



BUG-BYTES

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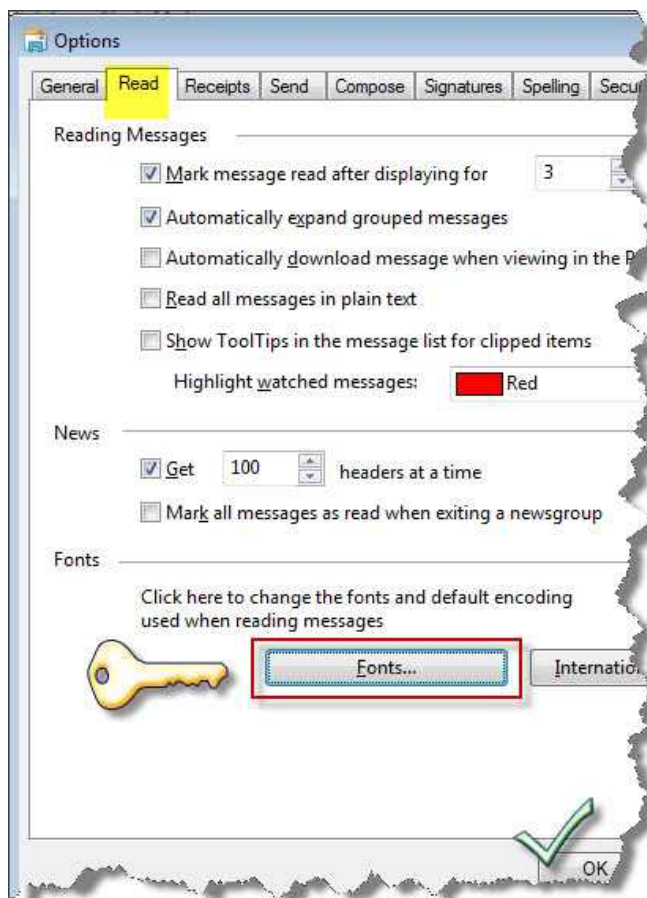
MAY 2010

CONTROL OE/MAIL FONT SIZE FOR READING AND PRINTING E-MAIL

Have you ever found that the font size displayed in e-mail messages are too large or too small? The problem may be aggravated when you go to print and your message takes more pages than you think is reasonable.

Fortunately, the problem is easy to fix. Open Outlook Express in XP, or Windows Mail in Vista or Windows 7.

Click on Tools, Options, Read. Then click on the Fonts button toward the bottom of the dialog box. Change the size of the font to something like medium. Experiment to see what size best meets your needs. See the screen shots below from Windows Mail. You will see something



similar depending on which version of the operating system you are using.



CONTROL DISPLAY FONT SIZE IN EXPLORER AND INTERNET EXPLORER

You can dynamically change the size of the displayed font in Windows Explorer or Internet Explorer. While in either of those programs, hold down the Ctrl (control) key and roll the scroll wheel on your mouse forward or back to increase or decrease the font size. Take your finger off of the mouse when you are done with your selection.

If your mouse does not have a scroll wheel, click on **View**, **Text Size**, and pick the font size you want from the Explorer or Internet Explorer menu. The choices are largest, larger, medium, smaller, and smallest.

THINKING OF BUYING A NEW COMPUTER?

(TIPS ON WHAT TO CONSIDER)



From an obsolescence point of view, computers and computer peripheral equipment tend to evolve at an ever accelerating pace over the span of three or more years. While the equipment is seldom worn out in that seemingly short time, there may be many compelling reasons to replace it. These reasons may include some or all of the following.:

You want to add one or more new peripherals that did not exist when you last bought your computer—peripherals that your current computer hardware doesn't support.



You want a computer that incorporates the technological advances made over the last three years and that optimizes all of its components for the most trouble-free computer experience. performance. A number of important hardware standards have and will change over the years.

You want the advantages of the latest version of Windows, but your computer will not run it (CPU too slow, not enough RAM, underperforming graphics, etc.).

You want to add capabilities that your older system does not support, i.e. a faster hard drive with greater storage capacity, a rewriteable CD, a DVD drive for movies or large storage, a better graphics card, a faster modem, networking, adequate Universal Serial Bus (USB) support for a wireless mouse, better sound, a scanner, digital camera support, an extra hard drive, an external CD Rom drive, or some as yet to be released goodie. USB means that you can add something to your system without opening your computer's case. That's a real plus.

Your operating system is no longer supported by Microsoft or will not be supported in the near futures

(such is the case for Windows 95 and Windows 98, and perhaps for XP as well).

You want to enjoy the benefits of a much faster and more responsive computer (quicker printing, faster program loading, swift file saves, quicker processing time, and multitasking).

You want to take advantage of very low hardware prices to upgrade to a bigger display and/or a more capable computer (with lots more memory and a faster CPU).

You have a serious desktop space problem and can benefit from an LCD flat panel monitor.

Your old computer is starting to show signs of age and is getting quirky and cranky.

You want to position yourself for the next three years so that your computer helps you rather than hinders you in what you do.

You recognize that Windows versions prior to Windows XP (or the previous Windows 2000 or NT) were hobbled by the need to be backward compatible with DOS. Thus, those version were less stable and much more trouble pron forward. They were also harder to troubleshoot.

You want the latest drivers for new equipment you plan to add.

You want something that looks better in your office or wherever you have your computer.

Isn't there a learning curve?

As with a new car, you will notice differences with your new computer. Some buttons may be in different spots, but you still know what to do with all of them. If you choose a computer with Windows pre-installed, it can be setup to looks similar to your present version of Windows. Your computer will have capabilities that were not present in your old Windows computer including the ability to directly view graphic files as thumbnails, to be able to search for and read e-mails (Win 7) and to easily setup a home network. You'll really like that.

Yes, there is a learning curve, but it is relatively easy. Change always involves some temporary

discomfort, but it is a small price to pay for what you finally get.

What do you need to consider in buying a new computer?

As a general rule, buy the best computer that your budget can afford. It should take care of all your needs for at least the next three years. For what it is worth, some XP users have stretched the life of their computer for eight years.

Include in your computer's bundle all of the peripherals that you think you will need and find useful. It is better to purchase them when you buy your new computer (where they are optimized for the system) than to try to add them one at a later time later. As a result, You will save both money and aggravation. Wireless or wired?

Include in the computer bundle the software options that you will find useful. It will save you money and the software will come pre-installed on your computer. You know it will work correctly right out of the box. Example of such software are an office suite such as Microsoft Office or Corel Office.

What is a good way to configure my computer the way I want it, and to see how much it will cost?

Do some comparison shopping on the leading mail order websites. Even if you decide to purchase your computer locally, The websites will provide you with the facts and figures that you will need to make your final purchase decision. A good place to start is www.apple.com, www.dell.com, www.hp.com, or www.asus.com. Comparison shopping gives you a feel for the price versus configuration trade-offs when you add or subtract different options. You instantly see the effect of individual decisions on the price of your computer.

Look for the "sweet spot" in CPU prices for the best CPU bargain for the brand of CPU that you plan to buy. Go right the AMD or Intel website for that information.



Consider purchasing an extended warranty for your computer. This options can give you in-home service if you need it, and peace of mind.

If a very low price is a serious consideration, consider buying a refurbished machine. They are factory remanufactured computers at bargain prices. The come with a factory warranty.

Start by making a list of what you plan to do with your computer. Then see how well the computer(s) you are considering will help you do what you want to do. Consider not only what you have been doing up to this point in time, but also what you would like to do in the future. For instance, would you like to burn CDs with your own custom music collection or use CD's as a low-cost backup solution?; work with a digital camera and edit your photographs (including old collections of pictures, slides, and negatives?); or maybe to print family pictures in color and to share them with family members?

Do you want to scan pictures and data? Would you like record movies that are scheduled to air on your television and watch them at a time of your choosing on your computer? With a TV tuner installed in your computer you can do just that.



Do you want a desktop, laptop, or netbook computer? See the recommendations in the February 2010 Consumer Reports magazine. However, be aware that Consumer Reports only tests a small number of models. The model you want may not have been tested by the magazine.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of local suppliers versus mail order vendors?

Local advantage: If something goes wrong, you can quickly carry your computer into the store. You can deal with the vendor face-to-face. You can see what your computer looks like before you buy it and examine alternative choices.

Local disadvantage: You tend to pay more for a given set of features and benefits; you can't customize your choice (what you see is all that you get); the computers are generally not as highly optimized as those from highly rated mail order vendors. Support tends to be very weak when you have any kind of problem other than outright equipment failure. If a failure occurs, you may be required to ship the computer to a service center to fix it. (Similar to mail order after warranty).

Mail order advantage: Great prices (especially in bundles), a wide range of features and options, and very good online and phone support after purchase. After all, you are talking to the manufacturer of the equipment rather than to a sales person at a local store. Most mail order vendors offer free on-site service for the first year (extended warranties are available). On-site service means that if there is a problem they come right to your home to fix it.

Mail order disadvantage: After the warranty expires, you have to ship the computer back to the vendor for service. The shipping adds a delay until you can get your computer back and you can use it again. You don't have someone you can talk to face-to-face, you have to deal at-arms length by phone, e-mail, or chat session.

What is a good way to pick a mail order computer supplier?

Read the reviews of computer magazine professionals (Pcmag.com, Cnet.com, PCWorld.com, MaximumPC.com). Look for the most bang for your bucks (performance versus price) along with the ratings for reliability of the vendors and the ratings for their support services. Take the recommendations of friends with a grain of salt (including this one). Where possible, look for vendors with a long history of high ratings. Dell, HP, and Lenovo have been such vendors, but look in the magazines reviews for confirmation. Be aware that there are vendors at the bottom of the list, many vendors in between, and a relative few at the very top.

A warning

Where possible, purchase a recovery CD if your new computer comes with a "recovery partition" in lieu

of a separate operating system CD or recovery CD. If a part of your hard disk becomes corrupted, a 'recovery' disk will restore your disk to the condition it was in when you purchased it. That is, all of your data, and any programs you installed after purchasing the computer, will be erased. If your computer does not come with an original Microsoft Operating System disk, make it a point to buy a recovery disk from your computer manufacturer. Many manufacturers sell such a disk for just the cost of shipping and handling. Think of getting the recovery disk as cheap insurance.



If you have a CD, or CDs, for each computer program or peripheral installed on your computer, you can reinstall just the particular program that is experiencing a problem. This may save you days of labor which may be required to rebuild your hard disk from scratch depending on how many programs were affected.

A checklist for possible options (things to look for)

Select a discrete graphic card (a separate graphic card) rather than a graphic chip built-into your motherboard IF you want to watch movies on your computer (with an optional TV tuner card), want to do a lot of photo editing, or you are a big game fan. On-board graphic chips share your main memory whereas discrete graphic cards provide their own memory—memory that is optimized for the display of graphics. If your computer is memory starved, an on-board graphic chip will make the problem worse.

RAM (random access memory): More is better! You want at least 512 MB of memory with XP, and 1 Giga-byte (GB) is better. If you have Windows Vista shoot for 2 GB, and with Windows 7 - 4GB or more.

Storage: Look for a machine with at least a 80GB hard drive. The incremental cost is very small between a

80GB and a 250GB drive. Even 1 Terabyte (1000 Megabytes) drives are relatively inexpensive. It is better to have a drive that is too big than one that you fill up in the first couple of years. Also, larger drives tend to operate at higher RPMs (7200 versus 5400) and they offer faster seek and better data transfer rates. This relates to how quickly the drive can read and write data (like having a bigger straw for your ice cream soda). Ideally you want a drive that supports SATA. :-)

Monitor: Get a computer with at least a 15 inch monitor (17 inches is much better), and with a dot pitch of 28 or lower. Better yet look at a variety of monitors in sizes ranging from 17 to 24 inches. Look carefully at the text on the screen and how easy it is for you to read it. I have two computers. One has a 19 inch monitor and the other has 23 inch. With aging eyes, the 23 inch is a dream (and it displays movies in the wide format). However, the 19 inch is still very useable as well. Your chosen monitor should support a refresh rate of at least 75 at a resolution of 1024x768 or higher. The



Monitor: or flat panel display? If desk space is really critical (especially front to back), consider getting one of the new flat-panel LCD monitors. They look like a big flat book held up on a small stand. Many of these displays can be rotated in either a portrait or landscape orientation. That

is, in the portrait orientation, you can see a whole page of text rather than just 24 lines of text. Such displays cost about as much as a CRT monitor. If you are solving a desk space problem. LCDs are more pleasing to look at and use a fraction of the power of a CRT display.

Cooling: Machines with CPUs above 2.0 MHz require much better cooling to protect the CPU and PC components. High heat can greatly shorten the life of PC components or cause sporadic equipment problems. Better machines provide a CPU heat sink cooler plus extra cooling fans. Better machines also run quieter because they use cooling shrouds and more attention is paid to bearings and sound considerations. A high end machine may come with a liquid cooling system.

Video card: The quality of your video card really becomes important if you are into playing 3D games, have a very large display, and/or do lots of photo editing. As a minimum, look for a video card with at least 64MB of memory. It is not unusual for better graphic cards to come with 1GB of memory. (ATI and Nvidia are two of the the better brands).



If you want to look at television on your computer, then be sure that your computer has a video card with TV adapter or a TV tuner card. My main computer has a TV tuner card and I love recording movies and watching them at

the times of my choosing.

CD/CDRW or DVD?: Most new computers come with at least a CD Rom drive as standard equipment. For a small incremental cost you can replace the CD with a CD the writes CDs. The latter is a very cost effective way to backup files and to create your own music collection. DVD enables you to play prerecorded movies on your computer. There are also several writeable versions of DVD in single or dual layer, and or Blue Ray DVDs. A DVD holds much more data than a CD. A standard single sided single layer DVD holds about 4.7GB. A single sided dual layer DVD holds about 8.5GB, and double sided single layer DVD holds about 9.4\GB and a double-sided dual layer DVD about 17GB. A Blue ray disk can hold 25 to 50Gb of data or movies.

Expandability: If you want to have the option to add equipment after you buy your computer, then be sure that it has at least four external bays and perhaps two internal bays. Check how many bays are offered and look to see how many will be available AFTER you get your computer configured as you want it. That is, how many empty bays will still available after you have filled some of the bays with hardware (DVD drives, extra hard drives, etc.)

Sound: If sound plays a role in your thinking, check out the available sound options for your proposed computer. You will be surprised how inexpensive good sound

can be and the dimension it can add to your computer enjoyment.

Software: Get the operating system of your choice pre-installed on your machine. I recommend Windows 7 Home Edition as do the major computer magazines.

Consider office suite software as a low cost option (much lower than if purchased later), or download and install OpenOffice. OpenOffice is free and it is a good alternative to Microsoft Office. You can set OpenOffice to save and to read Microsoft Office formats, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Thus, you are positioned to read and enjoy common files that people often send to you.

What can I do with my old computer?



We remember what we paid for our old computer. Now, we have to remember that the same computer has very little value as a sale item, today. In fact, today, we can buy a much more capable machine than the old one for much less than we paid for it. Here are some suggestions on what to do with the old computer:

Donate it to a computer club, seniors club, or school laboratory.

Give it to a student or perhaps to a family member.

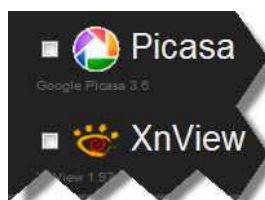
Use it as a backup machine or dedicate it as game machine (solitaire or other low-tech games).

Recycle it at one of the yearly recycle events. **Remember, you can no longer just throw your computer or television in the trash. There are hefty fines for doing that.** See the following link to dispose of your computer or television.

<http://www.grantspassoregon.gov/Index.aspx?page=1022>

HOW TO EASILY LOCATE AND INSTALL YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAMS ON YOUR NEW COMPUTER

Ninite: The amazingly easy way to find and **install many of your favorite programs on your new computer** is spelled Ninite. Download the free program version from www.ninite.com.



Once Ninite is open it displays a long list of popular programs by category. You select only the programs that you want to install on your computer and Ninite will automatically download and install your selection of programs. Ninite automatically detects whether you are using 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows.

Ninite covers the following software categories:

Web browsers (Firefox, Chrome, Opera, Safari)

Messaging (Skype, Messenger, Yahoo)

Media (iTunes, Songbird, Hulu, Audacity)

Imaging (Picasa, Paint.net, Gimp, Irfanview, XnView)

Documents (OpenOffice, Adobe or Foxit Reader)

Security (Essentials, Avast, AVG, Malwarebytes)

Runtimes (Flash, Net, Java, Silverlight)

File Sharing (uTorrent, eMule)

Other (Google Earth, Keepass, Dropbox, Everything)

Utilities (ImgBurn, CCleaner, CDBurnerXP, TeraCopy, Recuva, Revo)

Compression (7-Zip, WinRAR)

Developer Tools (FileZilla, Notepad ++)

Okay, there may other programs you wish were on this list. I know that is the case for me. They will add to the list in the future. It is a start. A good start.