Purchasing a New Computer System

1. Get the right processor for the job.
The processor is one of the most important factors that impacts on the speed of your PC. Low cost PC's usually have Celeron, or non Intel processors to save money. The Celeron processor is a normal Intel processor that has been deliberately "crippled" for the entry level market. The Celeron is fine for internet browsing or light home use, but it starts to struggle when you have multiple applications running. To get good performance from your new PC you should specify an Intel Core i5 or Core i7. Processors are expensive to upgrade, so this is the most important decision that you will make on the specification of your new PC. On some PC's the entire motherboard will need to be replaced just to upgrade the processor. The average cost of upgrading a processor is between $250 and $500 including parts and labor.

2. Get enough memory
The second most important factor determining the speed of your PC is the amount of memory. Although memory can be relatively inexpensive to upgrade it's still cheaper to get the initial specification right, than it is to upgrade later. These days you should specify a minimum of 1GB of memory or 2GB if you want to use all of the new Windows 7 features. The average cost of upgrading to 1GB of RAM would be approximately $90 to $120 including parts and labor.

3. Get the right version of Windows
There are various different versions of Windows and not all are suitable for educational use. For example Microsoft Windows Home version can not run all engineering required software. You should specify Microsoft Windows 7 Professional or Microsoft Windows 7 Ultimate if possible- these are the 2 that can be attached to a network. If you don't specify it with your PC upgrading to these versions will cost you approximately $250 for the software and labor.

4. Buy an extended hardware warranty
We always suggest that you take the extended warranty, but for a great deal you must purchase it with the PC. A two to three year extended warranty for next business day onsite maintenance, can be as little as $60 & $120. Make sure that the contract includes next day onsite service. It's much more expensive to purchase the maintenance contract annually, or to have a PC repaired on an emergency basis.

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Note: Campus Book Store has a discount on software for any CSUN Student. This includes Windows and Microsoft Office.

SITES AND LOCATIONS

http://www.hp.com

http://www.sony.com

http://www.dell.com

Best Buy

Frys Electronics