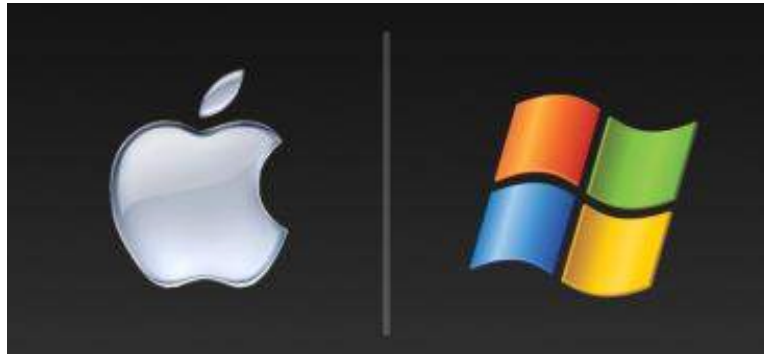


## Windows or Mac OS X?



So, you are ready to buy a new computer and are confused about whether you should buy a Microsoft Windows based computer or an Apple Mac OS X based computer. Well, no worries: I'm here to help. However, let me say right from the beginning, I will not be making an overall recommendation. If your current computer is four or more years old, you will be amazed how much more powerful, secure, quieter, cooler (from a temperature perspective) and capable a new computer is. However, the choice of Windows or Mac is really based on your personal knowledge and requirements. In this newsletter, I will be describing the things you need to consider in making your choice.

### Apps

If you have been running specific applications critical to your personal life or business, then you need to check whether those applications, or newer versions, are available for the latest Windows or Mac OS X platforms. Even if they are available, there may be specific features of the applications that you require, so you will need to make sure those features are available as well. Should what you require not be available, there are still ways that you can move to a new computer, but the configuration and underlying hardware requirements are more complicated. I am referring to what is known as a virtual machine configuration in which you run the old operating system and applications as a "guest" on the new computer. This requires purchasing software (nominal cost) from a company such as VMWare that provides the virtual machine environment and migrating your operating system and applications from the old computer to the new computer. Such a process can take many hours, but it does work if set up properly.

### Peripherals

Similar to applications, if you have an expensive peripheral (such as a specialty printer or scanner) that you require, you need to check two things: can you physically attach the device to your new computer and are there device drivers available. Once again if the answer is no, there may be ways with hardware adapters and a virtual machine environment that your old device can be supported by the new computer.

### Budget

If your budget is less than \$500, you can eliminate a Mac immediately. If you want a laptop and your budget is less than \$900, you can also eliminate a Mac immediately. Since many hardware manufacturers support Windows and only Apple provides Mac OS X computers, you have many more choices in both picking a Windows computer and a price point than with a Mac computer. It used to be the case that since only Apple created both the hardware and the operating system that Macs were more supportable and better integrated. But Microsoft changed the game with the introduction of their Surface line of computers, in which like Apple, they are both the hardware and software manufacturer (but just for the Surface line of products, not for other Windows-based computers).

### Security

Although many believe that Macs are inherently more secure than Windows computers, that really isn't true. What is true is that the installed base of Windows computers vastly exceeds that of Mac computers, thereby creating a much bigger incentive for "the bad guys" to focus their hacking and virus efforts on Windows computers.

### Cloud Support

Microsoft, Apple, and third parties such as Google and Dropbox all offer their own ways of sharing and synchronizing data with the cloud. If you haven't been using the cloud before, then one way or another, there will be an option for you should you wish to begin to leverage this technology. If you are used to a specific cloud offering, then much like with applications, make sure it is available in the form you want on the new computer. If you have chosen iPhones and/or iPads for your mobile computing, integration with Mac OS X is superior as of this writing, so that might be an important selection criteria for you.

### Look and Feel

Both Windows and Mac provide rich and powerful user interfaces. Although there are many similarities, there are many differences as well. If you have been using one interface for a long time and don't want to go through the frustration of learning a new interface, then this might greatly affect your choice of a new computer.

### Other Considerations

Other things for you to think about include:

- desktop vs laptop vs tablet
- screen size
- keyboard comfort
- computer size and weight
- disk capacity
- disk performance (HDD vs SSD/Flash)
- memory
- CPU speed

- expandability
- warranty

*As always, I hope you have found this information useful. If you do not wish to receive these emails in the future, let me know.*

*This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (<http://steve.gimnicher.com>).*