



## The ChromeBook as an Alternative to a Laptop.

**What's a ChromeBook?** – You may be familiar with Google's web browser called Chrome. If you aren't, you might consider installing it and switching to it from either Internet Explorer or Safari. It's **generally better, faster, and more secure** and that's why it's the **most popular web browser** available. If you have a free Google account and log into it in Chrome then your settings and bookmarks are transferable across computers.

What if there was a computer whose only job when booting up was to launch the Chrome web browser? There was no other software involved. That operating system could be simple, **small, and therefore fast** and that is what **ChromeBooks** are all about. No Windows, no Mac OS, just a **tiny, secure** operating system that only launches the Chrome web browser.

What if there was a computer like that could be small, fast, and cheap to build because it wouldn't need all the power of a Windows PC or a Mac. Those conventional computers are like muscle-cars and the ChromeBook is like a motorcycle. It doesn't have near as much power as the muscle cars but it's so light it's **very quick**. Now you have an idea what the ChromeBook is you are probably saying “What good can it be? It can only surf the web” but that's not nearly as limiting as you might think so please read on..

**What can it do?** You can do email, social networking, [chat](#) and [send SMS text messages](#), but maybe you already knew that. You can also do telephone calls, [video-conferencing](#), and there's a full office suite (yes – it can print either remotely [through the internet](#) or through [your local network](#)). It can even [convert PDF files to editable Word docs](#) and it [can take dictation](#) through your computer's microphone.. Chromebooks can edit pictures ([simple](#) as well as [full-featured](#)), edit [Photoshop files](#), [edit video](#) and [build web pages](#) or use a product [like Adobe Illustrator](#). Why you can even [play games](#) on them. You can [manage your personal](#) or [business finances](#). You can [stream your favorite tunes](#) while you work with Google Play Music, Spotify, Pandora, or SoundCloud and you can store your pictures online in Google Photos. If you are a lecturer you can show your presentations via a wireless connection to a projector.

There are lots of [add-ins for the Chrome web browser](#) to make it much more capable that you imagine and there are lots of great websites where you can do stuff. Here are 4 [links](#) where you can research this more:

<a href="#">The Google Chrome Web Store.</a>	<a href="#">Best free online applications and services.</a>
<a href="#">MakeUseOf's list of best websites.</a>	<a href="#">Best Chromebook Games.</a>

Did I mention that most all this stuff is free? Chromebooks cost \$150 to [\\$400](#), weigh 2 to 3 pounds and run 6 to

10 or more hours on a battery charge. Our family owns 4 of them and the oldest is 6 years old now and I think the Chromebook is the future of home and school computing, available today.

**What will I need?** You must have a [free Google account](#). If you have a Gmail account then you already have this. The Google account gives you access to Google's apps; [Gmail](#), [Calendar](#), [Google Maps](#), [Google Docs](#) (looks like Office 2003), [Google Drive](#) (15GB space free to store your documents, tunes, photos, etc.) and [so much more](#). If you don't like Google's apps then Microsoft has a similar service at [Outlook.com](#) (formerly Hotmail - if you have an account there then you already have this). With that you get [Microsoft's Web Apps](#) (looks like Office 2013) and [OneDrive](#) (5GB free storage). There's even a free [app for Office in the Chrome Webstore](#). If you're used to a Mac you can use your [iCloud account](#) (or get a one if you don't already have one [with 5GB free space](#)). With that you have access to Pages, Numbers, and Keynote. If you don't like those options then there's also [MediaFire which gives you 50GB of free storage](#) and free [office apps by Zoho](#). You'll also need access to an Internet connection via WiFi.

**How quick is it?** Ours boot up in 6 to 7 seconds, wakes from sleep so fast I could not time it and shuts down is almost instant. How much would you have to pay for a PC or Mac that fast? Unlike Windows, the Chrome operating system doesn't slow down over the years. The keyboard and track-pad are excellent. Think Macbook Air and iPad combined but only \$230.

**Is it easy to use?** Think about it. All you have to do is turn it on and everything is done through the web browser. That's so much simpler. Most people know their way around the Internet and there is only one piece of software to learn and that's the web browser and if you currently browse using Chrome, then you're completely ready to use a Chromebook.

**When it comes to security,** [Chromebooks are inherently secure](#) without slowing down with the security software you normally have to install on a Windows computer or Mac and you won't need to scan regularly for viruses either.

**Another major advantages** are that your data, documents, and pictures, etc. are stored "[in the cloud](#)" and not on the computer. If your computer is lost or stolen or damaged [your data is still secure](#). Just get another Chromebook and log into your account and your documents, pictures, etc are all still there.

**Are Chromebooks useless without an Internet connection?** [Absolutely not.](#) [Google Drive / Docs](#) and [Gmail can work offline](#) and when you reconnect to the internet your document changes and email work will automatically be synchronized.

### **More articles on the ChromeBook**

YouTube - [The Chromebook Channel.](#)

MakeUseOf - [Looking for a Laptop - Get a Chromebook Instead.](#)

[Everything you need to know about switching to a Chromebook.](#)

[Chromebooks – Converting your iTunes to Google Play Music.](#)

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