

## **Retiree Corner:**

### **Getting Connected at Minimum Expense**

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Much of the world is connected by computer and you may be missing out. It's not that expensive nowadays, particularly with the appearance on the market of what are called 'netbooks.' They're small, cheap, lightweight and may be your solution to getting on-line. A number of companies are producing these small but powerful wonders.

I recently bought a netbook from Acer. I placed the order with Amazon at a cost of \$329. Amazon doesn't ship to APO/FPO addresses, so I used a service called ShipItAPO ([www.shipitapo.com](http://www.shipitapo.com)), a company in California that receives your orders and then ships them to your APO address. That service cost about \$18, and with free shipping by Amazon the total was under \$350.

The model I bought is the Acer Aspire One model with the 10.1" screen and available in Black, Red, White and Blue. It comes with Windows XP, 1 gigabyte (GB) of memory and a 160GB hard disk. It has built-in networking and if your Exchange cafeteria, for example, has free Internet access, you can connect for free. The first task would be to install free anti-virus software available from a service like <http://www.avast.com>.

You can get free e-mail from Yahoo, Microsoft Hotmail or other service, and with Internet access you can sign up for access to your bank, your credit union, Defense Finance and Accounting Service and other useful web site. The USA Federal Credit Union discontinued free monthly statement by mail. If credit union members want to keep track of their accounts, they would have to pay \$2 per month to continue receiving statements by mail. With a computer, you can set up access to your account(s) for free via the Internet.