Windows 11 Hardware & Home vs. Pro Versions
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Short link to Google Drive (adhere to caps) **https://ishort.ink/rSzn**

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Greetings

Congratulations! You've decided to take the plunge and invest in a new Windows 11 device.

We're here to help you make a decision with the following information.

Note: We do not get paid or make any commissions for this guide.

Contents

Glossary of Terms

Bloatware: Unnecessary or unwanted programs that come preinstalled on a computer. They take up space and slow down your device, even if you never use them. They can sometimes lead to unwanted pop-up ads and may make the system vulnerable to more adware. Companies may get commissions for purchases you make from ads or subscriptions after trial periods.

e.g. Mail and Calendar, OneNote, Microsoft Teams, Candy Crush and third-party apps like McAfee or Norton antivirus

See Bloatware section below, pages 6-8.

CPU (Processor): The CPU is the brain of your computer. A faster CPU makes a computer feel quicker and more responsive. The number of cores and threads within a CPU can also significantly impact performance, especially for more demanding tasks (e.g. video editing or running multiple applications simultaneously).

For everyday activities like email and internet browsing, a 3 core (Intel i3 or AMD Ryzen 3) may be sufficient. For photo/video editing or more demanding tasks, consider a computer with at least a 5 cores (Intel i5 or AMD Ryzen 5) processor, or even higher.

RAM (Memory): RAM is like your computer's short-term memory. The higher the RAM, the better it can manage multiple tasks at once without notably slowing down. For most people, 8GB is plenty for browsing, email and light document editing. But if you keep many programs open at the same time, or often edit videos, 16GB will feel smoother. Some devices have the ability to expand the RAM.

Note: **Because Mike has have multiple programs and browsers open simultaneously and wanted higher speed, he bought a 32GB minicomputer.**

Storage (Hard Disk Drive {HDD} or Solid State Drive {SSD}): Where your computer (now they usually come with an SSD) stores all your files and programs. It can also be an external device (either) to store files. (Also see USB External Device below.) SSDs are much faster than the older HDDs, so your computer will turn on and open programs faster. 256GB is a starting size, but if you have many photos or videos, look for 512GB or even a 1TB. Consider buying a device that permits adding more storage if that may become an issue later.

Screen Size and Resolution: A bigger laptop screen, 15 inches or more, makes it easier to view everything clearly. A higher resolution (e.g. 1920x1080, full HD) makes pictures and text sharper and easier on the eyes. Consider a blue light filter as well.

USB External Drives: Portable devices used to store and transfer files. They can provide extra space for documents, photos or copies of data files. They plug into a computer's USB port and are easy to use.

USB Hub: A device that expands a single USB port letting you connect multiple USB devices such as a keyboard, mouse, printer or external drive. It's like a power strip for USB connections, giving you more outlets to plug in your devices. Ours have seven ports.

Windows Operating System (OS): Manages your programs, files and hardware (monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.). It provides a user-

friendly interface with icons and menus, making it easier for you to do tasks like browsing the internet, writing documents or checking email.

See your two main options for Windows OS (2) below.

Considerations for Buying

Battery Life (for laptops): Good battery life is important since WiFi and Bluetooth drain the battery faster. A good battery life is 8 to 12 hours.

Bluetooth*: 5.0 or higher, as newer versions have better range, faster transfer speeds and more reliability. Do you need the device to easily pair with common accessories such as wireless hearing aids, headsets, keyboards, printers, speakers or fitness trackers?

Brand Reputation and Support: Buy your device from a reputable brand or resource with good customer support. Check online reviews or get recommendations. Check the product warranty information and/or tech support service plans if you need to feel assured you will get competent help when needed.

Connectivity: If you might want to connect a laptop to a larger monitor or TV, make sure the laptop includes an HDMI port.

Keyboard and Touch Pad or Mouse: If possible, try out before you buy, especially on a laptop. Are the keys comfortable to type on? Is the touch pad responsive? Specially designed keyboards and mice with larger keys or ergonomic designs can be more comfortable. A wireless mouse or keyboard is easier to transport.

Ports: Make sure the computer has enough USB ports for your devices (printer, external hard drive, etc.). If not, or you may need a USB Hub.

Web Camera and Microphone: Does the monitor or laptop have these built in? If not consider buying a combination one for Zoom or other online meetings.

Speakers: Are they built in and can they be heard clearly? Are your current external speakers usable for your new device or must you buy new speakers or a converter for the speakers you have now?

WiFi*: Look for dual-band support (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz). The 2.4 GHz band provides better range, while 5 GHz offers faster speeds for demanding activities like video calls or streaming.

Wi-Fi 6 is a newer version of wireless internet technology that provides faster speeds, better performance in crowded areas and improved reliability. It's especially relevant for homes with multiple devices connected at the same time.

* Note: Bluetooth and WiFi can support additional features like smart home devices, voice assistants and emergency alert systems, which are particularly helpful for seniors.

Bloatware and Bloatware-Free Device Alternatives

Bloatware is often found on major commercial brands. Brands often use special pricing to entice you to purchase a bloatware filled device. Inquire about bloatware before you buy. Look at reviews or ask Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Note: You can manually remove bloatware after purchasing a device, by using the Windows "Apps & Features" settings or find a reputable uninstaller app. Exercise caution when deleting apps you are not familiar with.

Avoid deleting 'installed apps' attributed to Microsoft Corporation on your device (Windows 11 path: Settings > Apps > Installed Apps).

Check out relevant YouTube videos and tech resources like Senior Planet's Hotline to assist you in identifying and removing bloatware.

Mini PCs: Small, compact desktop computers, often with surprisingly powerful specs and better performance at a reasonable cost. They tend to have less bloatware because they often focus on performance and value, rather than installing a lot of extra software.

Unlike a laptop or all-in-one, they do require peripherals (e.g. like a desktop or tower) including a separate monitor, keyboard, mouse, webcam, speakers, microphone and more. Wireless (requires a USB connection) and bluetooth options are available for some peripherals. If you already have peripherals, check how they connect to the mini; you may need to buy additional cables or a USB Hub.

Many modern Mini PCs do not need fans. They operate quietly, consume less power and have fewer issues with dust accumulation compared to traditional desktops with fans. Their compact size also makes them easier to place in small spaces, reducing exposure to dust-prone areas. It is essential to ensure proper ventilation to avoid overheating.

Ask a tech-savvy person, friend or family member to help you through the process of connecting everything and ensuring that it's working properly. Minis are typically easier to maintain over time because users have more control over hardware and software updates.

Read online reviews to assess reliability and customer support of suppliers.

Custom-Built PCs (from local shops or techies)

These computers are assembled by a local computer shop or individual using components you select. Specify that you want a clean Windows install, without bloatware or extra software, as well as the exact hardware that you need.

These experts can also transfer your programs and files and troubleshoot the installation, saving you time and mistakes. However, you may be without a computer for some time.

This option may be more expensive than purchasing pre-built devices and you will need to know what components to choose or get recommendations from the techie. Look for a shop or individual with good reviews or seek a recommendation.

All In One PCs are not recommended. If one piece of hardware fails (e.g. the monitor) it may require extensive repairs or the need to buy a new device.

Windows 11 Home and Pro Versions

You will need to make a decision about which version of Windows 11 to purchase, Home or Pro.

Windows 11 Home: The standard version for most home users. It includes all the features you need for everyday tasks.

Note: Windows 11 Enterprise or Education versions have additional features like Pro. But these versions are generally not available for the average user.

Windows 11 Pro: This version has some extra features but is more expensive. Most home users don't need the additional features unless you want advanced security and convenience features such as:

- **BitLocker Encryption:** Protects sensitive files by encrypting the entire drive, ensuring data remains secure even if the device is lost or stolen. You will need to protect access to the encrypted area by setting a strong password or using a recovery key.

- **Remote Desktop:** Allows you to access your computer from another device without requiring someone at the other end. It can be very helpful when traveling or away from your device. Your computer must remain powered on and connected to the internet for this feature to work smoothly,.

  Note: There are security risks if Remote Desktop is not properly configured.

Addendum

You need copies of your data files to install on your new device unless someone will do that for you. It is best to have at least two copies on external devices. Remember to manually copy your files regularly.

Windows 11 only uses OneDrive for <u>automatic</u> backups. This can simplify the process of securing your personal data if you use OneDrive. Manually backup your data on external drives or other cloud storage sites if you do not intend on using OneDrive.

Windows Security (a.k.a. Windows Defender) is an antivirus and firewall protection app included with Windows 11. Commercial devices may have third-party antivirus software installed that might conflict with the Windows Security app.

Follow these basic security practices (and others):

> Set up a strong password for the user account and keep Windows 11 updated with the latest patches.

> Be informed about security and privacy updates.

> Stay safe and download files or images only from well-known or trusted places. Do not download files from unknown sources such as websites, suspicious emails or links that you do not recognize or trust since these files may contain harmful software.

> Do not connect USB drives from unknown sources since they may contain viruses or malware.

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