

Bits & Bytes

Insider tips to get the most out of your computer

“We Just Couldn’t Believe It!”



As seen above, James is enjoying the new computer. “It’s been wonderful to have a totally secure, fast network...this is great!”

-Dr. James Rater

As you are all aware, there are many challenges when it comes to computers. We depend on these machines in both our practice and private lives. Over the last several months, Carolyn and I have worked with a computer contractor, Cherrina Mack of Great Gates Technology, to solve computer problems beyond our abilities.

Cherrina initially helped us configure the home network that allows Carolyn and I to share a printer. This week the motherboard on my computer shorted out and Cherrina came to our home the next day, diagnosed the problem, and suggested as the most cost effective solution, purchase of a new computer.

In addition to her prompt response to the initial problem Cherrina was able to transfer the hard drive from the old machine into the new machine facilitating the transfer of data and significantly increasing hard drive storage space. She was also able to reuse the FAX modem from the old computer.

Cherrina has been courteous, responsive and cost effective. In the event, god forgive, that you develop a need for a service provider in this area, I highly recommend Cherrina.

-Dr. James Rater

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Get Immediate Computer Support 24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week, 365 Days A Year For Only 20¢ A Day!

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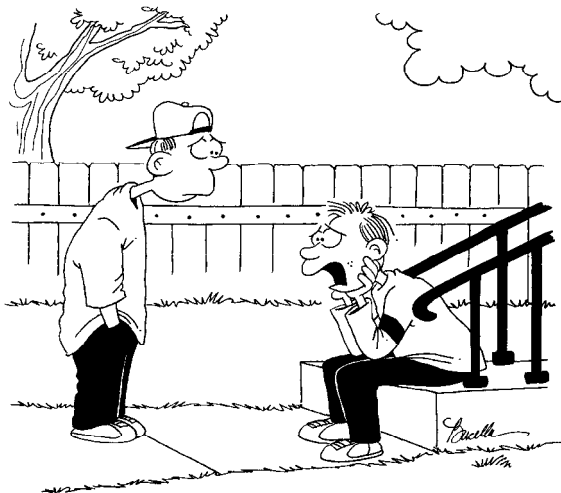
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24 Signs That Your Life Is Going Too Hi-Tech

1. You try to enter your password on the microwave.
2. You have 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
3. You consider "mouse elbow" a sports injury.
4. Your daughter is selling Girl Scout Cookies on her Web site.
5. The concept of using real money is becoming foreign to you.
6. Cleaning up the dining area means getting the fast food bags out of the back seat of your car.
7. The only jokes you "hear" come by e-mail.
8. Your cereal box says, "visit us online", and you do.
9. You consider 2nd day air delivery painfully slow.
10. The reason you don't keep in touch with some of your family: They don't have e-mail addresses.
11. You chat with a stranger from South Africa, but you haven't spoken to your next door neighbor in more than a year.
12. The computer you bought last week is now outdated and selling for half price.
13. You instant message your son in his room saying dinner is ready. He replied back to ask what you're having.
14. You consider naming your daughter "Dot" and your son "Com."
15. You order take-out food online.
16. Your family pet runs on batteries.
17. You can have more meaningful conversations with your car than your spouse.
18. You start calling telemarketers "spammers".
19. You've never actually met your spouse in person.
20. You can turn your lights on, open the garage door, turn up your stereo, and see your back yard without leaving your computer.
21. You have 5 remote controls in your living room to operate one TV.
22. Your dog has an e-mail address.
23. Your idea of a great first date involves a cup of coffee and a chat room.
24. Your legs have fallen off from lack of use.



"How embarrassing. I took my dad to the video arcade and he tried to play the change machine."

5 Things You Should Know Before Buying A New Computer

When you are ready to buy a new computer, one of the first questions you may ask yourself is where can I go to get the best deal. Obviously you don't want to pay more than you have to, but there are other considerations besides price that you should consider before making your decision.

If you shop the local electronics superstores for weekly specials, you can easily get a standard machine at a good price. This option would work best for you if you're not too picky or if you don't have any special requirements for gaming, graphics, or special software requirements.

If you buy over the Internet from a major manufacturer such as Dell or Gateway, you'll get more choice and customization on the components, chip speed, RAM, hard drive size, and video components, but you'll pay a slightly higher price.

The biggest downside to buying online is that you'll have a hard time getting technical support if something goes wrong. Not a week goes by where I don't get a customer who wants to pay me to fix a warranty-covered machine simply because the manufacturer (usually Dell or Gateway) is making it next to impossible to get the problem taken care of.

Sometimes only a component (like the hard drive) will go bad and that means you have to ship the entire machine back to the manufacture and wait a couple of weeks for them to repair it and ship it back.

If you have unique requirements, need help in selecting a machine, or if service before, during, and AFTER the sale is important, then you'll want to buy from a local shop like Great Gates Technology.

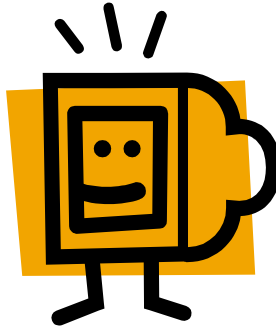
Here Are 5 Big Reasons To Buy Your Next PC From Great Gates:

1. You'll get a senior technician who will take time to explain your options, answer your questions, and help you make a good buying decision based on what YOU need, not what I have to clear off my store shelves. If you buy from an electronics superstore, there's a good chance you'll end up talking to a teenager working on commission who doesn't have any real technical expertise.

Since they don't offer custom-built machines, they will try to talk you into buying whatever they have in-store which may not necessarily be the best choice for your specific needs.

If you buy online, you'll get very little or no help in selecting the right combination of components and options, so this works best ONLY for those individuals who really know what they are buying.

2. Superior technical support and service after the sale. If you've ever dealt with a manufacturer's technical support in the past, you know how frustrating it can be. After waiting on hold for days, you'll end up speaking with a "technician" who doesn't have a clue. Most of the time they're reading from a script and taking you through a series of system checks you could have done on your own.



Whenever you have a problem with a machine that you purchased from Great Gates, we'll troubleshoot it for free. Plus, you won't have to wait on hold when you call, which brings me to another point...

3. If you need technical support on a computer that you bought from us, you won't go through voice mail jail or be transferred to another country. To save money, many manufacturers are outsourcing their technical support to India. The people they hire speak English, but it is sometimes difficult to communicate with them.

4. For no extra charge, we'll set up your e-mail account, Internet access, check your virus protection, set up your firewall, and other preferences and settings. When you buy from a superstore or online, it's up to you to configure your new machine.

5. We'll custom build a new PC using parts from your old PC. Maybe you just need more memory and a video card added. If you simply want to "upgrade" your PC to save a few dollars, we will gladly do it for you. This is something that no other store or online supplier will offer.

The bottom line is this: if you are shopping solely on price and aren't too picky, then watch the weekend papers for sales at your local electronic superstore. They can offer a great price on a standard machine. Usually you can save anywhere from \$100—\$200 buying this way.

For semi-customization at a decent price, check the Internet. There are hundreds of online resellers offering PCs at competitive prices.

For best customization, service, and support after the sale, buy from Great Gates. You'll pay a little bit more but we'll make sure you get exactly what you need without any hassle or problems. ###

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Services We Offer:

- PC & Printer installation, repair, and troubleshooting
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- Disaster recovery
- System back ups & data protection
- Virus protection & removal
- Network security
- E-mail & Internet setup help
- Custom built PCs
- Wireless networking
- Consulting & remote support
- One-on-one computer training
- Red Wing Software Installation & Consulting



Attention Small Businesses:

Get all of the computer support you need without the expense of hiring a full time IT staff. Ask about our Small Business Computer Support Program.

Computer Question of The Month: **Help, My Inbox Is Full!**

Q. Several of my friends have tried to send me e-mails but keep getting them bounced back with the message that my inbox is full. I don't have that many e-mails and have deleted most of them already. How can I fix this?

A. The bounce message is referring to your Internet Service Provider's server that handles your e-mail, not the inbox on your computer.

Most ISPs will give you 5-10 megabytes of space for your e-mail messages. Once that space is taken up, all other e-mails will bounce and senders will receive the message that your inbox is full.

There are two things you need to do to fix this:

First, check your e-mail preferences and settings with your ISP. If you are downloading your e-mail to your own e-mail software (like Outlook), then make sure your ISP is deleting all messages after you downloaded them to your PC or you'll eventually run out of space.

If you don't know how to review or change your settings, simply call your ISP and they can change it for you. That should solve the immediate problem.

Next, make sure you change the settings in your e-mail software so that all messages are deleted from the server after download. Here's how:

In Outlook Express:

Click Tools>>Accounts. Click the Mail tab and select the proper account. Click Properties>>Advanced. Clear the box next to "Leave a copy of messages on server."

In Microsoft Outlook:

Click Tools>>E-mail Accounts. Select "View or change existing e-mail accounts." Click Next. Select the proper account and click Change. Click Change and More Settings. Select the Advanced tab. Clear the box next to "Leave a copy of messages on the server." Click OK>>Next>>Finish.

In Eudora:

Select Tools>>Options>>Incoming Mail. Clear the box next to "Leave mail on server."

In Netscape:

select Edit>>Mail & Newsgroups Account Settings. Click Server Settings. Clear the box next to "Leave messages on server." Click OK.

Since e-mail can pile up, I recommend a monthly "clean up" where you save all large attachments to your hard drive and delete the message from your inbox.

Not only will this make your inbox easier to manage, but it will also ensure these attachments are saved when you run your system back up.

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Have a question you want answered?
Send it to: cmack@greatgates.net

