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BYTESOFINFORMATION



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# I.T. ITERATIONS



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## Windows 7 Is Here

Christmas is here and sales will soon begin. Microsoft Windows 7 has been released. Do you need to do anything? ANSWER: Only if you are purchasing a new PC this holiday season.

Some quick tips !!

FIRST, let's look at history: How did Windows Vista earn such a bad reputation? It is my opinion that this operating system was doomed, causing many consumer frustrations, because of the lack of resources on the computers which were running Vista.

In the memory or RAM department, when Vista was launched, Microsoft claimed it would run fine on 512 MB of RAM and up. However in the "Real World" that was a gross underestimation. My experience has been that Vista 32-Bit version will not run well unless the computer has at least 3-4 GB of Ram (memory). Vista 64-bit should have at least 6 GB of RAM (memory) to run efficiently.

Why did Microsoft do this? When they release a new operating system, the goal is to push it out to the consumer as fast and as inexpensively as possible. Regarding price, something always has to give and a decision was made to short hardware resources to reach the desired price point. A quick

review of a local computer superstore shows Windows 7 is also without the proper hardware resources which will likely cause bad consumer experiences when the system does not operate as smoothly as advertised.

What do you need to know when shopping for a new computer or laptop? In short, RAM and the version of Windows.

The version of Windows 7 -- Is it 32-bit or 64-bit? How will you know? If it is 64-bit, the ad you read will tell you; if there is no mention of the bit, then it is 32.

What's the difference in 32-Bit and 64-Bit Windows? The amount of RAM (memory) the computer is capable of handling and using. 64-Bit is capable of using 8GB of RAM maximum and 32-Bit is 4GB.

For Windows 7, 32-bit systems -- RAM should be at least 4GB. Do not compromise on this resource, but do not let the ad scare you away from the deal. If the ad says 2GB or 3GB and the price of the system is good, then how much it will cost to install more RAM. The price for extra RAM will range from \$25 to \$125, depending on how much you need to get to 4GB. You do not need a larger system, you simply need to add more

RAM. If you are told the system you are buying is not "expandable" to 4GB of RAM -- FIND ANOTHER SYSTEM.

For Windows 7, 64-Bit systems -- RAM should be no less than 6GB. Again, if the ad does not show enough RAM, ask the cost of installing more. I saw one ad presenting a Windows 7, 64-Bit system on a laptop, with 2GB of RAM (expandable up to 4GB). Look at another system. The system cannot grow over time with 64-bit. Go for a 32-Bit system instead.

Will sales people attempt to persuade you with different information? Probably! Remember, their motivation is to close the sale.

My motivation is to give you the benefit of lots of first-hand experience in the market place. Requirements listed on the products are often too low. The software will work. *But how well is the question !!*

Don't be frustrated with your new computer -- **BUY RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.**

\*\* This information does not apply to "netbooks". Please see the next article.



The single best upgrade for any computer is in memory/RAM...



## What's a Netbook and is it right for you?

What's a Netbook?

Is It Right For You ?

Thinking About Getting One ?

NETBOOK is a new product that hit the market this year. It is, simply, a small laptop computer – OR – an oversized PDA, depending on how you look at its use. Companies like Acer, Dell, and HP have versions of this new device. Verizon Wireless advertises Netbooks for \$199, with a contract agreement and the purchase of their web service, which allows internet connection from just about anywhere in the Country.

The purpose of this device is to give the consumer or "road warrior" a compact laptop internet option, while on the move. It is lightweight, starts fast, and is wireless. You can check your web-based email (yahoo, gmail, or company webmail), update social network sites, shop, get maps, or read the news. It is also meant to write letters and do what a full-size laptop or desktop can do, but

without the bulk. The Netbook is NOT designed to store files – its purpose is to access the web.

Have you heard of "Cloud Computing" -- that is what these little laptops do -- access your information via web sites.

What You Need To Know About Netbooks?

- They come in 8 to 10 inch sizes. They do not come with a cd-rom drive. Think of your "hand-size" when determining which one to buy. The keyboard is small and comfort should be a consideration. I recommend that you make an in-person visit to a retailer and see how the NETBOOK actually feels in your hand.
- They come with (up to) a 16GB Solid State Drive or 160GB Hard Drive. Obviously, the solid state drive has limited storage; if you plan to just access the web, then it is a good option with plenty

of space. If you are "road warrior" and you need space for some files, presentations, or music, then you may need more.

- Operating system options include Linux, Windows XP, or now Windows 7 Starter. If you are looking for a Netbook for this holiday season, I suggest the Windows XP version, with 1GB of RAM since little is known about Windows 7 Starter and its need for resources. Why not Linux? Because you probably have no experience using it. You will be able to surf the web, but the rest of the functions will be new to you. You already know Windows – stick with what is familiar.

**IMPOTANT:** Any files you have saved on the Netbook should be copied onto another PC – a Netbook should not be considered a replacement for a home, office, or larger laptop computer.

## Are Your Family Pictures Safe?

When I was growing up, I remember large 12" x 12" photo albums sitting on the top shelf. They weighed a ton. When you took them down, you handled them with care. They were kept up high because they were in the basement and our basement had flooded one time. If they had been lower, they might have been destroyed, a fire or other act of nature would have also ruined them.

Today most people have only a few albums. With the digital camera, folks can take hundreds of useless pictures just to capture the ONE picture, they might want to print. The "useless" pictures though are just as valuable, because they record a precious moment or event we might want to share later.

Are you ready for a disaster? Have you backed up your irreplaceable pictures, your important documents, or

your 6 years of emails? If your computer "crashed" right now, will you panic or just be frustrated?

3 ways to back your items up:

CD or DVD burnable discs – Burning files to a disc is one option. However, if you have several Gigabytes of information, this is a long and cumbersome process.

External hard drive – External hard drives have dropped dramatically in price. You can purchase 1-TB for about \$120 – this is enough for pictures, videos, and documents.

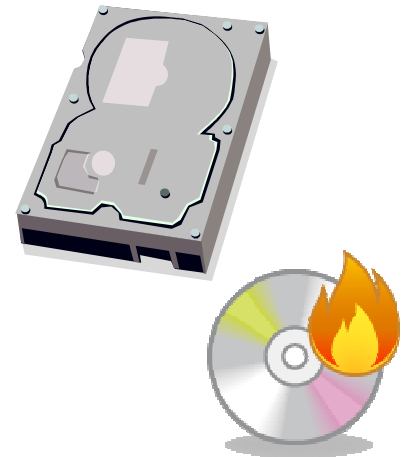
Online service – I highly recommend this no-brainer approach. Go to: [www.carbonite.com](http://www.carbonite.com) and sign up for unlimited online backup for only \$55 per year. Every night, the system will back up all of your daily activities. Should your computer crash, be stolen, or

damaged, your files will be just a restore process away. ( I don't benefit from this purchase.)

And, even if none of the above occurs, think of the ease of information transfer when you buy a new machine.

CHOOSE YOUR METHOD AND -- DO IT NOW!! One thing is certain, your COMPUTER WILL CRASH or NEED TO BE REPLACED. The question is when? Are you ready for it?

**PLEASE NOTE: A USB Thumb Drive IS NOT A BACKUP DEVICE!!**



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"Mark is my go to  
guy for tech..."

- Bob D.  
Farmington Hills



**No geek speak technical  
help for homes and small  
business**

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## QUICK TIPS FOR ALL

### **MAKE YOUR RECOVERY DISCS!!!!.....NOW!!**

Most pc's that have been purchased over the past 3-4 years have not come with recovery cd's. These are the disc's containing the programs you will need in the event of a hard drive crash. You will need about 3-4 DVD's or 6-9 CD's to make the recovery disc's. Look at your system manual or click the Start button – All Programs – look for a folder, for example if you have an HP, look for a folder saying HP Recovery Disc creator. Once the disc's are created mark them and place them in a safe place.

**College Students Take Note:** Every single time you stop working on a paper or homework assignment for the day, email yourself a copy of it. Over the years I have received frantic calls about a computer crashing and their assignment that is due tomorrow is on the hard drive. If you email the paper each time to your hotmail, yahoo, or Gmail account then you need only run to the library or a friend's computer and finish it up. Don't play "Russian Roulette" with your homework or final exam paper, send it to yourself after each day you work on it.

**College students:** Looking for software at a discount? Check out [www.microsoft.com/student](http://www.microsoft.com/student) for details on how to receive Microsoft products at a huge discount. If you need other types of software check your college store for similar discounts.

**Check out Kodak Printers:** Are you in need of a new printer? Check out the Kodak brand printers. They give good quality prints and the printers, in some cases cost more than the competition, but the ink is less expensive. To buy a black cartridge with 3 color cartridges is about \$25-\$26. For other brands the ink is any were from 1 ½ to 3 times as much.

**Off brand Ink Cartridges:** Many stores these days sell refillable or self branded ink cartridges for your printer. In my opinion I have found them to be unreliable. If you purchase them and have trouble printing, before saying the printer is bad buy the recommended cartridges and see if they work.