

Tablets. SmartPhones OFHF 2014

The Future of Computing

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Many in the computer industry have predicted that the era of the personal computer is coming to a close in favor of lightweight mobile devices such as Tablets and Smart Phones. The leading companies in this segment of the business are Apple, Samsung, Motorola, Kindle, Dell, Asus, Acer, Sony, Lenovo and many other entering the market monthly.

I purchased my first Asus NetBook using XP about 3 years ago and a second Asus using Windows 7 about six months later. I have had 3 Smart Phones, first was a Palm Centro with MyRoots, then a Motorola Droid X with genealogy apps and I am presently using a Samsung Galaxy III with the Family Bee genealogy program. I also use a Dell XPS13 Ultrabook and a HP Desktop. My talk is not to recommend a brand or operating system, but to discuss the available options.

UltraBook - Definition

Small portable computing device, similar to a laptop/notebook, but much smaller and lighter. Great for surfing the Web and checking e-mail, but can do much more. UltraBooks are usually less than 3 pounds with a 10-13 inch screen, at present most have a Solid State Hard Drive for greater I/O speed and reduced weight. UltraBooks have a keyboard that is usually 75-90% of a standard Laptop/Notebook. All UltraBooks have USB ports (typical 3), but only some models have both USB and VGA ports. Most have a 7-10 hour battery life. WiFi is standard on all computers.

UltraBooks and Application Programs

Presently my UltratBook has the following programs loaded: Family Tree Maker 2014, Legacy 8, RootsMagic, Ancestral Quest, Word 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Excel 2007, Screen Print Platinum, Skype, Google Gmail via Internet Explorer with room for many programs if needed. UltraBooks do not have internal CD/DVD Drives, so programs have to be loaded by downloading from manufacturer, copying a known source to a Flash Drive and then loading from the Flash Drive to the UltraBook Hard Drive, or purchasing an external CD/DVD drive for less than \$40. I have found that the external drive is the most convenient. UltraBooks may be used with a "docking Station" so that a full-size keyboard and monitor can be utilized.

Manufacturers of UltraBooks:

Apple, Sony, Acer, HP, Dell, Toshiba, Asus, Acer, Lenovo and others.

Advantage of UltraBooks: Use exactly the same programs as your other computer(s). No learning curve for the programs or the computer itself.

Disadvantage of UltraBooks: Heavier than Tablets, usually less than one pound heavier and cost.

Apple MacBook Air: This is the UltraBook concept with 11" or 13" screen, but with a Solid State Hard Drive(Flash Drive) instead of a Optical Hard Drive. The Solid State Hard Drive is faster than the Optical. The MacBook Air cost is higher than other UltraBooks depending on the configuration you choose but your Mac programs are the same. The MacBook Air and an iPhone would make a good combination for the Mac Users.

Things you should know before buying a Tablet or SmartPhone

What are you going to use it for, do you have apps in mind, if not there are easier and cheaper ways to compute. Both Tablets and SmartPhone computing devices have a learning curve just like your PC or Mac did when you originally purchased it.

Tablets:

A tablet computer, or simply tablet, is a complete personal mobile computer, larger than a mobile phone or personal digital assistant, integrated into a flat touch screen and primarily operated by touching the screen. It often uses an onscreen virtual keyboard rather than a physical keyboard. A physical keyboard accessory is available connected via Bluetooth. Several manufacturers have tried to develop a tablet over the years, but the iPad seems to have hit on the correct formula. Many other companies have since introduced competitive tablets including Motorola Xoom, an Android OS; Samsung Galaxy, an Android OS; HP (Palm) WebOS. Apple just introduced the iPad Air which has some advantages over the original iPad, but not enough to purchase the new version if you already have the original iPad. The companies to watch in this field are Apple, Google, Motorola, and Samsung. I am sure other will compete as time goes on.

Smart Phones:

Smart Phones have been around for a few years, but the iPhone took it to the next level. The number of affordable applications ("apps") made it considerably more useful than cell phones. Motorola, Samsung, Google and others developed the Google Android operating system. Genealogy apps: iPad "Families" compatible with Legacy compatibly, SmartPhones using the Android operating system have "Family Bee" and Families available. Only the Microsoft Windows SmartPhone is compatible with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, the other SmartPhones have competitive Office apps.

Who should buy a Sub-Laptop i.e. UltratBook, Tablet, Smart Phone?

All business persons and/or

Genealogist who wants:

Portability

Needs a database at a library or meeting

Needs a second computer

Who should NOT buy a Sub-Laptop?

Persons who are NOT willing to adapt to:

Smaller screen

Smaller physical keyboard or on screen keyboard

"Work arounds" for lack of CD/DVD Drive