

Smart Steps To Buying A Student's PC

(NAPSA)—For today's students, the PC is an indispensable part of learning, but Mom and Dad don't have to go back to school for a lesson on making smart technology choices. Six simple steps will help parents select the right desktop or laptop PC for their family or the college-bound student.

1. Get a big brain—Teenagers are the most demanding PC users on the planet. They push the multimedia edge on and off the Web, and they use the PC as a home movie editing machine and a digital jukebox. Since these power-hungry applications require a PC with a big brain, go for the most powerful brain—or processor—you can afford. For laptops, that means an Intel® Pentium® III processor with a high “hertz” number (that's the number computer nerds use to measure the power of a PC's brain). One Gigahertz is currently the top end for laptop PCs. For desktop PCs, your best bet is an Intel® Pentium® 4 processor-based system at 1.7 Gigahertz or faster.

2. Remember memory—The techno buzz word here is RAM (for Random Access Memory), which works with the PC's brain to make your programs run more smoothly. Go for at least 128 megabytes of RAM for a laptop or desktop PC. And make sure you have the option to add more as your needs grow.

3. Don't scrimp on storage—The trend in software is for bigger programs, so get a big hard disk (that's the PC's “filing cabinet”). For a laptop, look for at least 10 gigabytes (that's 10 billion bytes of storage capacity), and 40 or more gigabytes for a desktop. And if recording data or music on CDs is



Today's students use the powerful home PC as study tool, home movie editing machine and digital jukebox.

on your student's check list, be sure to get what the kids call a “burner” (that's slang for a CD recorder) and a DVD movie player.

4. Get connected—Not long ago a simple “modem” was all you needed to use a regular telephone line and dial up the Internet. Desktops and laptops today come equipped with a standard modem, so you're covered on that front. But many colleges today also offer students the option to connect using a high-speed digital link. A smart move is to ask for a desktop with a “Network Interface Card” or connector designed to connect to a campus' high-speed network or cable or DSL modem. For laptops, you may need to buy a special mini card and adapter to connect.

5. Think weight and battery life—For laptops, look for a model with Intel® SpeedStep™ technology to boost the running time when

operating via the battery. And bring a backpack with you to the store to “test drive” the weight of a candidate laptop.

6. Set a clear budget—In setting your budget, ask yourself how long you expect to keep the PC and what you want the PC to do today and tomorrow. If you want a system that has room to grow and can support the latest and greatest software, invest in a performance PC. It will last longer and do more for you. Top performing laptops range in price from \$1,700 to \$3,000. Desktop PCs with an Intel Pentium 4 processor start at about \$1,000. For a system with the latest multimedia bells and whistles, plan to spend about \$2,000 to \$2,500.

For more information on how to find the laptop or desktop PC that's right for your student, check out www.intel.com/home.