

Finding Reputable Vendors for Refurbished Computers

Purchasing refurbished computers is highly cost-effective and can be a risk-free way to acquire recent, high-performance equipment that works like new at a significant discount over new machines. Refurbished computers are widely available from many local and nationwide vendors at prices ranging from <\$200 for smaller, lower-performing home models to \$400 or more for higher-end i7 machines with faster processing and more RAM and storage capacity. Refurbished servers can also be purchased.



Here is an actual current advertised example of a refurbished machine available from a reputable vendor in Austin, TX (18 years in business) with a Better Business Bureau grade of A+:

Dell Optiplex 790 Tower

- Intel Quad Core i7-2600 3.4Ghz CPU
- 4GB DDR3 Memory
- 160GB SATA Drive
- Integrated 10/100/1000 Network Card (NIC)
- USB 2.0
- 1 Serial Port
- Windows 10 Professional (+\$50)
- 1-Year Warranty
- \$320 + tax (and shipping, if applicable)



What does "Refurbished" Actually Mean?

A computer that is sold as "refurbished" is generally one that was:

- Returned by a customer (even if it has no damage, it cannot be resold as new after its return);
- Failed to meet the original manufacturer's quality test and was repaired or rebuilt; or
- Came from a canceled order.

Reputable refurbishers repair everything that's damaged with quality parts, then thoroughly test the computer to make sure it works properly. **This means that when you buy a refurbished product, it should both look and run like new, excepting occasional minor cosmetic flaws.**

Many refurbished products come with a warranty, though these vary depending on who refurbished the computer. When an original manufacturer refurbishes and resells a product, the warranty is likely to be at least a full year. Products refurbished by third parties often have shorter warranties of 90-180 days.

In some cases, an original manufacturer refurbished product comes with the same tech support you'd get with a new computer. Then, if you have any problems with your new equipment, you can call the manufacturer for help. Check the seller's offer carefully for support arrangements.

Look for Certified Refurbishers

Every manufacturer has a process for certifying refurbished products. They may certify third-party shops to refurbish units, or the manufacturer may do the reconditioning itself (such as Dell).

A certified third-party refurbisher has been trained by the manufacturer and uses manufacturer-approved service techniques and parts. The refurbisher may have a second line of business repairing and servicing computers for customers.

There are many reputable companies selling refurbished computers. A simple internet search for "refurbished computers" will produce listings of both local and national sellers.

Some of the more well-known companies selling refurbished computers on a national basis include:

- [Amazon](#)
- [Best Buy](#)
- [Dell Factory Outlet](#)
- [Newegg](#)
- [TigerDirect](#)
- [PCConnection](#)

There are companies in cities throughout the country that sell used and refurbished computers. These products range from used low-end models that are sold "as-is" after being checked for major problems to rebuilt mid- or high-level desktop units that have been factory-reconditioned and come with a warranty covering parts and service. **Avoid buying computers sold as "used" versus one those labeled "refurbished," as used units have not been reconditioned to work like new.**

If you are looking for a local or regional seller of refurbished computers, be sure to carefully review the company before making any purchases. Your review should address these issues:

- How long has the company been in business?
- Is the company a member of the Better Business Bureau, and, if so, what is its BBB Rating?
- Does the company have generally positive reviews on its website and/or Yelp?
- Does it address and respond to customer complaints?
- Is the company a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher?
- Does the company back its refurbished computers with a one-year or longer warranty that covers parts and service?
- What is the return policy?

