



It's time to upgrade that motherboard. Seriously.

PC UPGRADE GUIDE

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Upgrading your PC can turn out to be a hassle. And in these cases being a computer hardware literate can be more stressful than being someone who has absolutely no idea about it. Because when you know what's good and what's bad, you have to go through the exhausting job of choosing a product that will live up to your needs. Our PC Upgrade guide is for those who are tired of answering questions and also for the ones asking them.

MOTHERBOARD:

Now the thing is, this upgrade is unnecessary most of the time. Because switching to a new motherboard often ends up with you buying many components you had an older version of (due to compatibility issues). But MoBo upgrades can open up new possibilities for achieving better performance. Before choosing a motherboard check if your processor, GPU and RAM(type and storage) are supported. If you have a PC that you bought 4-5 years ago, most of your hardware is likely to be outdated and not supported by modern motherboards. So go through the specs to see that everything is compatible.

That being said, the more ports and slots, the better. But don't sweat over boards that offer not-so-useful features for a lot of cash. Try choosing a board that has built-in connectivity options for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth and definitely one with USB 3.0 ports. Also check if your

motherboard is going to have a number of SATA connectors and even better if it features a built-in SATA RAID controller. And double check that your PSU (Power Supply Unit) is capable of working with your new purchase. Extra points for overclocking capabilities and SLI support,

although it should only be considered if it's within your budget.

RAM:

First thing to do, find out whether your motherboard supports a DDR2 or a DDR3 chip.

Next, think straight once more about what

your PC is used most for. Media manipulation tasks like video, audio and photo editing can require 16-32GB of RAM space. For gaming, if you want to play with maximum settings, then 8GB is enough. But if you're on a budget 4GB won't entirely let you down either. Corsair is the most reliable option. But I've found that Twinmos isn't bad either. Note: 32-bit versions of Windows won't be able to utilize 4GB of RAM so you need to install the 64-bit version.

GPU:

Being one of the most significant upgrades that bring a huge change to your gaming experience and comparatively pricier of the lot, you'll find yourself stuck between two worlds. Compromise on budget or compromise

on performance? GPUs like the Radeon R7 250X and the GeForce GT 730 are good options at prices which are likely to suit your pocket. And once again people, compatibility is an issue. I cannot stress enough. If you are not on a tight budget and can spend loads then there's no point in holding back. Go crazy. Buy Nvidia's new GTX 980, to be exact.

A pointer for you all- don't freak out if the GPU is GDDR5. Your system won't have to face compatibility issues for that. You can run it as long as you have a PSU with sufficient capabilities. Performance on the other hand, may vary depending on Processor and RAM combinations. The amount of VRAM, pixel shaders, etc can't really tell you how good a card is. Looking at their benchmarks from sites like Tom's Hardware, TechPowerUp, Guru3D is necessary to see how they perform in real life at different resolutions with different games.

PROCESSOR:

Not much to think about in this area. 4th Generation Intel Core-i processors are always a great deal. Core-i3 is alright for everyday usage and not-so-heavy gaming. We'd go with a Core-i5 because it's faster and thus contributes while multi-tasking. For media manipulation? Definitely. Buying the Intel Core-i7 is on the other hand, rather unnecessary in our opinion (considering "budget"). But then again, we're strictly speaking in terms of gaming and everyday work. If you're a power user: gaming, video editing, graphics designing with a huge amount of multi-tasking, then the Core-i7 is your road to a virtual heaven. You're probably wondering why we aren't mentioning AMD counterparts. Well, usage of AMD processors by our in-house enthusiast resulted in over-heating despite having a water-cooling system installed. So, we're leaving it out. Check

A lot of the terms here like SLI , SATA RAID, GDDR5 are thrown in as Google-senpai keywords. The basic idea of the article is to be a starting point where one can learn more about upgrading their PCs.

DR. GEEK
SAYS

Find Out the Exact Names of Your PC Components

You can use two programs for this job. CPU-Z and Speccy. We prefer Speccy as it's more organised and gives you broader details

SPECCY:

<http://www.piriform.com/speccy/download>

CPU-IZ:

<http://www.cpuid.com/softwares/cpu-z.html>

clock speeds, core count and max temperature. Features like Intel's "Turbo Boost Technology" can be a great plus point. Another thing, more cores don't necessarily mean better performance. Optimization, architecture is also important. Like the GPUs, get the benchmark scores.

STORAGE:

Now, this is one thing that I've had an issue with before. Several time, in fact. I exceed my hard disk space often and end up deleting movies, games and TV series episodes that I've seen but nonetheless would have liked to keep for future cravings. But no, my system drive and all other drives as well shows the indicator bar in red and that's not good, not to mention the sluggish performance.

The best bet in these cases is to get a SSD. While they can be pricey, they're worth it. Get a 128GB SSD for your OS and invest the rest of the money on a HDD. If you can't afford to masterrace on an SSD, I recommend a 1TB HDD. Check the transfer speed and definitely check the warranty. When/if your disk crashes, you don't want to end up being able to do nothing. Some prefer external options as well. If you're frequently visiting places like your office or a friend's house or anywhere for that matter then an external hard drive can turn out to be very useful.

www.game-debate.com is a great website to help you cross-check if your hardware is compatible and everything and also if the game you so want to play can be run on your new system.