



# Don't buy any computers until 2011

*Aching for a new computer? New technology and lower pricing make it worthwhile to wait if you can.*



Mortimer

**BY MICHAEL MORTIMER**

The purpose of this article is to alert you to some technology developments of which you are probably not aware since you are busy litigating cases and preparing for trial. The thrust of this article is that if you can make do with your existing computer equipment, you must hold off buying computers until 2011, or ideally 2012. Why?

- Coming out this year will be a number of exciting NEW technologies on computers, both for notebooks and desktops;
- Coming soon will be improved technologies that will save you a lot of time and money;
- A computer bought today will be horribly outdated in 2011 (and probably by mid-2010). There is no way that I want to be in that situation, where after practically just taking it out of the box my computer is already outdated.
- I keep computers about three years. Assuming that I made a computer purchase today, that would really upset my stable of technology if this time next year (only one year into my three-year computer life cycle) I will be on the outside looking in at all the new technology;
- The prices on next year's technology will be really low, simply because technology is becoming dirt-cheap nowadays. We consumers benefit from this, for once! We will certainly be getting way more "bang for the buck," as the saying goes.
- This should be good news for you because now you don't have to hassle with what's entailed when buying new equipment (backing up and transferring files, updating programs and applications, etc.) More significant, you can hold on to your cash for a year or two more. No matter how you slice it, avoiding cash expenditures and saving money are good things.

## What's happening?

Around December 2008, I told readers to hold off buying a new computer because it would have Microsoft's

dog-with-fleas operating system (OS) on it, (Vista). I said that Windows 7 would be coming out in October 2009 so it would be wiser to purchase a PC that includes Windows 7 rather than the flea-bitten Vista. This would be better and less costly than paying \$100+ to buy the OS off the shelf for each of your computers. (Sidenote: MS copy protection techniques now effectively prevent anyone from installing a Windows OS, Vista and beyond, on more than one PC.)

Fast forward to October 2009. Windows 7 did in fact debut when I said it would (not to toot my own horn, but I will, I informed Plaintiff Magazine readers about Windows 7 back when laypeople did not know what it was, much less when it was coming out). Anyway, Windows 7 is a fantastic improvement over Vista, and even better than XP. I have been telling people it is OK to buy the OS now, but only if you can get it at a discount. For example, students have been buying Windows 7 Home Premium for about \$30.

Well, now events have occurred that have caused me to write this "emergency" article and suggest to you to hold off buying new computers once again. So, if you can hold out, great. But if you need a new computer now, because not even "duct tape" can hold your "monuments to technology" together (1999 tech, that is), then by all means replace the computers that need replacing, but otherwise hold off replacing the computers that are working perfectly fine.

## Why another delay?

I could go on and on, but let me first mention a few upcoming and current technologies:

- Superspeed USB 3.0
- Blu-Ray-RW Drives
- OLED Displays
- Hybrid Notebooks
- Hard Disks that operate 10X faster than existing units
- Hard Disks 1TB (terabyte, 1000 x 1GB) for \$50



- Windows 7 – It's a hit!
- Prices for the above improvements? LOWER than what we paid last year for the then-latest tech!

### Why hold off?

#### Blu-Ray

Everyone is familiar with Blu-Ray, if for no other reason than the immensely popular Netflix movie rental service has movies available in Blu-Ray format. Plus, just as DVD players replaced VCRs, so too are Blu-Ray players rapidly kicking DVD players out of the house and into charity bins. (Blu-Ray players are backward compatible meaning they will play DVDs.)

But Blu-Ray advancements in conjunction with computers, THAT is where the news is at. Blu-Ray rewriteable drives will soon be included on desktop and notebook computers.

What's significant about Blu-Ray is that discs are available that hold 200GB of data. (While these are not yet sold retail, that day is coming.) Current discs available to consumers are 25GB and there is a 50GB dual-layer in development.

I recall in the past when people made buying decisions simply because a computer they were considering had a DVD-RW drive. And before that, a 10X CD-ROM generated much excitement, e.g. the model sold by SoundBlaster.

So imagine how cool it would be: your new notebook will have a \$70 Blu-Ray RW drive, the big difference being how fast the drive can write to Blu-Ray disc and disc capacity.

#### USB 3.0 (SSUSB - SuperSpeedUSB)

This is replacing USB 2.0. If you think USB 2.0 is fast, guess what . . . USB 3.0 is 10 times faster than USB 2.0!

USB 3.0 will save you time and money. So this technology alone is worth the wait until next year to buy a computer (albeit USB 3.0 will start appearing on computers in June 2010.) Think about the significance of just this one technology: On any task that uses a USB connection, you can get any work done 10 times faster (e.g., backing up files, scanning

documents, file transfers, printing, etc.) Think of the all of the possible uses for USB 3.0.

Assume you are backing up your files, a task any non-malpracticing lawyer should be performing every week, if not daily. (That's right, if you are not backing up your client files, research and other important digital data, according to the State Bar and rules of common sense, you are committing malpractice.)

Anyway, in 2010, a lawyer's computer files are becoming larger and larger. For example, if you litigate in federal court, a client's case files can total 2GB to 50GB by the time the case has concluded. This is because many files contain depo video, large PDF filings and other digital data. It's reasonable to assume you need to backup 10GB weekly in updated material; that is, data collected or produced from all sources including case research and case documents. (You don't need to backup closed files, for example, that have been previously archived on to DVDs or external drives.)

Backing up 10GB with USB 2.0 might take 10 minutes. Not a long time, but we lawyers are an impatient lot. If we can avoid tasks that take 10 minutes, we will. (Backing up files does not have a perceived immediate benefit nor does it trigger our pleasure sensors, so it's easy to keep putting off our backing-up duties.)

Well, USB 3.0 to the rescue. Imagine that 10GB backup takes one minute! If you need to work on some videotaped depositions at home, imagine transferring 50GB of videos in five minutes. (I know you are saying, "But my USB thumb drives are not that big." Well guess what . . . this year micro-SD chips are coming out that are 32GB. And "full sized" SD chips that are 120GB will be debuting this year too!

#### Windows 7

Windows 7 is being praised worldwide. By this time next year, Windows 7 will be included on all new computer purchases.

#### Prices

On pricing, things have changed radically in favor of the consumer. Without going into detail, recall the old days (one year ago) when the way things worked is that a hot electronic device would debut at a high retail price. About a year later, the price would decrease a bit and slowly decrease from that point on.

Fortunately for us, what has happened is that technology has advanced, but product debut retail prices are attractively low. In other words, the price cycle described above no longer exists on many electronic products, including computers.

An example best illustrates the point. At CES 2010, Lenovo (the company who bought IBM's Thinkpad computer line) showcased the IdeaPad U1 hybrid notebook computer. The most unique feature about this notebook computer is that the screen detaches from the lower half and the display can function as a 3G multi-touch slate tablet. Connected back on to the lower half, it all becomes a full-function dual-core notebook running Windows 7.

In anyone's mind this is a revolutionary product: a detachable display that can operate independently as an e-reader (can you say Amazon Kindle competitor?) or mobile Internet. It's like having two computers for the price of one. A reader, Internet appliance, but when needed, it has a full keyboard and is powerful enough to run the included Windows 7 operating system.

What would you expect to pay for such a revolutionary product? Like the infomercials . . . \$1,800, \$1,500, or under \$1,200 (meaning \$1199)? Nope, Lenovo says the retail price will most likely be \$999.

(See the link at: <http://tinyurl.com/PMIdeaPadHybrid>)

Another example: the Lenovo S10-3t tablet netbook with touch screen functionality. The display swivels neatly on a single sturdy steel hinge. This is a Lenovo entry into the netbook/tablet arena, a device that used to be very expensive. This device is available now, at a non-street



price of \$549. That's very low for a unique device like this. (See the link at: <http://tinyurl.com/PMIdeaPadS10>)

Don't like that netbooks come with a 10-inch display? Well, how about a Lenovo S12 netbook with a 12-inch display, HD (high definition) graphics, weighing 3.25 lbs and that has a full-size keyboard. On-Sale price: \$399.

How dramatic a change is all this? I recall the days that the Sony Vaio 3-pound sub-notebooks sold for \$1,800 to

\$2,000, with specs 1/100th of what \$400 netbooks have today.

### **Conclusion**

I have barely touched the surface of upcoming computer technologies. My concern is for your happiness. As is evident above, there's every reason to hold off buying a computer or computers until 2011, and maybe even 2012 depending on how things go.

It's not that I want you to wait for the prices to decrease, because that's a lame reason to not buy a computer. But if you are anything like me, I want that Blu-Ray RW drive, and three USB 3.0 ports. And a hybrid computer? That just sounds cool!

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