

Things to consider when buying a new computer...

So you're thinking about a new computer...the first choice to make is whether to go for a PC or Laptop— please see our separate article on this subject. Having decided that, before you go ahead, here are some other important points that often get forgotten.

Hardware:

If you have a PC and are just considering replacing the tower unit, and keeping your monitor (screen). Then to get the best from your new computer it should ideally be a fairly recent model as the colours and resolution are much better. The connection type (plug) hasn't really changed for many years however, most monitors and PCs will have a 'blue VGA' socket on them, and some will have an additional 'white DVI' socket also (digital video). The DVI type is slightly better, a bit like using a scart lead on a TV. If you have speakers built into your monitor, that's something else to think about when getting a new one, although a set of good quality desktop speakers are very reasonably priced.

Printer/scanner: If you're printer or scanner is quite old (more than about 3-4 years), there is a chance it may not work with your new equipment (especially scanners). So for the cost of it, budget for a new one. The same goes for keyboard & mouse.

Power supply – make sure you have enough sockets. You don't want new equipment plugged into old double adaptors etc. Get a nice new surge-protected 4 or 6 way socket strip.

Software:

Take a look at what software you have on your existing computer. A good case in point is Microsoft Office (Word, Excel etc.). It is a popular misconception that these programs are included with Windows, **in fact they are not**. So budget for a new version of Office, (2016 is still the latest version). Think about which programs you use to make sure you get the right package Word, Excel, & PowerPoint are included in the home version. Outlook, Publisher and Access increase the price considerably. If you don't add Office, you won't be able to open any of your old documents or spreadsheets. However, if your needs are fairly basic, or you haven't used Office before, there are cheaper programs like Works, or even free ones like Open Office that do the same job; but there can be some compatibility issues.

Also think about what you use for photo editing; you may have purchased a program like Photoshop etc., so make sure you have the original installation disc and licence number. If you are not sure, there are some free programs like Google Picasa that do an excellent job. Check for other things like family history or any other interests or hobbies you might use special software for.

Data:

Ideally you should do back-ups of your own data anyway, but if you haven't (tsk tsk!), now is the time to make sure you do, or we can arrange to do it for you, including important things like your address book, Internet Favorites, and emails.

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Internet connection:

How do you connect to the Internet? Wired or wireless? If you are buying a laptop it will use a wireless connection, so make sure you know your wifi password. PCs normally use a wired connection so that means the router should be within a metre or two of where the tower is to be sited. If the router is in another room, we will need to know as the PC would have to have a wireless adaptor fitted.

While you are doing all this, make sure you can lay your hands on your **Karoo username and password as your email cannot be set up without it.** If you can't find the details or you think you might have changed your password at some time, then phone Karoo to check up first.

Security:

You won't want to take any chances with your new system, so will offer you the latest anti-virus & Internet Security

Finally...

Enjoy! - Remember investing in a new computer can be a very rewarding experience, that's why in many respects it is advisable to get everything new at the same time. Try not to be sentimental about your old kit; save yourself the hassle of having problems with old incompatible hardware and software. You wouldn't have a brand new kitchen fitted and then shove in a dodgy old gas cooker! Enjoy the speed and convenience of all that new technology; don't suffer at the hands of old, slow and annoyingly quirky systems. Also it's the time to have a spring clean (not just around the desk!) and only put onto your new computer the stuff you really want, and keep everything else on discs etc., so you can always access anything if you need it.

For specialist help on installation, or impartial advice on any of the foregoing, please contact the undersigned.

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