The smaller size and weight make it ideal for students or anyone that needs to keep in touch with the office, home, or do research and homework. Netbooks vary in features and thus also vary in cost. For about \$400 to \$500 you can get a good one that has:

- Processor: Intel Atom, 1.6GHz
- Standard Memory: 1GB RAM
- Some Models Expandable To A Maximum of 2GB RAM
- Hard Drive Capacity: 160GB
- Battery Charge Time: About 1 Hour
- Battery Life: Depending on Battery Type 6 to 10 Hours.
- Operating System: Windows XP Home
- Network Technology: Fast Ethernet, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
- Standard Warranty: 1 Year

Catch Phrase Contest

Celebrating 15 years of service, we asked for a phrase that sums up what we do. The winning catch phrase is "More Power Computers. We provide more for less." For her phrase Rosie Hicks won a 16 GB Kingston flash-drive.

What Should I Look For In A New Laptop?

Most laptops will offer average performance for today's software. However, if you want to make your computer perform well for the long haul there are some features you want to look for in a new laptop. Make sure it has enough RAM. RAM is the fastest and usually least expensive way to increase a computer's performance. Most current operating systems are 32 bit and as such can only use a little over 3 GB of RAM. If you're planning on sticking with 32 bit XP or Vista then there's no need to get more than 3 to 4 GB of RAM. However, 64 bit operating systems can use more RAM. You can get 64 bit operating systems for XP and Vista, and Windows 7, the new operating system from Microsoft, will be 64 bit. If you're planning on upgrading to Windows 7 consider that more RAM may seem like overkill now but it will keep your system working better for a longer time.

Get a dual-core processor. Having two lanes of traffic for data flow is like having two lanes of traffic on a road. Trying to run two programs on a single-core processor is like when road construction closes a lane of traffic and a flagger has to stop traffic and only allow one side to go for awhile, then stop that side and let the other side go through. Dual-core processors allow for faster, smoother operation. Get a hard drive that matches your needs. If you store a lot of photos, video, etc., then get a larger hard drive. Consider adding an external hard drive to supplement storage space and for a back up solution so you won't lose everything should your hard drive fail.

A good graphics board or GPU is not just for gamers. What type of graphics the laptop has can be a make or break experience for the average user. If a GPU is handling the graphics that means more RAM is available for running programs.



The GPU is often where a manufacturer will choose to go with a less expensive option to cut cost and achieve a lower price. It may seem like the better buy, until you actually start using it. When shopping for anything, remember the old saying: If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

A good GPU also is needed if you want a larger screen size. Choosing the right screen size for you is really a personal preference. The trade-off is larger screens are easier to see but cost more, weigh more, and take up more space on the desk. As for screen shape, consider that many websites are going with a widescreen format, so if you have a square screen you may end up having to scroll left and right to see everything on a web page. As laptops with widescreens are wider there is more width to the laptop space so many offer a larger keyboard or a ten-key keyboard.

Optical drives are offered on most laptops, but the type of drive varies. Most are DVD-RW drives that will read and write CD or DVD disks. To save a few dollars some drives may read both CD or DVD disks but only write to CD disks. On the upscale side, Blu-ray Disc (BD-ROM) drives are available for those wanting to see Blu-ray HD movies on their laptop, but they will add extra cost to the price.

If you use your laptop mostly at home and only rarely take it with you then you may be OK with an average battery life. Note that some manufacturers claim longer battery life specifications by turning off features such as wireless connection

and turning down the brightness, dimming the screen beyond what any typical user would want to use. In real life most laptops get about 90 minutes or more (some up to 3.5 hours) depending on size of screen, configuration, and what you're doing. But if you take your laptop everywhere you may want to get a higher capacity battery. This may add some weight and size to your laptop. If you are without access to AC power but want to work longer you might decide to purchase an additional battery. The downside of that is you have to shut off your laptop to swap batteries. Some manufacturers offer an alternative option of an external battery pack that charges the laptop battery through the AC adapter port. This can be handy so you don't have to shut off the computer to swap out batteries. Extra features you may want are not always included on all models. Before buying, check whether the laptop has the extra features you may need such as: Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Ethernet, dial-up modem, ExpressCard slots, SD/Memory Card reader, multiple USB 2.0 ports, webcam, VGA Port, headphone jack, or microphone jack. You may want a special feature such as a tablet PC so you can write on the screen, a pull-out second screen, or a ruggedized or semi-rugged laptop more suited to a construction site or battlefield. These features cost more but may be essential for the right person.

Do You Have Questions Or Stuff You'd Like To See In The Newsletter?

Have a question, answer, or want to share helpful or fun websites to visit. Please e-mail them to us. We will try to showcase items that help More Power Computer users.