

Q&A: Choose a tablet or laptop?

Kim Komando, Special for USA TODAY 7:04 a.m. EST January 1, 2016

Q. I can't decide whether to buy a tablet or laptop. How can I decide?

A. The differences between modern laptops and tablets are fading fast. They both handle basic computer tasks just as well. A laptop is going to be larger with a keyboard that's better for typing, while a tablet is going to be more portable with a longer battery life. Learn more about choosing between tablets and laptops, including how to make a tablet more like a laptop.

Watch the ball drop on the go

Q. Every year, I like to watch the Times Square ball drop, but this year we're traveling. Can I watch it on my smartphone?

A. Grab the [EarthCam app](#) (Android, Apple; Free) and you can watch the ball drop live. EarthCam has been streaming the drop for 20 years on computers and now on smartphones and tablets, too. And while you're downloading apps, get a noisemaker app so you can celebrate without getting winded.

Great apps for Windows 10 tablet

Q. I got a Windows 10 tablet for Christmas, but I don't know what apps are good. Any suggestions?

A. You can get the usual ones like Skype, Facebook and Netflix, but there are plenty of others. Take a look at Duolingo for learning new languages, Office Lens for fast document scanning without a scanner, or Telegram Messenger for secure communication. Download six other apps you'll love on Windows 10.

Photograph New Year's fireworks

Q. I tried photographing fireworks last year and it didn't turn out well. How can I make it work?

A. Shooting at night is hard enough, but bursts of light make it even harder. You want to set the camera for long exposure, which means a tripod is a must to prevent blurring. Turn the ISO down to 100 and set an aperture of f/8 to f/16 for the best results. Get more ideas on settings and preparation for taking good fireworks photos.

Keep better track of receipts

Q. I have shoeboxes of receipts I'd like to toss. How can I digitize them to free up space?

A. You could use a general scanning app like CamScanner (Android, Apple; Free) to capture them and then organize the images manually. However, there are apps and services like Wave and Shoeboxed that are designed to capture and store receipts. Learn more about these and a few other options.

Bonus: Android's own digital assistant

Q. I have an Android smartphone. Is there anything for that works like Apple's Siri?

A. Not many people realize that Google has its own "Siri" called Google Now. Not only does it handle voice searches, it learns your habits, locations and likes to present you information you need to know before you ask. Find out how to turn it on for your smartphone and get started using it.

