



From the Technology Trenches – Rick Bernauer, Senior Systems Consultant

Law office administrators frequently ask me to help recommend PC specifications. How much capacity should the hard drive have? How much memory? How big should the monitor be? These questions can all be debated, but I've seen a standard PC configuration revealed while working with law firms.

Here are some of my suggestions.

Processor

Intel is the standard for most offices. There are other good companies making processors, but most firms end up going with Intel and running with "the pack." (If you want to be an individualist – buy a Mac. Wait, don't get me started on Macs.)

For office machines, firms are requesting the Pentium 4 processor. Celeron processors are less expensive but their limitations make them less attractive to most law firms.

If you'd like some of the technical info keep reading, otherwise skip to the next paragraph. Celeron chips have less cache memory than Pentium 4 chips – this difference can really effect performance. The Pentium 4 chip is manufactured to run at a higher clock speed than Celeron chips – as much as 60% faster. There are differences in the maximum bus speeds that the processors allow. Pentium 4s tend to be about 30 percent faster than Celerons.

Processor speed really isn't the most important factor determining how fast the machine will be. If you buy the fastest processor available, you'll pay a premium for the bragging rights. Buy a fast processor, but not the fastest one available. Spend the money on more memory instead.

Next month – How much memory is enough?

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