



09 August 2024

FEATURE ARTICLE

A Consumer's Guide to Purchasing Second-Hand Computer Electronics and Gadgets in Fiji

The second-hand electronics market in Fiji is a key part of the trade currently taking place in the country. The availability of electronic gadgets ranges from local to international sellers. It includes both consumers' electronic gadgets and office computer equipment, PCs, and their accessories. On a daily basis, one can come across several second-hand electronic shops dealing in computers, smartphones, gaming consoles, and accessories.

There is great importance in understanding consumers' education to the second-hand electronics market and the reasons behind purchasing second-hand electronics, especially in the context of a developing country like Fiji.

Why do consumers choose to go for second-hand computers and other technology gadgets? There are several reasons behind it. The main reason is because they are cheaper than new branded items, which may often not come with warranties.

These items are easier to replace with another cheap priced item. Instead of spending a lot of money on foreign branded items, including other accessories, people do go for second-hand items. There are a variety of affordable used monitors and printers, which are helping a lot of students and also workers. Besides this, the other most commonly cited reason is the reduce, reuse, and recycle concept. In such cases, people are more interested in lessening the stress on the environment by reducing the amount of electronic technology discarded every day and giving it a second, and sometimes third, life by including a little market value to it.

Factors to Consider Before Buying Second-Hand Electronics

Some important factors to consider before buying second-hand electronics are:

1. Condition of the Product

Ensure the product is still in good working condition unless you would like to repair or replace parts of the product yourself.

2. Ensuring Compatibility with the current Technology

As the technology is constantly evolving, adaptability is important to consider when purchasing electronics. New technology needs the latest gadgets to operate or may replace the older ones. It should ensure that the electronics will continue to work and will be compatible with up-to-

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlkt@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



date systems after purchase. This is especially important for Apple and Samsung products as their software might not be updated according to the most current software. This could mean access to some applications might not be compatible if the product is over 5 years already.

3. Reputation of the Seller

To identify an ethical seller, check other items listed by the seller. If more than 3 items are listed, it shows that they deal in huge quantities and it is a very good sign. Their profile will also give a glimpse of their performance and show reviews about their previous transactions. It is advisable to read the profile and the reviews. If there are a lot of people leaving negative reviews and talking about their bad experiences, try not to engage with the seller.

Tips for Inspecting and Testing Second-Hand Electronics

Here are some tips on inspecting and testing second-hand electronics:

Tip 1: Physically examine the outside of the electronic item you are interested in buying. Look for scratches and dents. Check that all of the push buttons, dials, flaps, handles, infrared light ports, microphone ports, earphone ports, memory card slots, and USB ports have no missing parts. Do not forget to ask if you can also check the inside of the battery compartment (usually hidden under a loose rubber flap on phones, cameras, or old versions of the Apple iPod). If the seller refuses to let you fully inspect an item, call off the trade. Let us investigate what is hidden! Before purchasing and after physically examining the item, you may want to pass it to your willing assistant to evaluate how well the electronic item functions. Trading in this friendly manner would enable the seller to show you more about how the electronic item works and can help you avoid buyer's regret later on.

Tip 2: Test all of the electronic item's functions. From the Council's experience, the best way to acquire an electronic item and test its full functionality immediately at home is by using these two gadgets: a loopback cable with its connectors symmetrically joined together, and a USB extension cable. If you connect these two gadgets together, you can complete the entire electronics test in 30 seconds but you would save a lot of time by asking the seller to fully demonstrate the product. Try to view photos, watch videos, listen to songs, make or listen to a test ringtone, make and receive test calls, answer test messages, test an app of interest on the item if any, and show how it flickers in the dark while playing games. Evaluate the electronic item's physical condition, performance, frequency of hang, speed of navigation, graphics, battery charger quality, web camera quality, and equipment packages (memory card, printing cable, etc.).

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlkt@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



Ensuring Authenticity and Avoiding Counterfeit Products

Counterfeit products are a multi-billion-dollar industry and are unfortunately on the rise in the age of fast-paced electronics sales and quick disposability of electronics to make way for new products with innovative features and improved processing abilities. In the second-hand market, consumers must be alert to whether the product is genuine or not. Genuine electronics have a one-year warranty period. Consumers can locate the year of manufacture on the inside of the laptop or tablet. If second-hand products are used, the electronic may only have six months to a year remaining on the warranty.

Some second-hand products may not be genuine and are duplicates or clones with look-alike features on the outside but are only a fraction of the quality of the genuine product. The counterfeit look-alike products can be dangerous and have the potential to catch on fire. Look-alike counterfeit electronics can also be brought into the country with faulty circuits that can cause the electronics itself to catch on fire. Check the IMEI network status of the device to see whether it is active, blacklisted, or has been flagged as lost or stolen. If the phone has been blacklisted or flagged, try to avoid buying the product as this could cause problems later on. . If the claimant is the owner and the device has an active status and meets the genuine features, then the phone can be sold to any interested parties.

Legal Considerations and Consumer Rights in Second-Hand Electronics Purchases

What is the legal framework that applies? Some of the most frequently asked questions by consumers and sellers are "Is there a return policy?" and "Is there a longer warranty period especially for electrical products?" Whatever the answers, it is usually to the sellers' advantage. In Fiji, most second-hand products are sold on an "as is where is" basis. This means that the seller does not take responsibility to compensate or give redress for any faults or damages to a product once it is sold. At the point of sale, all risk shifts to the buyer. As a consumer or seller, it is also important to know your rights and the law in the event that false advertising or fraudulent behavior is alleged.

In conclusion, when purchasing second-hand electronics and gadgets, it is important to be knowledgeable about legal considerations such as warranties, aftercare services, and protection against false advertising and fraudulent misrepresentation. Even though warranties for used goods may be fewer than for new ones, it is crucial to thoroughly check and understand the condition of the goods before payments are made. This will help to ensure protection in case of disputes, fraud, or unforeseen problems with the purchased product. Additionally, it is important to be aware of the seller's legal requirements and to understand the features of the

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerltk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

warranty in order to safeguard against potential malfunctions. Different sellers may offer varying policies and warranty periods, making it important to carefully review the terms and conditions. Ultimately, consumers have the responsibility to be critical thinkers, and be careful with how and where they spend their hard-earned money. If consumers feel that they have been subjected to a bad deal, please contact the Council on its national toll-free line 155, or email complaints@consumersfiji.org.

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerltk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj