

BEST BETS FOR PC BUYERS

RANK	OVERALL RATING	MANUFACTURER AND MODEL/ PRICE	CONFIGURATION	COMMENTS
1	8.77	Dell Computer Dimension XPS P133c \$3,249 w/ monitor	Minitower, 133-Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 1GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	Dell provides strong documentation and preloads Microsoft Office, making it easy to launch Excel and Word
2	7.70	Gateway 2000 P5-120 \$3,318 w/ monitor	Desktop, 120-Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 1.6GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM with a unique three-disk cartridge	Comes with Microsoft's Bob interface and 51 programs on 9 CDs
3	6.72	Gateway 2000 P5-90 \$2,168 w/ monitor	Desktop, 90-Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 730MB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	Same as Gateway 2000 P5-120
4	5.90	Compaq Presario 9546 \$2,598 w/ monitor	Minitower, 100-Mhz Pentium, 8MB of memory, 1GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	Awesome sound and color-coordinated cables make setup simple
5	5.88	Packard Bell Pentium 100 System \$2,898 w/ monitor	Minitower, 100-Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 1.6GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	Internet-ready and comes with 40 software titles and a remote-control device
6	5.78	Acer Aspire 2125 \$2,598 w/ monitor	Minitower, 100 Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 1GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	A stylish aerodynamic look, but a plastic wrist rest attached to keyboard was annoying
7	5.71	Hewlett-Packard Pavilion \$2,600 w/ monitor	Minitower, 90-Mhz Pentium, 16MB of memory, 1.2GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	A stylish design and kid-mode security feature to protect important files
8	5.67	IBM Aptiva \$2,649 w/ monitor	Desktop, 100-Mhz Pentium, 8MB of memory, 1GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	A small-footprint desktop unit with speakers that produce good sound
9	5.44	Compaq Presario 7170 \$1,998 w/ monitor	Desktop, 90-Mhz Pentium, 8MB of memory, 840MB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	When you boot up you go into a Presario Plaza, which has tutorials and an area for kids
10	5.38	Digital Equipment Starion 910 \$2,148 w/ monitor	Minitower, 75-Mhz Pentium, 8MB of memory, 850MB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	Strong documentation, and system ports are labeled with symbols that make attaching peripherals easy
10	5.38	NEC Technologies Ready 9022 \$2,699 w/ monitor	Minitower, 100-Mhz Pentium, 8MB of memory, 1GB hard disk, quad-speed CD-ROM	A handheld remote controls audio and telephone functions. The system ships with Microsoft's Bob interface and over 20 preloaded software packages

DATA: NATIONAL SOFTWARE TESTING LABORATORIES, A DIVISION OF MCGRAW-HILL COS.