

HPs, Compaqs & Edsels

Just like Baskin-Robbins shouldn't build jet liners, HP should never have built a computer. They should have stuck with printers. The name HP invokes thoughts of quality and dependability. Far cries from the words I would use to describe their computers. Most people buy HP and Compaq PCs based on the name and that is exactly what they are paying for, the name.

The reason you can walk into Best Buy or CompUSA and buy either PC is that they are targeted to the retail consumer with limited knowledge of computers. The \$5.15/hour "PC expert" at CompUSA is just that: a \$5.15/hour expert. Once you get the machine home and try to upgrade it you will soon realize... they don't want you to upgrade it, at least not much. These "retail" machines are designed for limited home use and are specifically designed with very limited upgradeability so that you will have to buy a new one within 2-3 years.

Then there's tech support. If you can actually talk to a live person, chances are they know little more about computers than you do. They simply follow a diagnostic chart hung up on the wall of their cubicle to try to help you. Then there's the dreaded hard drive crash after the warranty has expired. Trying to find all the necessary software and drivers to make your PC function again is like pulling teeth. You can forget about looking on their website, because the drivers simply aren't there. Why? So you'll buy a new computer instead.

So why am I telling you all this? Because in the end I'll probably get stuck trying to fix one of these machines for you. Christmas is just around the corner and a lots of you will be buying a new PC. The best advice I could give you is this: Go to Dell's website and have them build you a PC with the options you want. By far, I have less trouble with Dell PCS than any other computer and they are typically much more upgradeable. Their support website is a technician's dream come true - lots and lots of drivers. No, Dell isn't paying me to write this and I don't get any kind of commission from Dell for every machine shipped to Dimmitt, I just firmly believe Dell builds a better computer. At least they don't try to build toasters or cars.