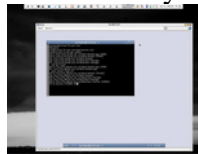


Whatever You Do, Don't Buy a Chromebook

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The first Chromebooks, from Samsung and Acer, are finally starting to ship, after a six-month tease by Google for its foundational Chrome OS. (Samsung's white 3G model is now shipping, and its three other models and Acer's sole models are available for preorder.) Please, save yourself \$350 to \$500 and avoid these cloud-only laptops. Spend your money on something you'll both use and enjoy, like an iPad 2 or Galaxy Tab 10.1. I write these words from a Chromebook, where my 802.11n network feels like it's traversing molasses when using Google Docs and other Internet service.

The sad truth is that the Chrome OS vision of all your computing occurring through the Internet is an unsatisfying reality. I've tried to be open to the idea and given the beta Chrome OS the benefit of doubt in its early versions. But as the ship date approached, I began to get nervous that Google couldn't take Chrome OS beyond being an awkward sub-OS.

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