m Nate's Computer Recommendations
For power users   2021

These are my recommendations for "power users" who spend significant time on their computer and sometimes do specialized work such as graphics or video, or work with large files.

Brands
The following are my recommended brands for production laptops and desktops.

- Apple (MacOS) •System76 (Linux) • Dell • Lenovo

What to look for
Here are some key things to keep in mind when looking for a new laptop or desktop.

- At least 16gb of RAM (consider 32gb if you want to be happy with it in 5 years)
- Hard drive capacity is not as significant an issue as you might expect, but hard drive speed is. Operating systems and programs get bigger and bigger, so the bottleneck is how fast it can read and write data. For power users, it is imperative that you get a device with an SSD hard drive.
- These days, a good processor is less important than it was 10 years ago, but for a power user, it's still a factor. You should be okay with an Intel i5 or AMD Ryzen 5, but if you want to be happy with it in 5 years, you'll want an Intel i7 or better, or AMD Ryzen 7 or better.

Where to buy
You can buy a laptop or desktop from BestBuy or other retailers, but be aware that sometimes they come with more pre-installed "bloatware" that can slow down your new computer. Here are some other places I recommend you look as well.

- Dell outlet: dell.com/outlet
- newegg: newegg.com
- B&H: bhphotovideo.com

Operating Systems
Windows is still the dominant operating system for power users, in part because of the number of programs that people depend on that only run on Windows. However, depending on your use case, particularly if Microsoft Office is not a requirement, some other options might be worth a look.

Chromebook
Chromebooks are surprisingly powerful. There are people who make great use of these as power workstations. You can install Android apps directly in ChromeOS, which opens a huge window of capabilities. It's also possible to install Linux applications on ChromeOS, meaning there really is no limit to what you can do on a Chromebook.

MacOS
If you're already familiar with Mac, or you like the feel and interactions you have with apple devices, it might be worth it to consider an Apple device. You will pay more of course, but the hardware they make in general is still more robust than the PC options, and there are security advantages. The debate continues to rage over whether or not a Mac is worth the money, but if you've got to have it, you won't regret it.