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Build It: A Web-Surfing PC for \$500



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A Complete PC for only \$500?

It's not as easy as it seems to build a complete PC for \$500. Sure, if you want to hit eBay or shop in the "discontinued, circa 2001 parts" section of some online store, you can do it easily. But we're trying to build a relatively modern PC with new components here. As you can see from the chart below, we didn't quite make it. This is primarily because, even in a PC this cheap, we decided to go with a discrete graphics card rather than integrated video.

Component	Brand / Model	Price
Processor	Athlon XP 1800+	\$50, check prices
Active Cooler	Cooler Master DP5-6I31D-01	\$6
Motherboard	Chaintech 7NIL1-SUMMIT	\$58, check prices
Memory	256MB Kingston PC2700	\$51, check prices
Case	In-Win V564G	\$51
Power Supply	250W (included with case)	NA
Hard Drive	Western Digital WD400BB	\$44, check prices
DVD-ROM / CD-RW	Sony DDU 1621	\$29, check prices
Graphics	ATI Radeon 7000 64MB	\$33, check prices
Monitor	19" CTX VL700	\$85, check prices
Speakers	Creative SBS 270	\$15, check prices
Audio	Integrated motherboard	NA
Floppy	None (card reader built-in)	NA
Keyboard	Logitech LABTEC generic PS2	\$7, check prices
Mouse	Microsoft Wheel Mouse Optical	\$8, check prices
Operating System	Windows XP Home	\$82, check prices
Total		\$519

The last time we built a system similar to this, it was a [mini-ITX system](#) almost a year ago. That system weighed in at \$498 without Windows, and while our new system is far from cutting edge, it's certainly much faster. We opted for the cheapest reliable micro-ATX motherboard we could find, built around the nForce2 Ultra 400 chipset. The Chaintech

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board we ended up with is a great deal, but lacks integrated video, so we had to supplement it with a 64MB Radeon 7000. This pushed us over our \$500 goal, but only by \$19, and it provides a clean upgrade path for higher-end CPUs and video cards.

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