

Laptop –vs- Desktop

Laptops are all the rage this year. I have noticed a sharp increase in telephone calls of customers looking to purchase a new or used laptop. Unfortunately I am also seeing a huge increase in phone calls concerning laptop repairs.

Laptops have really dropped in price over this past year. Customers now have a choice to make when deciding on a new computer. Desktop systems are no longer the default system to purchase. Laptops have gotten to be so powerful and relatively inexpensive compared to just a few years ago that they are now beginning to be the first choice in a new computer purchase.

There are some things to keep in mind though before deciding on your new computer. First of all, laptops are still more expensive than their desktop counterparts. An equivalent desktop system can cost as much as half of an equivalent laptop system. Also the repair costs of a laptop will normally be several times greater than that of a desktop system.

Laptops don't use standard off the shelf replacement parts. If a laptop LCD screen or keyboard breaks, for example, it will be nearly impossible to cross reference them with any other brand or model laptop. This customization produces two problems for the customer. First, the repair time can be as much as two or more weeks because it is virtually impossible to stock every part for every model laptop. Secondly, because these parts are not made in mass quantities the cost of the repair can be as much as four times that of a desktop system. There are very few certified repair centers in the Knoxville area, because of this; you may find yourself needing to ship your laptop to Atlanta or Nashville if your laptop needs repairs under warranty. A word of warning; if you do have to ship your laptop off to be repaired, be sure to make a backup of your data because there is a strong likelihood that you will not get the data back.

Also laptops will be slower than their desktop counterparts. The processors in laptops tend to operate at a slower speed because manufacturers have to balance power consumption, with heat dissipation, and processor speed. Laptops are also not very good gaming systems because the video card is not normally upgradeable and are typically inadequate for today's 3D games. In addition LCD screens don't make good gaming monitors because the refresh rates tend to be slower.

Be sure to rationalize why you want to choose a laptop. I have found that many people have no good reason for needing a laptop. The extra upfront cost may not seem like much, but beware of the above "hidden" costs of laptop ownership.

If you're not getting along with your computer, give Thomas, Roger or Justin a call at Computer Depot at 947-0749 or e-mail us at computerdepotonline@att.net. We can help reconcile your differences, and who knows, if we write about it maybe it will help another family with their computer problems.