

'Tips' check old desktop and case before buying

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Many people who choose to buy second-hand machines usually only check a few simple steps: the machine starts up quickly, takes a quick look at the machine configuration information in Windows, runs a few application programs.

The potential errors from hardware such as memory (RAM), main board (mainboard), hard drive, screen . are difficult to see only through a few common check steps as above.

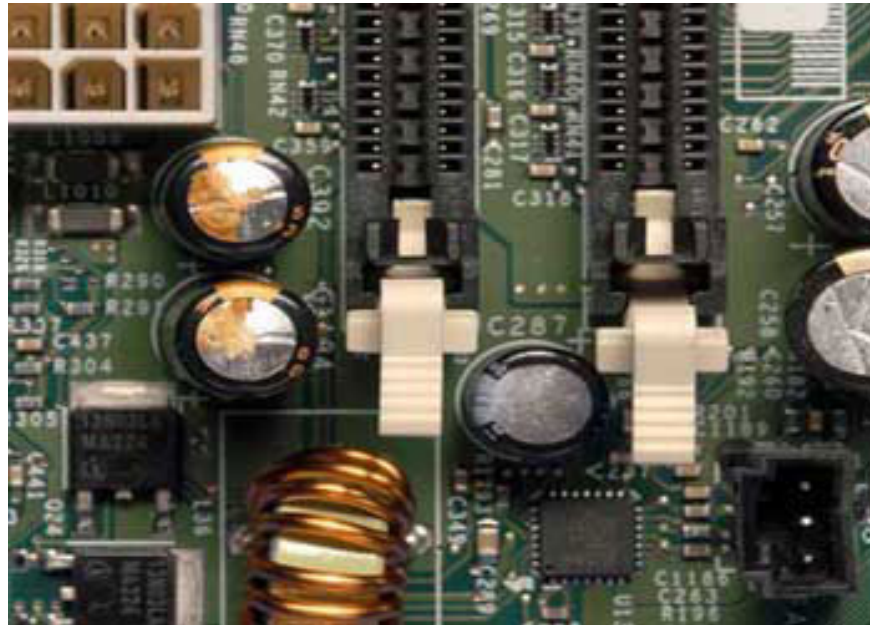
If you are looking for instructions to check your laptop before buying it, read this detailed guide: [14 tips of buying a laptop](#)



Second-hand computers imported from the US are sold a lot at Nhat Tao market (HCMC). *Photo: Huy Truong.*

Mr. Phan Thanh Nam, owner of an old computer repair shop in District 7, Ho Chi Minh City, with long experience in repairing the mainboard and hard drive, said there are many tips to check the errors of these parts.

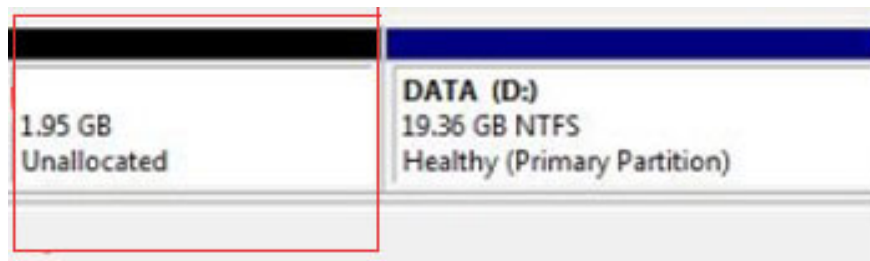
First, buyers should look at the main board with capacitors that are not compatible. If you can't see it in the case, you can also do this: turn off the computer, start several times. If these processes are normal, then 80% of this mainboard is good.



Capacitors on the mainboard are eddy, deformed and watery. *Photos vozforums .*

For hard drives, Mr. Nam said don't simply check the capacity in Windows Explorer. Sellers often have tips for "legitimate" machines with faulty hard drives: cutting off the faulty partition, not installing the operating system into the faulty partition so that the machine speed is normal.

The simple way to check whether the hard drive is cut or not is to go to Computer Management (Right-click Mycomputer select Manage -> Storage - Disk Management). If there is a partition cut off, it will be similar to the following:



The cut off partition (red) has the word unallocated. *Screen shot .*

To test more carefully, use the following method to find errors on all hard drive areas :

Boot with Hiren Boot disk: select **Hard Disk Tool -> Victoria** . Type " P " to select Primary, then press F4 so the program can check the partition from start to finish. If there is a screen error, there will be red spots or X

marks, areas with slow reading speed will see yellow and green. Looking down at the bottom right corner will see the read / write speed of the drive (if the speed of 20,000 Kb / s or more, it can be used).



Check hard drive error with Victoria. This hard drive has a lot of errors, so the speed is very slow: 3,895 Kb / s.
Screen shot .

Mr. Nguyen Van Hieu, owner of a computer repair shop in Thu Duc district, has more than 10 years in selling old computers, also revealed some ways to check RAM, CPU, Monitor.

Accordingly, you should force the machine to run a lot of application programs to use the maximum available memory. This can check whether the memory fails in any memory cell.

Normally, when doing the above step, if the RAM fails, the blue screen will appear as follows.

```
***STOP: 0x000000D1 (0x00000000, 0xF73120AE, 0xC0000008, 0xC0000000)

A problem has been detected and Windows has been shut down to prevent damage
to your computer.

DRIVER_IRQL_NOT_LESS_OR_EQUAL

If this is the first time you've seen this Stop error screen, restart your
computer. If this screen appears again, follow these steps:

Check to make sure any new hardware or software is properly installed. If this is a
new installation, ask your hardware or software manufacturer for any Windows updates
you might need.

If problems continue, disable or remove any newly installed hardware or software.
Disable BIOS memory options such as caching or shadowing. If you need to use Safe
Mode to remove or disable components, restart your computer, press F8 to select
Advanced Startup Options, and then select Safe Mode.

*** WXYZ.SYS - Address F73120AE base at C00000000, DateStamp 36b072a3

Kernel Debugger Using: COM2 (Port 0x2F8, Baud Rate 19200)
Beginning dump of physical memory
Physical memory dump complete. Contact your system administrator or
technical support group.
```

The ram error notification screen. *Screen shot* .

Can use the program to check RAM such as Doc Memory 2.2b or Gold Memory 5.07 in the disk Hirent Boot to test about 20% of RAM capacity because RAM often fails in the first memory.

Mr. Hieu also said that CPU is often very faulty, if it has booted into Windows as well. The problem to check is its actual speed. The test speed in My Computer Properties is not necessarily correct because this information is editable in the Windows Registry. You can use CPU-Z software to get standard information.

The computer screen after a period of use is often blurred, the brightness is unstable, or blinking off, shrunk. When you turn on the monitor on the image, it gathers into a small mid-point then slowly bursts out fully. While the image is clear, this is a monitor sign that has reached the end of its life, only one to two months can be used.

Once you know the smell of phosphor, you can smell it. If so, it is also the age for the screen to "bottle".

Use the Mornitor Test program to check the screen in different color modes to see streaking and blurring errors (if any). For CRT monitors (screen lights) are white, black, blue, and LCD monitors use 4 colors of blue, green, white, and black.

The screen should be turned on for about 10 minutes or more to see if it is blurry, flashing or dark, with a stable brightness, clear reading without blurring.

After checking through the above parts, you should let the machine run continuously for 24 hours and it will be easier to see the error if the first steps are not detected.

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