

## How to Choose a “Mac” Computer

Buying a “Mac” or Apple product is an exciting, fun, and potentially expensive process. When looking to purchase a new “Mac” – there are several important factors to consider:

### 1. Have a plan.

#### Purpose

- Why do you want a Mac? Have you always owned a Mac or are you a PC user looking to make a switch? Do you have a specific hardware or software reason to move to the Apple community or have you heard Macs were more reliable or virus-free?
- What type of law do you practice?
- What type of tasks do you use a computer for?
- Think about whether you plan to use it solely in the office or if you want to travel with it too? How much accessibility and functionality does it need to meet those needs?
- What features are important to you? Large monitors? Fast processor speed? Lots of memory? Dual monitors? Great graphics card?
- Are you in the market for brand new or do you prefer a cheaper option like a refurbished model?

#### Budget

- What’s your budget?
- Does your budget realistically meet your needs/wants?
- Are there other hardware / software products or upgrades needed besides your Mac?
- How many do you plan to purchase? Is there a need for more than one?
- Does your budget include extra funds for training and support?

#### Education

- Are you familiar with the OSX environment (code for the Mac environment) or have you primarily been a Windows or Linux user? Do you own an iPhone or iPad and use it on a daily basis?
- Is your staff familiar with the OSX environment or have they primarily used Windows or Linux operating systems?
- Do any of your staff own/use iPhones or iPads or have Macs at home?
- How much training will be needed based on the needs/wants of hardware/software upgrades?

## Research

- Make a list of all the hardware/software that you use.
- Are there any compatibility issues with older equipment or current products (like your Assistant's computer, another partner's computer, law practice management, time/billing, or accounting software, etc.)? Add those requirements to your list of hardware/software you use.
- Consider what other software you might buy. Are those options compatible to Mac?
- Where do you want to buy your Mac? Via the Apple website, the Apple store, or an Apple retailer?

## Apple Care

- Have you considered purchasing [AppleCare](#)? (AppleCare is Apple's extended warranty coverage in case something happens with your device). Most new and refurbished devices purchased directly from Apple or an authorized Apple retailer come with a 1 year warranty and the option of purchasing AppleCare, which extends your warranty two more years from the purchase date for a total of three years of coverage (some products like iPads and iPhones may come with only one additional year of extended coverage). Contact Apple for more information.

## **2. Be in the Know.**

- Get to know all the products and options.
  - [MacDesktops](#)
    - iMac – Apple's most popular desktop – perfect for all the basic home/office daily tasks and functions – 21.5" and 27" offer dual monitor hookups – discuss with Apple what options are available
    - iMac Pro – Apple's newest desktop built for gaming, heavy imagery, video editing, 3D designs, virtual reality – offers dual monitor hookups – discuss with Apple what options are available
  - [MacLaptops](#)
    - MacBook – perfect for all the on-the-go home/office activities; does not have capability to connect to multiple monitors
    - MacBook Air – differs in display from the MacBook – great for on-the-go activities
    - MacBook Pro – the only Apple laptop that can connect to multiple monitors – 13" can connect up to 2 external monitors and the 15" can connect up to 4 external monitors
  - [iPads](#) and [iPhones](#)
    - Smaller options for those not wanting a laptop.
    - Same differences apply except AppleCare coverage is different.

- Know your needs vs. your wants.
  - Hardware / Software Needs:
    - How long do you plan to keep this new Mac? This need will help determine how many upgrades you need to consider.
    - Typically, most Apple professionals recommend upgrading memory, processor, etc. if you plan to use for longer than 2 years. If you plan to keep longer than 5 years, Apple professionals recommend upgrading to the highest processor speed and memory available at the time of purchase.
    - Check presently-owned hardware/software to make sure it is “Mac compatible.” Compatibility is not as big of an issue as it was a decade or so ago (see options below.) However, for older hardware/software...it is still important to check as a best practice.
      - For software that is only “Windows compatible” – Macs come with pre-installed software called “Bootcamp”. Bootcamp allows the user to run the Windows operating system. At startup, the user chooses which operating environment (Windows vs. Mac) they want to run.
      - The app “Parallels” also allows a Mac user to run a “Windows” based app.
      - Be aware that there are some exceptions as to what software will and will not work.
    - Apple can help you determine what upgrades are best for your situation and budget as well as any compatibility questions – [Chat](#) by product or call 1-800-MY-APPLE.
  - Hardware/ Software Wants:
    - What accessories do you want to go with your new purchase? (Example: Dual monitors, Dock, Networking tools, Storage, Printers, Scanners, etc.)
    - Do these accessories meet the authorized Apple product requirements or are they from a third party retailer? (Some products may actually damage your new device – so it’s important to check for fraudulent products).
      - Make sure new accessories are Apple Certified or have Mac Compatibility. Use [this link](#) to help you review Apple Certified/Mac Compatible products.

- Know there are differences when buying directly from Apple vs. another Apple retailer.
  - Buying from Apple directly:
    - Product ships directly from Apple
    - Provides you opportunities for free setup
    - Easy exchanges/returns
    - Product customizations
    - Guaranteed 1 year warranty and optional Apple Care coverage
  - Buying from approved Apple retailer:
    - Buy product (at most retailers) on site / Limited product customizations unless ordering directly from Apple
    - Different exchange/return policies
    - 1 year warranty and optional Apple Care coverage at most Apple authorized retailers (Website to check to see if product has coverage: <https://checkcoverage.apple.com/> before you buy)
  - Buying from unapproved third-party retailer (like an online store or big box chain store):
    - Buy product online or onsite
    - Different exchange/return policies
    - No 1 year warranty and optional AppleCare guarantee (Website to check to see if product has coverage before you buy <https://checkcoverage.apple.com/> )
- Know that [refurbished products](#) purchased directly from Apple also come with 1 year warranties and the option to purchase AppleCare.

### 3. Reach out for support.

- [AppleChat](#) – reach out to an Apple Care agent for support or for purchasing a product.
- Call Apple directly. 1-800-MY-APPLE
- Contact the South Carolina Bar Practice Management Assistance program for a free technology consultation. E-mail [pmap@scbar.org](mailto:pmap@scbar.org).