

# Mega-Giga-Huh?

■ **COMPUTERS:** Knowing the needs and expectations of the user are critical to finding the best computer

By Amy Palanuk  
Higher Education Reporter

Cashing in on the right cache, zip and megabytes can be a complex and confusing excursion for computer buyers.

And finding the right computer for the right price eventually results in one thing.

"It really comes down to what your needs as a customer are," said Mark Lundgren, sales and technical support specialist for computers at the University Bookstore.

By looking at the needs and expectations of each student, Lundgren is then able to choose the most efficient and practical computer for their specific needs.

But finding the best package for a student's specific needs can become a jumbled mess of numbers, resulting in "mega-hurts" to the wallet and the brain.

What kind of computer should you buy? What kind of capabilities should you look for? How much should you expect to spend? And how long before the computer goes out of date and becomes obscure to the needs required for students entering into the "real world"?

**Mac vs. PC**

The differences between a Macintosh and a PC (IBM-compatible personal computer) lie within the casing.

"You can put together PCs with different parts but with Macintoshes you really can't—you have to buy the whole package," said Jennifer Jones, computer and information science major.

There's also the dilemma of deciding what's comfortable to work with.

"I never heard of someone who uses a Mac in their office and then goes home to use their PC and say it's fun," said Nick Martini, computer and information science major and salesman at the bookstore.

Martini specializes in Macintoshes but admits the trend for computer science majors and the greater business world is towards PCs.

But Lundgren, a PC specialist, gives Macintosh credit for their "ability to cross platform and read disks from PCs."

After IBM allowed other companies to copy their operating systems, PCs have taken the lead in the commercial market for equipment and software, but in the last few years Macintosh has adapted by allowing clones of its own operating system to be made.

A Macintosh clone, using a Macintosh operating system, is offered at the bookstore, now selling for \$1,295 without a monitor.

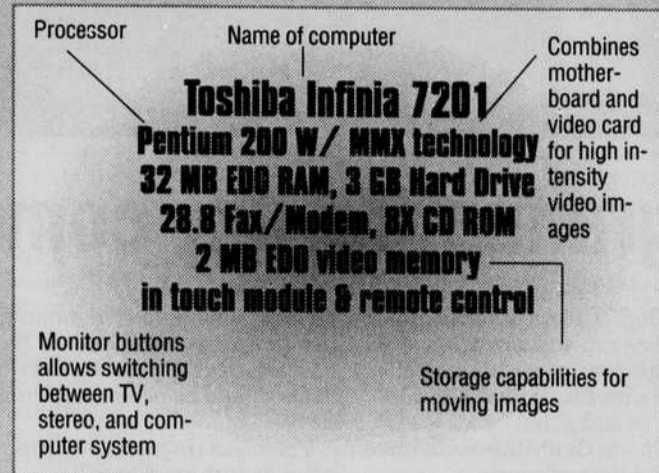
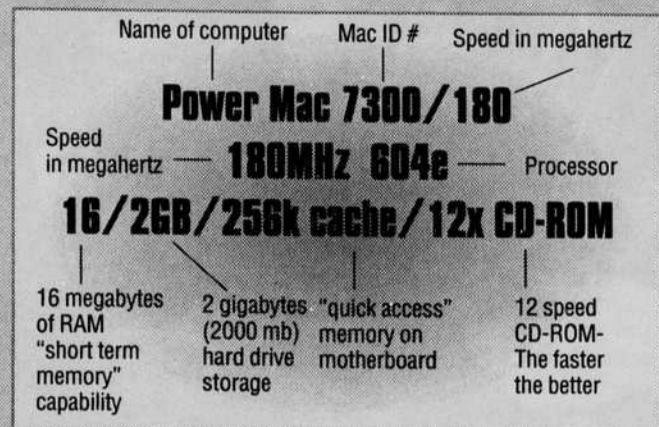
But the trend in educational institutions still veers toward Macintosh use.

Both law and architecture students are required to purchase or have access to Macintosh computers.

"Macintosh is considered a better design tool," said Leslie Hunter, admissions advisor for

**BUYING COMPUTERS: BYTE BY BYTE**

Ever wonder what all those letters and numbers mean?



**Price List for Desktop Computers**

■ **Apple Products: (not including monitor or other accessories)**

- PowerMac 440/200: \$1570
- PowerMac 6500/225: \$1885
- PowerMac 7300/180: \$2130
- PowerMac 8600/200: \$3000

■ **Windows 95 OS Desktop Computers: (including monitor and other accessories)**

- Toshiba Infinia 7201: \$2699
- Custom built computers: range from \$1200 to \$2683

■ **Monitors:**

- 15" Multimedia Display: \$450
- Apple 1705 Display: \$645
- Apple 1710 Display: \$790

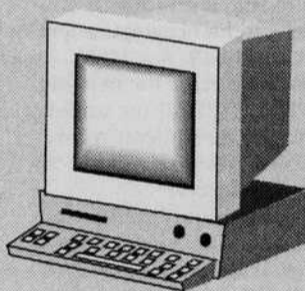
■ **Printers:**

- StyleWriter: range from \$240 to \$295
- LaserWriter: range from \$585 to \$2120

■ **Modems:**

- Range from \$45 to \$185, depending on speed.

SOURCE: University Bookstore



architecture and interior architecture. "It's not necessarily the one most used in the field but [it] can teach the students basic design elements."

The undergraduate and graduate application for admissions for the school of architecture states incoming architecture students are required to have access to computer tools in their studio workspace.

The school of architecture's recommendation for '97-'98 school year is the PowerMac 7300/180, now sold at the bookstore for \$2,130, not including monitor, software and other accessories.

For students more interested in power, adaptability and a wider variety of options, experts recommend buying a PC.

The top of the line PC offered at the bookstore, Toshiba Infinia 7201, has "all the doo-dads," said Lundgren, including the ability to act as a television set and stereo system.

"For a sleek looking computer for the dorm room, this is it," Lundgren said.

But for students with a tighter budget, a computer can be custom built for a good price, say most PC specialists.

**Costs**

The most expensive parts of the computer are the monitor, motherboard or processor, and storage space.

"In general, the higher the numbers, the better the computer," Jones said.

But for students on a tight budget, most recommend that a larger hard drive is the highest priority.

"It might be slower, but at least you'd have the capacity to store," Jones said.

Students can get educational discounts on computers and software at the bookstore. Costs for desktop computers currently listed are as follow:

PowerMacs range in price from \$1,570 to \$4,410, not including a monitor, printer, modem and other accessories.

Custom-built PCs range in price from \$1,580 to \$2,683, including monitor and modem, but not a printer.

# Want A

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**Marco Ching** was hired by the Tye Group in Portland BEFORE he graduated. THE REASON—he was an *Oregon Daily Emerald* Advertising Executive from Spring '94 to Fall '96.

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