

Silver Surfers - Choosing a Computer

WHAT COMPUTER? DESK - LAPTOP - TABLET - PHONE - KINDLE

WHAT OS? WINDOWS - APPLE - ANDROID - LINUX

WHAT ELSE? KEYBOARD - MOUSE - SCREEN - CAMERA

PRINTER - SCANNER - STICK - EXTERNAL DISC

WHAT FOR? EMAIL - WEB - DOCS - PICS - GAMES

WHAT NEXT? SOCIAL ROBOTS - 5G & 6G - SAS - IT UTILITY

3.04

Acquiring a new computer is something that most people undertake perhaps every three or four years and parallels in some way the purchase of a car. What factors play a role in the choice?

Current model - if you like it just buy an updated version

Price - just like forecourt deals, computer retailers may be anxious to shift kit as new models come in

Speed - for the average user the speed of the internet connection may be more important, for gaming a higher spec computer will be needed

Capacity - desktop computers will have the most storage expandability

Appearance - fashion statement, status statement, appreciation of good design, ergonomics

Colour - anything but black! Except that a black surround to the screen is the most restful on the eyes

Your conflicting requirements may lead to a compromise piece of kit which is less than optimal on some points. If the budget allows look at say a desktop at home because you want two HD screens for your photo work and document storage, with a tablet for general use at home and when on the move.

Think about the peripheral devices. Do you need a colour printer or would a monochrome laser be more useful? Do your finger joints need a more ergonomic keyboard and a specialist mouse? What medium will you use for backing up your data? Could you use a wide screen or two screens?

Use the internet to explore reviews and feedback.

Silver Surfers - Choosing a Computer

- > **Talk to friends and relatives about the computers they use**
- > **Watch them use the kit and try out a few activities yourself**
- > **See what fellow surfers use**
- > **Age UK Isle of Wight run an IT inclusion service - ask them**
- > **Check trusted web reviews**

3.05

Things move quickly in the world of computer hardware and software. My desktop PC is 9 years old and runs Windows 7 - to replace it with like for like will not be a straightforward process. I will be reading around and talking to people with different PC set-ups in order to reach a decision on what to buy.

Silver Surfers - Session 4

MORE EMAIL

FILES - DOCUMENTS - PHOTOS

APPS

BACKUP

4.01

There is always a bit more to know about email and some bits bear repeating!

A great deal of our everyday lives used to exist as paper documents, printed pictures, slides, video or sound tapes, vinyl discs etc which now more and more are recorded in an electronic form inside a computer or on an external medium, organised as 'files'. A file is the basic unit of storage as far as the user is concerned. It occupies a named space within the storage area of the computer, an area divided up into organisational units known as folders.

What is an App?

Silver Surfers - More Email

CONTACTS	CREATE - SAVE - IMPORT - FORWARD DETAILS
TASKS	TO-DO LIST - CALENDAR
ATTACHMENTS	SIZE - LINKS
MANAGEMENT	FOLDERS - MARKING UP
SETTINGS	VIEWS - REDIRECTION - OUT-OF-OFFICE

4.02

A contacts list can be much more than just a set of email addresses - postal addresses, telephone numbers, photograph. You can send individual details to other people, you can export contact details to an Excel spreadsheet or import new contacts.

Private electronic task lists and calendars may be suit the individual or sometimes regarded as overkill. They are very useful if you have to organise a group of people or a club as tasks and dates can be distributed via the connected email and managed.

Beware of large attachments - some people have limited data download capacity and a large attachment will eat into their allowance or take some time to receive. Use a link instead if you can.

Get to know the bells and whistles of whatever email view you use - manage your folders, purge on a regular basis, use categories to highlight.

Silver Surfers - Files

DEVICE

FOLDER

FILE

DOCUMENT - PHOTOGRAPH - TUNE

VIDEO - PROGRAM - DATABASE

FONT - EMAILS - SYSTEM SETTINGS

4.03

Usually the operating system will have assigned some standard folders at the top level - My Documents, My music etc - which the user can further divide into subfolders to reflect their individual preferences. Cloud based storage systems such as Google Cloud follow the same sort of structure structure.

If you use memory sticks, SD cards or storage devices other than the main system device, you will have to organise the structure from scratch.

You should make regular copies of data because your laptop, tablet or PC may fail completely. In some cases you should also make copies of the entire system along with a repair set so that your system can be reinstated after a repair. Even if you use cloud storage it may still be possible to lose data or for the cloud provider to suffer a catastrophe.

Should you backup the backup copies periodically? Good quality DVDs kept sensibly are more stable than sticks but you are well advised to still do complete copies every so often rather than incremental backups.

Silver Surfers - Applications

DOCUMENT - MS Word - Google Docs - Libre Docs

SPREADSHEET - MS Excel - Google Sheets - Libre Sheets

PICTURE - Adobe - Corel Paintshop

MUSIC - Media Player - iPlayer - MusicBee

An 'App' or an 'Application' is a computer program designed to fulfill a data processing requirement. The terminology is somewhat loose; the term 'App' is associated with computer programs that can be downloaded onto smartphones or tablets, while laptops and desktops tend to have 'application programs'. In either case the software has to be installed on the device. We now also have 'web apps' which run within the browser but which are not permanent residents on the user device.

Windows, Mac OS, iOS and Android OS are not applications but collections of systems software that organise and control the computer device, so that applications can function.

Silver Surfers - Backup

WHAT?	SYSTEM DATA - USER DATA
HOW?	WINDOWS - AV PACKAGE - BACKUP PACKAGE
WHEN?	DAILY - WEEKLY - ON CHANGE - WHEN I REMEMBER
WHERE?	DVD - EXTERNAL DRIVE - STICK - CLOUD

This is an easy subject to deal with in general terms and very difficult in specific detail. In general we need to guard against a malfunction in our computer or a user mistake that makes data unavailable - either system data or data that we have saved.

How we proceed will depend on what sort of system we have. The following links discuss in not-too-technical terms several packages and would repay careful reading, although the standard product from the system supplier should usually be sufficient. You will also find that some antivirus products include a backup facility.

<http://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-pc-backup-software>
<https://www.techadvisor.co.uk/test-centre/software/best-backup-software-3647678/>

Microsoft, Apple and Google have products that increasingly favour backup to cloud storage. The Chromebook takes this to the extreme in that backup is unnecessary apart from the possibility that Google might lose the data.