

BUYING SOFTWARE

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Select your software carefully. One easy way to do that is to purchase SHAREWARE and FREEWARE before investing the big bucks. WordPerfect software for instance retails for around \$300, but you can purchase PC Write, a shareware word processing software for \$5 from S Software (800) 243-1515.

There are some disadvantages when purchasing shareware and freeware though. Some of them are really good while some of them are really lousy. That's why it's important to rely on a good shareware distributor (a company that only deals with selling shareware) that is very selective in the programs they include in their catalog. One such company is The American Shareware Network, 250 Arlington St, Marshfield MA 02050, phone (617) 834-9208.

The American Shareware Network carefully installs and operates the software program before it is listed in their catalog for sell. They only choose top-of-the-line programs that are popular and worth the money. They also are honest in making sure the diskettes they send the programs on are full. Some rip-off shareware distributors will take a program that will fit on 1 or 2 disks and split them up into 4 or 5 different one. Then they'll charge you 99c per disk and make you think you are getting a bargain. But in actuality you would have been better off purchasing from the shareware distributor that advertises at a price of \$3.49 per disk.

Also, don't make the mistake of going crazy ordering lots of shareware. You don't want to have 100 different software programs on your computer that do 100 different things. This would make life too confusing and you'd have to learn them all. You'd never know any of them well enough _ just a little bit about each one. The whole idea here is to try out several different shareware programs in the particular software category you need before you invest money into the commercial software programs.

You should streamline your needs and the functions you want your computer to perform. Most of us will be buying a computer for our home-based business. Therefore, you need to find a good software program that will do the job you need for your particular situation. If you're going to be a typesetter, try out a variety of desktop publishing software until you find the one that does everything you want it to do and more. One fantastic look-alike of the popular PageMaker software (retails: \$549) is a program called PagePlus. In 1993, the price is only \$60 _ a 90% savings over its counterpart. (Purchase from Serif, Inc, PO Box 803, Nashua NH 03061 (800) 869-8909.)

In addition, if you will be selling mailing lists, concentrate on a good database software. If you will be writing and selling reports, concentrate on finding a good word processing software. If you plan to draw and create art, find a good CAD or drawing software program.

After locating the right software for your particular business, go through the same procedure in finding a good business accounting software you feel comfortable with so you can keep accurate records of your daily business transactions.

Do your best to narrow the different software programs on your computer down to as few as possible. This way, you can really learn each one of them and become an expert much quicker than trying to learn a whole bunch at once - thus, creating confusion rather than knowledge.