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We'll take a peek at the parts and processes that create the digital tools we can't live without.By Nathan ChandlerWhen it comes to the business of building supercomputers, taller equals smaller and cooler means faster, and these 10 players have gotten really good at it. Get to know them before they're replaced by someone new.By Eric SeegerDoes the name Sequoia ring a bell with you? How about Mira, or Tianhe-2? If you're not up on the latest supercomputer news, those words may mean nothing, but they're major players when it comes to petaflops.By Wesley Fenlon & Bernadette JohnsonWith a global shortage of capable programmers, the Raspberry Pi may be the device that gets us back to computing basics. And that's a very good thing. Did we mention it only costs about $25?By Bernadette JohnsonWithout hardware, even the best software ever created is useless. What components do you need to have assembled before you can boot up and start clicking?By Wesley FenlonToday's mobile, sleek computers have come a long way since their comparatively clunky predecessors first debuted. Given how fast technology evolves, is there a way to protect your PC from becoming obsolete?By Kate KershnerPersonal computers are now so small that you can fit an entire machine onto one circuit board. How do these little machines work, and what are they giving up for the sake of their miniature size?By Jonathan StricklandWithout heat sinks, today's high-tech computers couldn't run at the speeds they do. At least not without completely overheating, which could potentially destroy your entire system. But what exactly is a heat sink and how does it work to keep your computer cool?By Robert HartleNetbooks are ultra-portable computers that are even smaller than traditional laptops. They're all the rage right now, but can they overcome their shortcomings to become a mainstay of the portable computer market?By Nathan ChandlerYour computer's casing encloses some pretty toxic stuff. If you were to pluck through its innards, you'd expose yourself to a whole bevy of chemicals. So how do you stay safe when you power up?By Cristen Conger The old saying goes something like this: That shiny new computer you just bought is obsolete the second you take it out of the box. Well, there might be some truth to it. Our modern electronics might actually be built to break.By Beth BrindleAmazon has released several Kindle models, but the Paperwhite is designed to completely change the e-reader experience. How well does it succeed, and are any challengers stepping up to the plate?By Bernadette JohnsonApple's late 2012 addition to the tablet market didn't surprise many people -- details about the iPad Mini had leaked long before its official announcement. Does the iPad's baby brother live up to the pre-release hype?By Wesley FenlonTouch-screen interfaces are everywhere -- most smartphones and tablets use them today. See interesting facts and graphics on how touch screens work.Perhaps you've heard of the Maylong M-150. After all, it had the unique distinction of being a tablet sold at Walgreens -- a U.S. drugstore known more for picking up nail polish and prescriptions than personal technology. What else is there to know?By Kate KershnerAs manufacturers struggle to find new ways to cram transistors on computer chips, it would seem that Gordon Moore's famous prediction will one day fizzle out. Should we retire Moore's Law?By Jonathan StricklandPeople aren't always familiar with the role drivers play in their computing experiences because this software is often updated automatically. But if you do need to update them yourself, we've got some tips for you.In the early years of home computing, buying a machine was a huge investment. Many models sank, but these 10 broke sales records and gave many of us our first glimpse at the digital world. Did your favorite computer make the cut?By Wesley FenlonComputers run our modern lives, but how many of us actually know how these everyday machines are made? We'll take a peek at the parts and processes that create the digital tools we can't live without.By Nathan ChandlerWhen it comes to the business of building supercomputers, taller equals smaller and cooler means faster, and these 10 players have gotten really good at it. Get to know them before they're replaced by someone new.By Eric SeegerDoes the name Sequoia ring a bell with you? How about Mira, or Tianhe-2? If you're not up on the latest supercomputer news, those words may mean nothing, but they're major players when it comes to petaflops.By Wesley Fenlon & Bernadette JohnsonWe know your digital life is important to you --all those apps, files, photos and music. But here's the 50-million-dollar question: Is a solid-state drive or a hard disk drive the right technology for the job?By William Harris Python is a programming language even novices can learn easily because it uses a syntax similar to English. And it has a wide variety of applications.By Chris PolletteEven beloved games aren't supported forever. What happens to the titles that are no longer getting official love from their creators? Can fans still find and play them?By Bernadette JohnsonYou want your e-mail, streaming video and social media content, and you want it now. And tomorrow, you'll want more. How do data centers handle the ever-increasing demands of our perpetually plugged-in world?By Bernadette JohnsonIt's vast. It's handy. And it's about time you took advantage of it, perhaps even more than you already do during your daily computing adventures.By William HarrisA service that lets you access your files anywhere, anytime and with any device you like, as long as you're connected to the Internet, sounds good right? After all, this is why we invented the Internet: to get, share and collaborate on information.By Nicholas GerbisAre you constantly surprised by overage charges from your smartphone or tablet data provider? Here are some easy ways to check on your overage and put a limit in place.By Laurie L. Dove Updated: 08/31/2020 by Computer Hope Finding the hardware installed in your computer may be necessary for many reasons. Whether it's to determine if your computer meets system requirements, check on compatibility for upgrades, compare your machine to another, or help sell the computer. To check your hardware specifications, find your version of Windows in the section below and follow the instructions. Tip Some information, like brand, power rating, or size, can be determined by looking at the hardware. For example, most hardware displays the brand somewhere on the front or side panel. The power rating of a power supply, in terms of wattage outage, is often displayed on the side of the unit. Note Although often correct, keep in mind that whenever viewing any information about computer hardware through a program, it may be incorrect. Also, any hardware that is overclocked displays the overclocked speed and not the original speed. The dxdiag utility included with DirectX allows you to not only display all system information but save it in an easy to read a text file. To run this utility click Start, run, and type: dxdiag and press Enter. See our dxdiag page for further information on this program. Msinfo32 Run the Windows System Information (msinfo32) that comes pre-installed with Windows to determine installed hardware and software specifications. See the msinfo32 definition for complete information about this utility. Device Manager Generic hardware information of what Microsoft Windows is detecting is found through the Device Manager. If more detailed information is required, use a third-party utility. Below is an example of what the Device Manager looks like and what devices may be listed. Third-party programs If this program does not list the information you need, see the third-party program section on this page. It contains a list of programs that can be installed to detect and list the hardware and software on your computer. Windows 95 users Device Manager Generic hardware information of what Microsoft Windows is detecting is found in the Device Manager. If more detailed information is required, use a third-party utility. Third-party programs If this program does not list the information you need, see the third-party program section on this page. It contains a list of programs that can be installed to detect and list the hardware and software on your computer. MS-DOS and Windows 3.x users To see the computer's system specifications, run the MSD command from an MS-DOS prompt. Note: As mentioned on the MSD command page, this command is only meant for older computers running MS-DOS and not Windows computers running the Windows command line. Third-party programs Computer manufacturer's such as Dell also have unique identification numbers (Service Tag) that can be used on the manufacturer's website to determine all your system specifications. Finally, there are third-party programs that enable users to display their system specifications and in some cases also benchmark their computer. Below is a list of these programs and the program's capabilities listed in the order we recommend most. Belarc Advisor The Belarc free personal PC audit is a great software program and another highly recommended program that creates a fantastic report of your computer hardware and software. Below is a list of what this program is capable of detecting and displaying. Operating system and system model type. Processor speed and primary and secondary cache amount. Motherboard type/chipset, controllers, bus clock speed, and BIOS. Installed memory including what size of chips and what bank they're installed into on the motherboard. Drives including hard drive manufacturer, size, SMART status, network drives, and other disc/diskette drives. Installed local and network printers and their paths. Installed video card and display. Installed sound card and other multimedia cards. Other connected devices (e.g., keyboard, mouse, USB devices). User accounts and last login date and time. Installed virus scanner and its version. Installed Microsoft Security hotfixes and if any missing hotfixes are detected. Software license information. Installed software version. Fresh Diagnose Another great free method for determining your system specifications through software and benchmarking your hardware devices. The program is capable of detecting such hardware as the CPU, hard drive, video, sound, motherboard, and drive performance. Note: The program does require a valid e-mail address to download. HWiNFO and HWiNFO32 Another great software tool for getting a comprehensive list of your hardware information that is available as a 14-day trial. HWiNFO can also display sensor information used for detecting the temperature of the motherboard, CPU, and any other devices and displaying voltage and fan RPM speeds. Finally, the program also includes a benchmarking comparison that can compare your computer against other hardware. FinalWire AIDA64 Formerly Lavalys EVEREST, FinalWire AIDA64 is a program capable of displaying a complete list of the software and hardware installed on your computer and can run benchmarks. The program is capable of detecting as much as many of the other programs listed on this page. SiSoftware SANDRA Short for System ANalyser Diagnostic and Report Assistant, SANDRA is an information and diagnostics software program capable of listing the hardware in the computer. Additional information We were told it was passé. The stuff they used to do in Detroit in the 1970s was not fit for the new Millennium. They'd say: You will never be the next billionaire, and George Soros will not invest because it's absolutely… the right idea for the mess we're in! Let's make hardware. And here are 5 reasons why: 1. Hardware spreads the love. Unlike software, hardware's value chain involves many people across many companies and a few different countries. The risks and rewards are usually shared by many–an ideal structure for tough economic times. While it will be near-impossible for you to become the next Facebook or Google, you've got a decent chance of being the next Nokia because investments in hardware reach the break-even point more reliably than software. Just look at any vertical market for Software: the dominant winner usually owns 60% to 70% of the market. The runner-up is somewhere near 20% and the rest is distributed among many small competitors. Global hardware markets, on the other hand, rarely behave that way. A few leaders dominate with 10% to 20% of the market. Dozens of other competitors share the wealth and find their niche even in the most crowded fields. Food for thought: Just walk the isles of your local Super-store and see how many types of blenders cover the shelf… somebody is making money selling just… blenders! 2. You value good software, but you lust for good hardware. It connects with you in a visceral way, making you want something you may need, or not. You can touch the keys and switches and feel the quality (or lack thereof). You can imagine it in your house. You can smell it. This experience is random and hard to avoid. Most people like shopping, and they do so with less money and much more care today than ever before. Everyone is looking for new things at the right price. If your product is right it will sell. 3. The hardware world is flatter. Unlike Thomas Freidman, I am skeptical that the real world is going "flat"-yet no world is flatter than the world of hardware development. Over the last 15 years the world has become one great factory with R&D centers spread globally and a supply chain that stretches from China to India, to Romania, Thailand and many more countries. Today, CAD files are shared flawlessly, people across many cultures collaborate and goods are routinely developed, assembled and shipped across continents. All these people are waiting for your new idea. 4. You can just Redesign. Often, the right solution is simply to redesign. It may sound remedial, yet it's effective! You know the product you have already. You understand it and understand what's wrong with it. With that knowledge you could re-create the product with better focus and you have a very good chance of reducing cost while enhancing appeal. It's also easier to sell the re-designed product because you have a known market. After all, you'll be your own competitor–that's a game you can win, right? 5. Think Clarity, Simplicity and Style. That's my mantra for any product creation, and it is essential today. With clarity you achieve a well-aimed product that doesn't confuse the end-user or the retail-channel buyer. With that clarity, your idea gets simpler, has fewer features, and it costs less. With clarity and simplicity at hand, it will be easy to find the magic dust–style! Gadi Amit is the president of NewDealDesign LLC, a strategic design studio in San Francisco. Founded in 2000, NDD has worked with such clients as Better Place, Sling Media, Palm, Dell, Microsoft, and Fujitsu, among others, and has won more than 70 design awards. Amit is passionate about creating design that is both socially responsible and generates real world success. Read more of Gadi Amit's blog: The New Deal