

Laptop 500 USD

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Buying a genuine laptop for just \$ 500 is no longer a fantasy, of course, these laptops have limited performance. The price is very attractive and they run very well for common applications like e-mail, web surfing, word processing and some other "mustache" applications.

Experiment with laptop models costing about 500 USD by Acer, Dell and HP. Gateway and IBM also have products with similar prices. These ultra-low-cost systems threaten to overthrow the concept of "the cheapest laptop can not be cheaper than the lowest-cost desktop computer".

Last August, for the first time at retail stores in the US, the amount of laptops sold was much higher than desktop computers. According to NPD Techworld statistics, laptops sold at retail stores accounted for 52%. This increase is in line with the price reduction: the average price of laptops in August 2004 is 1350 USD; But in August this year, this figure dropped to 1100 USD.

There is a return



However, to have a \$ 500 laptop, you have to "hunt". For example, the Acer Aspire 3003LCi laptop has a retail price of US \$ 649, but thanks to the discount and promotions, it has dropped to \$ 499 at the store. Also, the HP Compaq Presario M2000 costs \$ 579 and is reduced to \$ 50. The Dell Inspiron 1200 costs \$ 549, but you can buy it at \$ 499.

"Living" with a cheap laptop also means you have to accept an agreement. These low-cost systems cannot break the speed record, they score relatively low when tested with PC WorldBench 5 (compared to other trendy laptops). Acer 's laptop peaked at all, reaching 68 points, which had the fastest processor (1.8GHz AMD Mobile Sempron) and the most memory (512MB compared to the other two with only 256MB). However, the score of the Acer scored 10 points lower than the average PCX monthly score of the PC series. The battery life of the device reaches 1 hour 19 minutes, which means you have very little time to disconnect the device from the electrical outlet.

Using the Intel Celeron M 350 1.3GHz processor, the Dell Inspiron 1200 scored 57 points for PC WorldBench 5; Compaq Presario M2000 uses 1.4GHz Celeron M 360 to score 60 points. At least you'll want to upgrade your laptop's RAM to 512MB, which is the minimum requirement to run Windows XP smoothly. This upgrade costs about 50 USD.

All 3 laptops use low-end integrated graphics, using PC chipsets and main memory instead of graphics chips and dedicated graphics memory. Such graphical configuration is not for people who play video games or edit videos, but watching DVDs is quite good.

These models have PC WorldBench 5 score equivalent to normal laptops on common tasks like surfing the web with Mozilla web browser, Microsoft Office 2003 and editing images with Adobe Photoshop. If you are a student, a casual user or looking for a cheap second computer in addition to the main PC at home or in the office, you should look for laptops like this. Gamers and users run a variety of audio applications, graphics should not watch these laptops.

Add and subtract points

Although all three machines have very good prices, they lack some essential things that are available in regular laptops. For example, only the Acer Aspire 3003LCi has integrated Wi-Fi support; Dell Inspiron 1200 and HP Compaq Presario M2000 do not have wireless connectivity. No laptops have memory card readers; All 3 also do not have a DVD burner.

Two Dell and Compaq models have limited capacity hard drives, 30GB and 40GB respectively. Acer has a 60GB hard drive. Acer and Dell machines have a DVD-ROM / CD-RW combination drive, while Compaq only has a DVD-ROM drive.

On the plus side, each has a USB 2.0, ethernet, modem, headphone and microphone ports as well as a PC Card slot. Even Compaq has a FireWire port.

Each machine has a point that interests you. Compaq has impressive sound and design. Acer has a range of function keys that you can assign them as shortcuts to quickly launch frequently used applications and Acer's touchpad pointing device has a 4-way scroll button in the middle. Dell also has 3 USB ports and has a good battery life: 2.4 hours.

You can also upgrade these laptops, which is not always possible with previous laptops. For example, every device has the ability to upgrade RAM and let you replace the larger capacity hard drive.

You are also entitled to a reasonable warranty from Acer and HP: each machine has a 1-year warranty and telephone support. Dell does not have phone support or hardware support, the 90-day warranty period, if technical support via mail and phone you have to pay an additional 25 USD.

Prices will be lower

How much will the laptop price drop? Less than 500 USD, some stores said so.

The cheapest laptop may drop to \$ 400 by the end of this year and may drop to about \$ 300 by the end of 2006.

According to an analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates, thanks to increasing the number of production, some high-priced components have lowered prices. This makes the system price decrease.

For example, according to market research firm iSuppli, the cost for flat panel displays often accounts for more than half of the total value of computers that has fallen by more than 70% during the past 12 months. The cost of other laptop components such as hard drives and memory has also decreased by a quarter in the past 12 months.

Cheaper parts don't mean poor quality products. Low-cost systems also have to censor product quality like any other system. These systems can run well on basic applications.

But Dell and other manufacturers agreed that low-cost laptops were seen as bait. HP said selling cheap laptops means it is encouraging users to come up with upgrades.

Understand what you need

Before you click to buy a cheap system, make sure that the system can do the work you need. Although manufacturers are always aiming to elicit customers' purse, you can get the power to calculate the right demand without paying a high price.

For example, paying an additional \$ 50 for a Dell Inspiron 6000 laptop for a 1-year warranty, a 40GB hard drive and a 15.4-inch LCD screen, compared to the Inspiron 1200 only has a 90-day warranty period, a 30GB hard drive and a screen. 14.1 inch LCD. In the case of this Dell, you may have to consider a slightly higher model to get the features you need. Some vendors only sell fixed computer configurations, with little or no options to upgrade.

Also, see if you really need a laptop. With low-cost laptops and desktops, you still get the power of desktop processing speed. HP Compaq Presario SR1420NX Minitower costs \$ 450 using a Celeron d 2.93GHz CPU, 512MB of RAM and an 80GB hard drive, with a 9-in-1 memory card reader and a DVD +/- RW drive (you will have to spend an additional \$ 100 for a 17 inch CRT screen or 200 USD for a similarly sized LCD screen).

Compare features

ACER LEAD

The following laptops run pretty good office and web applications, but some have limited RAM, storage capacity and battery life.

Laptop

Price (discounted / not discounted)	Speed	Configuration	Acer Aspire 3003LCi	499/649	Score PC
WorldBench 5: 68					
Battery life: 1:19	1.8GHz	Mobile Sempron 3000+;	512MB RAM;	60GB hard drive;	15 inch screen
					Dell

Inspiron 1200 499/549 PC WorldBench score 5: 57

Battery life: 2:24 Celeron M 350 1.3GHz; 256MB RAM; 30GB hard drive; 14.1 inch screen HP Compaq

Presario M2000 529/579 PC WorldBench score 5: 60

Battery life: 2:06 Celeron M 360 1.3GHz; 256MB RAM; 40GB hard drive; 15 inch screen

PC World USA

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