

## Tips, Tricks and Advice from your local “IT Guru”

This month I want to talk to you about the choice between Apple Mac's and Windows PC's.

Quite a few people this month have asked me if they should buy a Mac rather than a PC. I don't know if the popularity of the iPhone has raised the awareness of the Apple brand, but it seems a lot more people are considering making the switch. So, here are a few things you should take into account.

First off all, you should take the price into consideration. Without a doubt, you will pay a lot more for a Mac. In fact, you will probably pay twice as much for the same sort of processing power that you could get with a PC. The entry level Mac Mini starts at £649, and that's without a screen and keyboard! In the laptop arena you will pay at least £849 for a basic Mac, whereas a good Dell will set you back about £400. The next thing to consider is software compatibility. If you have any specialist software or hardware for a PC it's unlikely to run under Mac OS. Obviously, you can get Mac versions of the most popular software, but you will need to purchase this in addition to the new computer itself. If you like your PC based games, you are out of luck as well. There are a few games for the Mac, but the majority are written for Windows.

So, after reading the previous paragraph, why would anyone even think about switching to Apple? Well, there are a few reasons. They are definitely much more sophisticated and stylish; any Mac looks stunning, and is an elegant touch to any room in comparison to a bulky PC. They are also easier to use, and have a longer, healthier life; they do not suffer from the dreaded Windows bloat, so they don't slow down after a few years. Better yet, you get almost everything you need upon its arrival and can begin using it straight away without any hassle. The most striking advantage, however, is the lack of viruses. Without having the constant worry of updating your anti-virus program or your OS, it really is quite refreshing. You can set up a Mac and let the user interact with it, without any worries that they will accidentally cause any problems. This is the single most important reason to switch to a Mac.

So, would I recommend a Mac over a PC? If you can afford the price premium and want an easy life, or you need a system for someone who is not overly computer literate, then yes. But, as I said last month, Windows 7 is a big improvement over XP and Vista. In fact, the savings you make could go towards your friendly IT guru keeping you system in top shape for a few years!

Having mentioned the iPhone, by the time you read this the new iPhone 4 will have been released. Highlights are a much better screen, camera and battery. Also some nifty additions include a camera flash, thinner design and the ability to do video calls. It looks like a good upgrade and O2 is offering some tempting deals for existing owners. Personally, I shall be putting my name down! Much more importantly, the new iOS4 update for the existing phone will be available. This is something you must get if you have the 3GS, because apart from a ton of new functions that App developers will be able to take advantage of, Apple have at last provided a way of multitasking. Don't worry if you don't understand, just know that it is a good thing.

Finally, last month I mentioned the iPad. I've had mine for a couple of weeks, and while it doesn't quite live up to Apples "Magical" tag, it is very good. It's brilliant for a quick check of eMail or web browsing, for example. In addition, the "instant on" ability is very useful, and the fact that it is so easy to use means it's ideal for those of us that struggle with modern technology. It really is something you could give your 85 year old relative without any immediate concern. Can it replace a PC? Maybe not quite yet, but give it a year and I can see lots of people opting for this rather than a full PC or Mac system.

If you have any questions or anything you would like me to cover in this column, email me at [look@4-11consultants.co.uk](mailto:look@4-11consultants.co.uk)

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