



THE BITS & BYTES REPORT

Volume 2, Issue 1 Fall 2009

MONTREAL'S PREMIER COMPUTER AND NETWORKING SUPPORT SERVICE

How to Sell Your Old PC

Got an old desktop mouldering in your garage or a closet? It's probably worth some money, but first you need to prepare it. Here's how.



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FEATURE STORY

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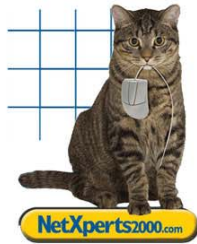
In today's economy every dollar counts--so why not sell that not-so-old PC you don't use anymore on Craigslist or eBay? Odds are, a penny-pinching buyer is out there eager to save big by buying your second-hand hardware. After all, anything is better than having your recently retired PC gather dust bunnies in your closet.

To help you sell your old PC, we've put together a list of the four steps you need to take to make sure that your PC is ready for a second life of service. We also answer some of the common questions about selling a used PC, such as how to estimate what it's worth, and what legal issues are involved when selling a PC loaded with expensive software (can you charge extra?).

THE FOUR KEY STEPS

- 1- RUN A SCAN:** It's critical to scan your old Computer for malware, including viruses, spyware, and worms. You don't want to pass along security threats to the next owner. Viruses and spyware can also significantly slow the system down. Getting rid of them is not only playing it safe, it also gives the PC some pep. If you're not already running an antivirus/antispyware app, don't rush out and buy one. PC World has selected [eight great security tools](#) that'll do the job for free.
- 2- MOVE YOUR DATA TO YOUR NEW COMPUTER:** Naturally, you'll want to transfer all of your files, programs, browser favourites, passwords, and other essentials.

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For a direct PC-to-PC transfer, an inexpensive Windows utility like Laplink's PCmover is a good option. The \$70 (U.S., no Canadian price available) shrink-wrap version includes a USB 2.0 cable, or you could save money by downloading the app sans cable. If you back up your files to an external hard drive or online service, you could restore them to a new system. And remember that when it comes to backups, personal data--including photos, videos, and music--should be [your top backup priority](#). You can always reinstall applications, but not your kids' pics.

- 3- WIPE THE DRIVE CLEAN:** [Don't leave personal and financial data](#), including credit card, bank account, and social security numbers, on your hard drive. Sensitive files that you've "deleted" still exist on the disk and are very easy to recover. It's critical that you render this data unreadable. A drive-erasing tool like DBAN is a must. Another option is to wipe the drive completely and reinstall Windows. (Nobody wants to buy a PC without an operating system.) This wipe/reinstall process should take eight easy steps, but be sure to transfer or back up your data before you begin
- 4- PEP UP YOUR OLD SYSTEM:** What if a potential buyer wants to figuratively kick the tires of your PC before plunking down cash for it? Slow system performance can easily scuttle the deal. You might want to install one or more [free utilities that will speed up and tweak your PC](#). For instance, if Windows starts up too slowly, you might try StartUpLite to streamline start-up and eliminate unnecessary overhead. And Vista Services Optimizer zaps unnecessary background services that slow Windows Vista.



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COMMON QUESTIONS

How much is my used computer worth? A good way to determine a fair asking price for your computer is to go to [eBay's home page](#), enter the manufacturer's name and model number (for example, Gateway MX8734) in the Search field, and click the Search button. On the search results page, go to Refine Search, scroll down to Condition, and click Used. The results will show what eBay buyers are asking for PCs like yours.

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Another way to estimate how much your system is worth is by checking with eBay again and searching for completed auctions. First sign in to your eBay account and go to Advanced Search.

Next, type in the model number of your old desktop or notebook into eBay Search and select "Completed Listings." The search results will deliver what people actually paid for auction items. [Here are ebay's instructions.](#)



We found that an old Dell Dimension 8300 recently sold for \$160 (U.S., no Canadian price available)--not bad.

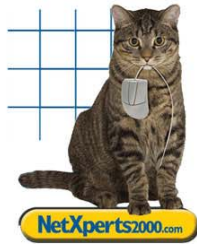
Let's say your notebook has a copy of Microsoft Office or Adobe Photoshop. Is it legal to leave the software on the portable, or should you delete it first? The good news is that copyright laws don't prevent you from reselling software. The bad news is that the End User Licensing Agreement (EULA) that you clicked--and probably never read--when installing a program may prevent you from doing so. If you want to play it safe, read the EULA of the apps you want to leave on the PC. If reselling is a no-no, delete them.

SALE!

What's the best way to market my PC? In most cases, a used PC isn't a big-ticket item, so you'll want to keep marketing costs to a minimum. A free Craigslist ad is an economical option, particularly if you want to sell your computer locally, which is always easiest. To cast a wider net, eBay is a good choice, although you'll have to pay seller fees and probably pack up and ship the computer. For tips on buying and selling on Craigslist, see "[10 Craigslist Tips for Power Users](#)".



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Xperts Solutions

Solutions to your computer-related questions



I've upgraded to the latest version of AVG Free and now I'm finding my computer is running slower. What should I do?



Like most anti virus programs AVG has a number of protections that can slow your computer. One of the common problems with AVG is the "Link Scanner" function. This checks links in a web page before you click them and warns you if there's a problem with the linked site. While this is a good idea, it slows web browsing.

To turn this off, open AVG by double clicking the AVG box on the taskbar near where the time is shown. When AVG opens, click Tools and Advanced Options.

In the Advanced Options screen, there are list of settings on the left hand side. Click Link Scanner and take the ticks off the three boxes; Enable AVG Search Shield, Enable AVG Surf Shield and Enable reporting threats to AVG. Click apply.

To help speed the machine you may also want to change the automatic scan settings. To do this, go down the settings list to Schedules, expand the list by clicking the "+" box and select Scheduled Scans.

On the right hand side of the screen, take the tick off Enable This Task. Click Apply and reboot your computer.

You should note that because AVG will now not be protecting your web surfing then you should practice safe browsing.

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