



## The Top Seven Misconceptions About Refurbished Computers

There are plenty of people who would definitely consider buying a pre-owned car, but who wouldn't dream of buying a refurbished computer system. And they may think they have plenty of reasons for feeling that way. However, these reasons are often based on misconceptions about used equipment that simply don't hold up under close scrutiny. This paper takes a look at the most common misconceptions people have about refurbished systems – and why you shouldn't let them get in the way of a great deal.

### 1. "NEW COMPUTERS ARE SO AFFORDABLE THESE DAYS, WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO BUY USED?"

With manufacturers promoting new computers for under \$500, a new system may seem like the obvious choice. But the reality is that you're likely to find a far more compelling variance than you might think between the cost of new and refurbished computers. That's because that \$359 desktop you may be considering is liable to cost far more than that by the time you upgrade the hard drive, memory, and other components to get the power and functionality you're looking for. The fact is, you can get a comparable refurbished system for a lot less.

Here's an example that compares a system being promoted on a major manufacturer's website with a similarly equipped system from a company that sells refurbished systems.

	New	Refurbished
Profile	Notebook	Notebook
Processor	Intel Core 2 Duo 1.80GHz	Intel Core Duo Centrino 2.2GHz
RAM	512MB	512MB
Hard Drive	60GB	40GB
CD/DVD Drive	Combo	Combo
OS	Microsoft XP Professional	Microsoft XP Professional
PRICE	\$ 1218.00	\$ 576.00

Based on information from a major manufacturer's Website and a refurbished-systems seller's site 7/31/07.

## 2. "NEW COMPUTERS COME WITH SUPPORT. USED ONES DON'T. CASE CLOSED."

Any reputable online source for refurbished computers should stand behind the systems it sells with at least a 30-day money-back guarantee and a 90-day parts and labor warranty. Ideally, the company should also provide the option to extend the warranty for a year or more. Electronics recovery companies can offer this kind of assurance of the quality of their refurbished systems for several reasons. First, they tend to get their inventory from large corporations that are doing technology refreshes. Often, these systems may be just a couple of years old and likely to have been very well-maintained. Second, the company should be equipped to thoroughly recondition and test systems before selling them. Finally, the systems made available for sale by electronics recovery companies tend to be "the cream of the crop," because any systems of lesser quality will most likely be broken down for parts. A company that gets its systems from trusted sources will thoroughly test these systems for functionality before reselling them. They typically have very strict standards for the systems that they offer for resale and should have enough confidence in the systems to provide warranties with them.

## 3. "AN OLDER SYSTEM ISN'T GOING TO HAVE THE SPEED AND MEMORY I NEED."

That may have been the case years ago, when software was advancing much more rapidly than hardware. Back then, you almost always needed the newest hardware you could get if you wanted to run the latest applications. Today, that balance has shifted. The newest versions of commonly used business applications like Microsoft Office or Photoshop do not require the latest, greatest hardware; only extremely processing-intensive applications such as gaming are likely to require maximum hardware performance. In most cases, a computer system that's two or three years old is likely to have all the power and performance you need.

## 4. "ONLINE AUCTIONS ARE WAY TOO RISKY – BUT THAT'S WHERE YOU FIND THESE SYSTEMS."

No one could blame you for steering clear of online auction sites. You can't always be sure who's selling the equipment or whether they're trustworthy; you may find that the shipping costs far more than what you pay for the computer itself; and you can probably forget about a warranty or guarantee. Fortunately, however, online auctions aren't the only places to find used computers online. One alternative is to check the online outlets of electronics recovery companies that specialize in refurbishing computers for resale. These sources offer several advantages over online

auctions. For one thing, the systems you buy from them have been completely reconditioned, which is not necessarily – or even likely – to be the case with an online auction site. And a reputable electronics recovery company will stand behind those systems with a money-back guarantee and/or a warranty.

## 5. "I HAVE A SMALL BUSINESS THAT NEEDS A WHOLE FLEET OF COMPUTERS. YOU CAN'T GET 50 OF THE EXACT SAME USED COMPUTER."

You can get exactly that, if you're buying from a company that acquires entire fleets of computers from large companies that are retiring them. Here's how it works: Major corporations turn over those assets to an electronics recycling company, which in turn removes data from the hard drives, reconditions the systems, and then resells them to the public. An electronics recycling company that maintains relationships with large corporations to handle asset retirement in this manner is actually more likely than not to have multiple systems of exactly the same model.

## 6. "I DON'T WANT SYSTEMS THAT HAVE ALL THAT WEAR AND TEAR ON THEM."

If you look specifically for former corporate assets that are retired after a relatively short time in service, you'll be likely to find systems with little wear and tear on them. In addition, look for a seller that has set stringent standards and practices for testing the exterior and interior condition of the systems that it will resell. TechTurn, for example, evaluates systems for resale according to the following minimum guidelines for cosmetic condition and mechanical function.

Exterior Condition	Mechanical Condition
Marks or scratches below tolerance for grade level	All latches functional
No cracked plastics or chipped corners	All drive bays and drive bay locks functional
No discoloration	Hinges and drive bay covered secured and functional
No attached anti-theft devices	All screws and connectors secured
No residue from attached components that have been removed	Card attachments secure
Notebooks: No internal markings, no screen issues	All buttons functional
Thoroughly cleaned and prepared for shipment	USB and/or Firewire ports unobstructed
	Footpads attached
	All fan covers unobstructed by dust
	Notebooks: Keyboard keys attached and functional, mouse pad secured

## 7. "AREN'T NEW COMPUTERS BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?"

The environmental impact of buying and using a computer is the same for a new system as for a refurbished one. But think about the additional positive impact on the environment that you can have by buying a refurbished system instead. Every system that's refurbished and reused is a system that won't end up leaching chemicals into a landfill, as many old computers unfortunately do. Consider these unsettling facts:

- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the chemical contaminants in old electronics include cadmium, lead, mercury, and chromium VI, all of which have the potential to be hazardous to human health and the environment if they're not disposed of properly ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)).
- If the estimated 130,000 computers discarded daily in the U.S. were all tossed into landfills, the result would be a pile of toxic chemicals the size of a football field and more than 1,000 feet high ("Keep computers chemicals from landing in the Landfill," San Antonio Express-News, 2/12/2007).
- The EPA's most recent estimate is that over two million tons of e-waste end up in U.S. landfills each year ("Where computers go to die – and kill," [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com), 4/10/2006).

By buying refurbished computers, you're being environmentally responsible, because you're following the "three Rs" – Reduce Reuse Recycle – that are increasingly considered vital to the continued well-being of the planet.

To sum up, refurbished computers, purchased from reputable resources, cost less than new systems offering comparable performance, are likely to be guaranteed and warrantied, and promote the kind of reuse that reduces the risk of negative environmental impact. What's stopping you from buying them?



### ABOUT TECHTURN

TechTurn is the trusted industry leader for technology recovery, refurbishing and remarketing. Through its world-class facilities and processes, TechTurn provides the foundation for sustainable technology, providing companies with an economically smart, environmentally friendly and risk-free method for the recycling and reselling of used technology. Since 1999, TechTurn has been the preferred take-back partner for 300 of the Fortune 500 and the top four computer manufacturers. These leading organizations provide TechTurn with a non-stop supply of high-quality, high-value technology systems and components that, after testing and certification, are remarketed to customers worldwide. By extending the life of these products, TechTurn is able to enrich the lives of millions of people worldwide while also helping to significantly reduce the amount of e-waste that is filling landfills and polluting the environment. For more information, visit [www.techturn.com](http://www.techturn.com).

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