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5 factors to consider when choosing a DC fan: by Admon Felix

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The time has come to replace that DC fan. Or your latest build has come to the point of installing a fan for the first time. However you have come to this point, the bottom line remains the same; you need a new DC fan. Before placing your order, it is important to consider a few things to help choose the best fit for your system.

Price: The price of your DC fan will depend on several factors including the size of the fan and the size of the system you are installing it for. However, for most standard sizes, it is completely reasonable to find a fan for around $5-10, with some models running as inexpensive as $2. These fans are definitely an example of you get what you pay for, but for many projects the less expensive fans are completely adequate.

Durability: DC fans are a must-have for maximizing the lifespan of your system, so you want to have one that is working at its peak. But you donâ€™t want to replace it on a monthly basis either. Most fans will last several years if you give it some small care. First, make sure to purchase a fan made of durable materials such as aluminum to ensure that the fan is able to perform for longer. Second, give your fan the proper environment in which to operate. Make sure the vent area is clear as the fan will have to work harder to push air through anything than to vent into clear air (no more laptops on the duvet). Keep the system surrounded by relatively cool air, so that the fanâ€™s workload will be reduced (move that desk away from the radiator). And give it a break! Turn your computer off at night, and if possible during your lunch break, to let the computer cool naturally and reduce the workload on your fan.

Customizability: In order to make sure your system gets the best cooling possible, and make sure you are benefitting the most from your entire setup, a perfect fit is necessary. The right fan will fit your system in three ways: size, voltage, and noise. Make sure the fan fits perfectly, many companies offer a variety of sizes allowing you to fit your system to the nearest 5mm interval for any dimension. The voltage required by a dc fan is more flexible than an AC fan, but the speed of cooling will be effected by how fast the blades are turning (which is controlled by the voltage). Finally, noise production needs to meet the requirements of your systemâ€™s use.

Acoustics: Speaking of noise levels, there are a number of ways to help avoid undue acoustic interference. Buying a high quality fan is the first step, as these are cut for a better fit to reduce noise-creating friction. Install the biggest fan your system has room for, as the larger the ventillation area the lower the airflow through the system (higher speed air makes noise when it encounters obstacles such as fan blads). Finally, if your system begins to buzz on the whole, get a new fan immediately. Very rarely the fan can resonate the whole system. (Ever put a tuning fork on your skull? Its like that) In these cases that sound can literally shake the system apart, so replace it before that happens.

Energy Efficiency: One of the major perks of a DC fan over an AC fan is the energy efficiency offered by these fans. DC fans typically save up to 60% of energy consumption over an AC fan that would serve the same system. This is because the current only needs to go one way, and for a proper ventilation, is more than sufficient. To maximize that efficiency see the specific energy requirements of each model under consideration, and ensure that the fanâ€™s environment is kept optimal as discussed above.

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