

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry and with my own company since 1994. In the entire time I have worked in this field it has been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. What advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing and what I know that works.

I am always about saving money, not spending on things you don't need to.

Question

Should I upgrade or buy a new computer?

Answer

In the past a new computer could cost as much as an inexpensive car. However today, the cost of a new computer has dramatically decreased and depending on what you need out of the computer may or may not justify the purchase of a new computer. Below is a listing of different upgrade options and why you may or may not want to upgrade. Keep in mind this does not include all the programs you have, (that have to be reinstalled in a new computer), and some of those programs may or may not be compatible on the new operating systems of the new computer you buy, and there are many programs that have files you produced that only that program can read. For example: Microsoft Works cannot be opened with Microsoft Office, and there are many more examples. Something to keep in mind, that is where a computer consultant, like myself, comes in handy, for a mere \$35.00 over the phone and a remote log in (simple), can answer all your questions on your upgrade, programs, and what it would entail.

Memory upgrade

A memory upgrade is one upgrade that can really affect the overall performance of your computer. Increasing the computer's memory can help increase the speed of a computer and help with the load times of many of your programs. In addition to being an effective upgrade it's an affordable and often easy and fast upgrade.

Video card upgrade

If you're playing computer games on your computer an upgraded video card can be one of the best upgrades for your computer. With the new improvements and complexities of graphics in games many older computers or computers with inefficient video cards can become real slow.

Adding a new video card is often an easy to do upgrade and is a lot cheaper than purchasing a new computer.

New display

Although a new display is not going to improve the performance of a computer adding a LCD or flat-panel display or increasing the size of your display can make using the computer a much more enjoyable experience.

If you're display is 17" or smaller, you're using a monitor and not a flat-panel display, and you have the room to do it, this upgrade is easy and a lot less than purchasing a new computer. Also if down the road you do purchase a new computer you will not need a new display.

Disc drives

Adding a new disc drive such as a faster CD-R/CD-RW (cd burner) or a DVD drive can be a great upgrade to a computer that either has a slower drive or does not have a CD-ROM/CD-R/CD-RW/DVD.

If you burn or create a lot of your own discs a new burner can greatly decrease the time it takes to create each disc. In addition a faster drive can also help with the installation process or load time of any CD or DVD programs. Apart from these two examples this upgrade is more of a new feature than a performance upgrade.

Hard drive space upgrade

In the past upgrading the hard drive was a popular upgrade. However, today hard drives are becoming so large that most users are not running out of disk space. However, if your computer is running out of hard drive space, you're happy with the performance of the computer, and you're considering the options between upgrading and purchasing a new computer adding a new hard drive to the computer is a cheap and often fairly simple upgrade, you can also put in a 2nd hard drive to add space, and nothing would have to be reloaded, and it would be a good back up drive to the things you already have on your computer. When the drive is not the drive with the operating system on it, it rarely fails or needs to be wiped.

Other upgrades

Apart from the above recommendations if you're looking at doing any other upgrades such as CPU, or motherboard, I almost always recommend that you save your money and purchase a new computer now or down the road.

Send me your questions: Montgomery@Hollyecho.com and I will answer, include if I could post your questions in my next article.