

Introduction

Welcome to *Buying A Computer For Dummies* — a book which assumes that you know *nothing* about a computer but are strangely compelled to buy one. If that's you, you have found your book!

This book is not a buyer's guide. In it, you won't find endless, boring lists of prices and products and useless part numbers. Instead, this book assumes that you need a computer for some reason. You'll discover that reason and then read about how to find software to carry out that task. From there, you'll match hardware to your software and end up with the computer that's perfect for you.

Because this is a *For Dummies* book, you can expect some lively and entertaining writing — not boring computer jargon. Nothing is assumed. Everything is explained. The result is that you'll have your own computer and *enjoy* the buying process.

About This Book

Buying a computer is a five-step process, which this book fully explains. Along the way, you'll read about computer hardware and software and fill in some worksheets that help you configure a computer just for you.

The five steps to buying a computer are outlined in Chapter 1. After that, the book is divided into several parts, each of which occurs at a different stage in the buying process:

Part I overviews the entire process.

Part II discusses computer hardware and software: what it is and why you need it.

Part III details the buying process: where to buy, how to read a computer ad, and how to find service and support before the sale.

Part IV deals with setting up your new computer.

Part V is the traditional *For Dummies* “Part of Tens” — various lists for review or to help you get on your way.

And Just Who Are You?

Let me assume that you're a human being who wants to own a computer. You probably don't have one now, or, if you do, it's very, *very* old and you desire a new one. Other than that, your experience with a computer is very limited. You have heard the jargon and know some brand names, but that's about it. If that's you, this is your book.

This book concentrates on buying a computer, which can be either a PC, Macintosh, handheld, laptop, or game console. Although all the information applies to buying *any* computer, the main thrust involves buying a desktop computer.

Icons Used in This Book



Lets you know that something technical is being mentioned. Because it's technical, and written primarily as nerd trivia, you can freely skip the information if you want.



Flags useful information or a helpful tip. When you're visiting the computer store, for example, make sure that you leave with the same number of children you had when you arrived.



Something to remember, like all computers need a monitor or else you'll never see what it is you're doing.



Oops! Better watch out. You have lots of warnings to heed when you're buying a computer. This icon lets you find them right quick.

Where to Go from Here

Steadily grab this book with both hands, and start reading at Chapter 1. Then continue reading. Occasionally, you may be asked to visit a computer store or find a computer advertisement. Do so when asked. Fill in the worksheets that are offered. Then get ready to go out and buy yourself a computer.