

The Great Laptop v. Notebook Debate

Technology is a funny thing. It has an innate ability to divide opinion, and create 'experts' out of nowhere, at the risk of sounding sexist, particularly amongst men. Last week I casually announced to friends that I was thinking of buying a laptop or notebook, but hadn't quite figured out the exact difference between the two. The response from 'instant experts' was overwhelming; suddenly the bottle of Pinot we were about to order became low priority. All that was important now, was to [compare notebooks](#) with laptops. "Don't worry about it," said one, 'there's absolutely no difference between them.' "There absolutely is," replied another, 'there's a huge difference. Internal memory capacity for a start.' At this point, my eyes probably began to glaze over. "Possibly size?" Said someone else. Ah, this part of the conversation I could follow. From what I'd figured out, the main difference between the two was that notebooks were smaller, more easily portable. My confusion had only been that if I purchased a notebook, would I miss out on using my new toy as a 'proper' computer. "No, no, no." Another 'expert' joined the conversation. "It's only a branding thing – some companies call all their 'laptops' notebooks – that's all it is." "It's not," said someone else, 'a laptop functions as a small PC, a notebook is for, well taking notes and not much more.' "Yeah, but the batteries last longer on notebooks." Quipped someone else. Finally, it got too much and I had to halt the 'experts' – refilling my wine glass became an even greater priority. We agreed that we would disagree and I finished the conversation none the wiser. Later I did some research of my own and it turned out to be one of those strange situations where to a certain extent, no one was right and no one was wrong. Some companies do, it seems, quite simply call their laptops 'notebooks' – whilst other companies use the term notebook to refer to a different product. Their version is lightweight, offers longer battery life, but has no DVD player and there's some techy difference about 'processors'. Confusing, to say the least. This still left me with no clue which one I actually wanted. A visit to a vast out-of-town computer shop left me none the wiser either. A young man with dubious skin tried, but failed, to explain the differences. He eventually confused himself more than me and left to find the manager. After waiting patiently, I left too. These episodes led me to the conclusion that it didn't really matter what I called my new computer, as long as it did all the things that I needed it to. So I reverted to the good old-fashioned method of writing a list of my needs. Armed with this list, I hit the safety of online shops, late at night. It was glorious; no one to argue with me or cause further confusion. A few weeks later, as I sat in a café with my shiny new toy, some good friends came to join me. "Nice laptop." Said one. "Looks more like a..." He got no further than that.

About the Author

Sarah Maple uses [Shopping.com](#) to [compare notebooks](#) and get the best prices

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