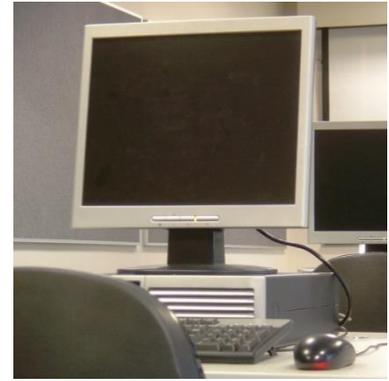# Buying a Secondhand Desktop

This will tutorial will tell you what to watch out for when purchasing a second-hand desktop. When checking out a secondhand computer, bring a USB device such as a flash drive with you for testing ports, and also headphones or ear buds if you may use them.

1. If it is running Windows XP or Windows Vista then do not buy it. Both operating systems have been essentially abandoned by the major software providers such as Microsoft and Google.

2. If you cannot check it out for yourself in person, I would generally recommend you not buy it. There are too many things that can go wrong. It might have issues the seller does not even realise. If you cannot see it but you are still keen to purchase it, ask them questions based on this document.

3. Compare the asking price with other sources such as TradeMe or ask an expert. Is it a realistic and fair price for a system of these specifications?

4. Ask the seller how old it is. If it is more than six years old, I would advise against purchasing it. While any part in a tower desktop can be replaced with relative ease, once they reach this age the odds of failure of multiple components increases dramatically.

5. Power up the computer.

6. If the deal includes a screen, check the quality of the picture. Even small defects can get worse over time. However, these are relatively inexpensive to replace and can be used with any tower.

7. Leave the computer on for approximately ten minutes. Have a listen to the noise coming from any vents. The whirring noises are cooling fans. If any of them sound high pitched or obviously struggling, then the fan is either in need of a clean or damaged. Most desktop fans are relatively inexpensive to replace except for the power supply fan which would necessitate replacing the whole power supply. Closer examination by a qualified tech here would be beneficial.

8. Make sure Windows has been fully reset and none of the previous owner's files and apps remain. If it has not been reset, ask the seller to either do so, get a tech to do it, or offer you a discount so you can get it done. You can never be sure what the previous owner has done. It could be infested with viruses and spyware.

9. Make sure it is connecting to the Internet.

10. Play something on YouTube to make sure the sound works. Test the headphone jack if applicable.

11. Using the aforementioned USB device, plug it into each USB port and make sure it works.

12. Pay attention to the speed. Does it seem to be fast enough for your needs?

If the desktop passes all of these tests, there is a good chance it will be a safe purchase. If in doubt, ask if you can take the computer to an expert for an assessment before purchase.