

# Computer Corner

By Jim Jeup  
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## Question

Here's our question. First, we want to buy our 12-year-old son a computer for Christmas. We searched the stores looking for a computer at a good price, but have no idea which ones are a good value. Second, once our son receives his gift, we don't know how to set it up and update it properly. Can you help? – D'Ann

## D'Ann,

This holiday season will be exciting for computer shoppers. Retailers have overstock of "value-priced" computer systems, and features on a "basic" home computer exceed most software requirements. There are few times in computer history when this type of overstock has occurred.

The reason for overstock is supply and demand. Processor speeds (2.4, 2.5, 3.2 GHz, etc.) are increasing quicker than manufacturers can design and build new computers. The result – Top-of-the-line Computers last month, do not have the fastest processor speeds this month. Translation – Last month's best computer is worth less money! You save BIG!

Here is an example of a "minimum" computer for schoolwork, basic games and Internet. (Compaq's web site – [www.shopping.hp.com](http://www.shopping.hp.com)):

- Compaq Presario s5000nx Computer
  - Intel Celeron Processor 2.5 GHz
  - Windows XP Home Edition
  - 128MB DDR SDRAM
  - 40GB hard drive
  - CD-RW, modem
  - sound, video, Network card
  - Intel Extreme Graphics
  - MS Works and other software
  - Available expansion slots (future growth)
- Compaq's Price: \$459.99 & Free Shipping  
\*Monitor & Speakers sold separately

New computers should be on everyone's list this year!

## Computer Setup

Most computer retailers offer in-store setup. They open the computer box, make sure everything works, and run through the computer's initial setup. This does not help when you get it home and have to setup hardware. Additionally, there is no way to be sure Microsoft security updates are complete. Another option – Have a professional technician complete setup in your home.

Consider local technicians for complete, in-home computer setup. Some offer setup certificates, which can be included as part of your gift. Contact them early in the month to receive priority service after Christmas, and be sure these procedures are offered as part of their "standard" in-home/office setup package:

- Onsite Service (Complete setup in your home/office)
- Computer Setup (Attach all peripherals – Monitor, Speakers, printer, etc.)
- Printer/Scanner Setup (Install drivers for a printer and/or scanner attached to your computer)
- Internet Connection (Install/Test your internet service connection)
- Test all hardware (modem, sound, CD/DVD drive, floppy drive, printer, etc.)
- Install Microsoft's Critical Updates (If you have a high-speed internet service)
- Check Antivirus Software (Up-to-date and working properly)
- Include basic tutoring for your new system

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To All Computer Corner Readers,  
Have a happy and safe holiday season!  
Jim

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