

Computers - Laptops and Discounts

This information on laptops has been given by a research fellow at Children's Hospital Boston:

The laptop I currently recommend is Hewlett Packard's ZV6000 series. These are cheap, reliable and powerful machines. They have a 15.4" monitor which is available as "Brightview" for an extra \$25, and is well worth the expense. It looks fantastic. Pre-configured systems can be bought at stores, but to get the most for your money I recommend buying online from [Hewlett Packard's web site](#) where you can customize pretty much every aspect of the machine. I bought one recently, and it was delivered by FedEx two weeks after I submitted my order, and three days earlier than the estimated time of delivery.

This computer uses an AMD64 processor rather than the more popular Intel chips. The AMD64 is a superb chip, a 64 bit processor which is likely to become significantly more powerful when Microsoft's new operating system, Longhorn, is released. Some 64bit drivers are already available for windows XP.

The system I bought has a 15.4" Brightview screen with 1200*800 resolution; an AMD64 3500 chip (2.2 Gigahertz, 512Mb L2 Cache); 1GB RAM; 80GB 5,400rpm Hard Drive; Dual layer DVD reader/writer; Integrated WiFi and Bluetooth; a 128MB ATI RADEON(R) XPRESS 200M video card and a 12cell battery. It cost \$1150. I consider this to be fantastic value for money.

This machine is a good all purpose computer, it performs well as an office machine, games platform, DVD player, multimedia device. The integrated Bluetooth and WiFi work beautifully and are incredibly easy to set up. The built in speakers are of good quality, and it has 4 USB ports to connect external devices, a 6 in 1 digital media card reader, S-video port and a FireWire port. It runs quite cool as long as its fan vents aren't obstructed.

The downside is that it is quite heavy, starting at 7.97 pounds. These machines are designed as desktop replacements, which is to say you carry them from place to place and plug them in rather than just relying on battery power. The battery drains quickly, particularly if you use loads of resources such as WiFi, Bluetooth, DVD drive and so on. I find that with a heavy load on the system, my 12 cell battery lasts about one and a half hours before needing a recharge. With those devices switched off, and the power settings switched to "max battery"; however, it significantly extends the amount of time the battery lasts. Another problem is that although this machine uses AMD's new socket 939 motherboard, HP have bizarrely disabled its dual channel memory. This is not a significant problem, as having this enabled would have yielded only a slight performance improvement. Dual channel would have been nice, but at this price who cares?

This computer would be a good choice for anyone wanting a system that they intend to carry between home and work. It is my opinion that to get comparable performance from another machine would cost hundreds of dollars more. Worth mentioning that the HP Compaq R4000 systems are very similar (and a little cheaper too, if you need more processing power go for the R4000), but I think that the build quality of the ZV6000 is better, and the keyboard is more comfortable. Regardless, both systems can be ordered from the same website.