

Buying a new computer.

Ok ... so 'old faithful' has breathed its last and gone to be treated as toxic waste down at the recycling centre. It is time to choose a new computer.

I meet a lot of people who seem to miss out the most important fact when buying a new machine ... what am I going to use it for?

If it is for gaming it is easy, the most expensive graphics card, fastest multi core processor, loads of fast memory, extra fans, extra large speakers and ear plugs for the rest of the family.

For CAD, Photoshop, DAW's (Digital Audio Work Stations for music production) and other resource hungry programs, a similar spec to above, but without such large speakers, musicians, after all use monitors and headphones. Already a saving on earplugs.

For the majority of people they want to send e-mail, browse the web, play with those old wedding photos and a thousand other things, including *Google Earth*, or surfing the web. Even here a bit of thought can make the whole business a lot easier.

For machines running XP you need at least 1 GB (gigabyte) of RAM, but 2 is better, for Vista a minimum of 2 GB of RAM. 4 GB is better, though most machines will only see 3.5 GB as they are running 32-bit operating software.

There are many places to buy computers, online, local suppliers, even the supermarkets. All too easily they are sold like Kettles or Mushrooms by ill-informed staff, or trained parrots like the well known chain of computer SupaStores.

In places like that it is an education listening to the screams and tears from those poor souls in the never ending queues for technical support.