

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 199. Is the Desktop Computer Dead?

by Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR
715 N Dries Street, Saukville 53080 (262) 268-1949
wb9rqr@att.net

The simple answer: YES! But first, lets look at a couple of definitions.

We all know what **desktop PCs** are ... medium to big boxes that sit permanently on or under the desk. They can generally be classed as powerful, with lots of memory and lots of hard disk space. **Laptops** are small versions of desktops, often seen as mobile versions of the classic desktop unit. Laptops are generally more compact, light and mobile than desktops, and this trend has continued over time. Presently, you can perform all the tasks available on a desktop PC with a laptop. **Tablets** are even more compact and lightweight than laptops. While they are very easy to carry, they really don't have the computing power of a laptop. On the other hand, they are sufficient for many people's needs. Good enough to watch TV, surf the Web, play light games, check email and the like. A few of the more popular tablets include the iPad, Kindle Fire and the Nook.

Lets look at sales. In 2015, desktop sales are projected to be about 20% of all computers sold, at 129 million units. Laptops will be about 194 million or 30%. Tablets will reach 332 million units or about 50% of all computing units sold. Clearly, the desktop is declining in popularity and the tablet is increasing. This increase will continue as tablets catch up to the power of desktops and laptops.

We have not even considered smart phones, which are getting more and more powerful, and doing the many computing tasks that some folks consider essential. In my opinion, these will take over the functions of all other computing units within 10 years. I doubt that desktops, laptops and even tablet computers will exist in 2025. Everything will be done with smart phones. They will be called something else by then. And many will be implantable. Yes, implanted inside the human body. If you want to make a call, you will just need to think it; there will be no buttons to push.

But, lets get back to the present. I got into this article because my wife Nancy (KC9FZK) wanted a different computer to replace her desktop. She wanted something faster with more bells and whistles. I suggested a laptop. Laptops can be placed in spots where desktops just would not fit. Another big plus is that laptops contain their own batteries, keeping them up and running during short blackouts. Hey, we take advantage of the latter attribute every Field Day – the logging laptops keep on “chugging” even when the generators are being refilled. That's like a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) being built into each unit! And, laptops are great for mobility – Nancy can check her email while watching TV in the living room. Or she can take it with her to lunch to show the ladies something interesting she came across. No need to use it just in our upstairs office.

Laptops are amazing. They are getting faster and generally more capable every year. Until the implantable smart phone comes along, they are a good choice for your general computing needs. Consider one next time you need to buy a new unit.

Happy Computing!