



Asiya Computer and Photo Club



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How to choose a computer: If portability and price are important, and you do mostly light work, a 10-inch netbook is fine as a secondary device. It is usually less costly and more work-oriented than a tablet. For heavier work and a larger keyboard and display, a conventional laptop is better. A 14- to 16-inch model offers the best balance of portability, usability, and price. A 17-inch laptop, with its larger screen, is a better desktop replacement yet it costs only about as much as a smaller model. A slim-and-light laptop with a 13-inch screen may cost more, but a model that small may be a good choice because it can weigh as little as 3 pounds. Three choices exist among desktops. A basic design with a separate case and a 20- to 24-inch LCD monitor costs the least but takes up the most space. Slim desktops such as those offered by Dell and HP, which require a separate monitor, are also inexpensive but have a smaller footprint than those with a basic design. All-in-ones, which pack everything into a single unit that sits on your desk are compact but can cost more than \$1000. Consider reliability. Don't go out and buy an extended service plan. On average, computer repairs cost about the same as an extended service plan, which you might never use.

Most and least reliable: Choosing a brand with a good repair history can improve your odds but there is little difference. For laptops Toshiba is the most reliable brand with 16% requiring repairs, followed by Sony 17%, Compaq 18%, Acer 19%, Apple 19%, HP 20%, Gateway 20%, Dell 21%, and Lenovo 21%. For desktops Apple computers have required the least repairs at 13%, followed by Compaq 18%, eMachines 19%, Dell 20%, HP 21%, Sony 22% and Gateway 23%.

Ratings for Tech Support: On a basis of 0 to 100, 100 being everyone completely satisfied with the tech support, Apple is reported to have the best tech support. For laptops Apple scores 86, Lenovo 63, Toshiba 60, Dell, 56, HP/Compaq 53, and Acer/Gateway/eMachines 39. For Desktops, Apple 87, Dell, 55, HP/Compaq 53, and Acer/Gateway/eMachines 39.

Get the Best Buy for the Money you spend: Do not just look at the initial cost. A low quality computer at a low initial cost is more expensive and less usable than a quality computer at a higher initial cost.

Best Buys for Netbooks: The best of the netbooks offer lighter weight, larger keyboards and trackpads, and longer battery life. All include a memory-card reader and webcam. The 10-inch Samsung NP-N150-JAO3US for \$350 has a battery life of up to 8 hours. The Asus EeePC 1008HAB-BLK001S for \$310 has a battery life of up to 5 hours. For a larger display and keyboard the \$400 Samsung NC20-21GBK with 12.1-inch display and a battery life of up to 4½ hours or the \$400 Dell Inspiron 11z with an 11.6-inch display and a battery life of up to 3¼ hours are good choices.

Best 13-inch laptops: The Apple MacBook Pro MB990LL/A, \$1,200, is very well rounded, with an above average display and speakers. Sony Vaio VPCY115FX/B1, \$800, delivers 7 hours of battery life but has no optical drive. The Apple MacBook MC207LL/A, \$1,000, has a very good display. The Toshiba Satellite U505-S2970, \$740, is a great value with a large 500GB hard drive, lots of memory, and a decent battery life. For those who are willing to pay a premium for netbook-like portability and notebook-like performance the Apple MacBook Air MC233LL/A, \$1,500, has a very good display but lacks features such as an optical drive and memory-card reader.

Best 14-inch laptops: The Sony Vaio VPCCW21FX/L, \$800, has excellent performance, good battery life, and 250MB of video memory for gaming. The Toshiba Satellite E105-S1802, \$760, has longer battery life than most of the 14-inch models and a 500GB hard drive. The Dell Inspiron 14 (1464), \$750, has excellent performance and 512MB of video memory for gaming. The HP Pavilion dv4-2155dx, \$750, has excellent performance at a competitive price. The Samsung R430-BLACK, \$630, delivers 5 hours of battery life, and is well priced.

Best 15- to 16-inch laptops: The Toshiba Satellite A505-56005, \$680, has good battery life but weighs a bit more than others of this size. The Asus U50F-RBBAG05, \$650, offers a lot of performance for the money and a longer battery life than most models of this size. The Sony Vaio VGN-NW350F/S, \$730, is among the few models with a Blu-ray player and a solid performance. The Toshiba Satellite L505-ES5018, \$500, is well priced and competent, with support for multitouch.

Best 17-inch laptop: The Dell Inspiron 17 (1764), \$870, has excellent performance at a decent price and 512MB of video memory, and is lighter than other 17-inch models.

Best Full-sized Desktops: The Dell Studio XPS 8100, \$650, has an Intel Core i5 650 processor, 3GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive, and 512 MB video memory. The Dell Inspiron 580, \$530, has an Intel Core i3 processor, 4GB RAM, a 320 GB hard drive. It had the lowest price with excellent performance of all the full size models tested.

Best Compact Desktop: The Dell Inspiron 580s, \$560, with the Intel Core i3 530 processor, 4 GB RAM, and 320 GB hard drive has excellent performance and ergonomics and very good versatility.

Best All-in-Ones: The Apple iMac 27-inch MB952LL/A, \$1,700, is pricey but has an excellent display that is the largest in an all-in-one computer. It is a well-configured system with a TTB hard drive, very good speakers, and excellent performance. The Apple iMac 21.5-inch MB950LL/A, \$1,200, has excellent performance and the price is right for a Mac. The HP Touch Smart 600-1050, \$1,200, is very good for gaming with a big touch-screen display and a large hard drive. The Sony Vaio VGC-JS450F/S, \$1,000, has a Blu-ray player; it's well priced, with very good performance for applications and gaming.