

ACT computers put the humanity into technology

By Jessica Armstrong

Special to the Islander

In the rapidly changing world of computers, the term user-friendly can seem like a bad joke.

Purchasing the right system or getting technical help in the middle of a computer glitch is often more difficult than it needs to be.

That's not the case at Advanced Computer Technology (ACT) in Vero Beach, where "user-friendly" isn't merely a platitude. Owner Claus Schwanitz, along with his team of technicians and teachers, offer full support so customers don't have to hassle with the manufacturer or inadequate technical support provided over the phone.

While the computer world is getting bigger and more complex, it lacks essential qualities, said Schwanitz, and that's service and the availability of a human being. ACT provides technical help six days a week during their store hours. Customers can bring their computers and questions to the store, or a technician will visit their home or business.

ACT is a full-service computer store offering customized systems using top-quality components, along with upgrades, repairs on all brands and installation. On-site computer instruction and repair is also offered.

When it comes to computers, the saying "you get what you pay for" is especially true. Schwanitz owns the business with his son, Juergen, a technician at ACT Computers who specializes in software and programming.

They are committed to quality work and products that are dependable and made to last. Systems are built using only quality name brand components which are 100 percent compatible for complete upgradability. Their systems are designed to last 10 years or more because all parts are interchangeable and upgradable.

There's a wide range of quality on the market, said Schwanitz, yet many people don't bother to comparison shop. They look for the "most performance and best quality for the money" when buying a car but not with a computer, he noted. And when shopping for a computer at office supply store, the clerks know little, if anything, about the



Forum /Edgar Straeffler

Computer technician Will Conklin and Senior Computer Technician Juergen Schwanitz working on a computer at their specialized computer repair business.

Advanced Computer Technology

Owner: Claus and Juergen Schwanitz
Years in business: 5
Specializing in: custom-built computer systems, as well as upgrades
Employees: 7
Location: 134 South U.S. 1 (drivers license office plaza), Vero Beach, 567-7888

inter-workings of the computers they're selling, he said.

"We are not the cheapest store; we want to be the best," added Schwanitz. "We want people to come back for their second and third computers for quality systems that they don't have to pay more to replace."

That's exactly the type of business ACT has achieved since opening their doors five years ago -- a loyal clientele who appreciate quality service and computers.

Schwanitz also understands that computers aren't a one-size-fits-all type of product. He takes the time to talk with computer buyers to make sure they get the right system that meets their particular needs.

"If you use a computer just for the Internet, you don't have the same needs as a design studio that's scanning all day," he explained. "They would need the fastest computer they can afford."

ACT's technicians must know a lot about computers before they are hired and they also learn plenty on the job. Technicians aren't the only one making house calls. Instructors will also visit a customer's home or business to help people learn how to use a computer.

Originally from Germany, Schwanitz has been involved with computers even before the computer revolution dramatically changed the way people communicate. His family was involved in building computer data process centers. He opened his first computer store in Cologne, Germany in 1978 and a similar store in Philadelphia in 1987.

While the world of computers continues to evolve his basic philosophy remains the same: to keep customers happy and give them a computer that's built to last.