

POWER PCs												
Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	PC World-Bench 4	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Processor type/speed	RAM	Hard disk/capacity	Mother-board	Chipset	Modem	USB ports
<b>1</b>  Best Price Poweroid.com 2013 020 8904 3347 www.poweroid.com	<b>NEW</b>	Aug 02	123	£1,299	1-year parts and labour, 4-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.73GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Maxtor/ 2 x 60GB	Asus A7V333	Via KT333	56K	12
<b>2</b>  Multivision Vision Titan 0121 550 8000 www.multivision.co.uk	<b>NEW</b>	Aug 02	120	£1,299	3-year onsite	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.73GHz	512MB DDR RAM	IBM/ 2 x 80GB	MSI KT3 Ultra ARU	Via KT333	56K	9
<b>3</b>  Evesham Axis 2100+ 0800 038 0800 www.evesham.com	<b>NEW</b>	Aug 02	119	£1,349	2-year onsite, 1-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.73GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Western Digital/ 120GB	Asus A7V333	Via KT333	56K	10
<b>4</b>  Carrera SSC Octan 2100r 0870 066 0682 www.carrera.co.uk	<b>NEW</b>	Aug 02	110	£1,299	2-year onsite, 3-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.73GHz	512MB DDR RAM	IBM/ 2 x 80GB	Asus A7V333	Via KT333	56K	6
<b>5</b>  Cybyte XP2000RD+ 01603 457 995 www.cybyted.co.uk	<b>NEW</b>	Aug 02	124	£1,299	2-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 2000+/ 1.67GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Western Digital/ 120GB	Soltek 75DRV5	Via KT333	56K	6
<b>6</b>  Hi-Grade Meridian XP 2G PV05 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	2	May 02	125	£1,339	3-year onsite	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.67GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Maxtor/ 80GB	MSI K7N420	nVidia nForce	56K	2
<b>7</b>  Systemax Inspire A2000BA 0870 7297 364 www.systemaxpc.co.uk	3	May 02	121	£1,249	1-year onsite, 2-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 2000+/ 1.67GHz	256MB DDR RAM	Western Digital/ 100GB	MSI MS-6380LE	Via KT266A	56K	4
<b>8</b>  Atlas Meridian XP 2100 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	4	Jun 02	128	£1,399	3-year onsite	AMD Athlon XP 2100+/ 1.73GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Maxtor/ 60GB	MSI 420D	nForce 420	56K	4
<b>9</b>  Hi-Grade Ultis PV4 2400 PA06 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	7	Jun 02	119	£1,499	3-year onsite	Intel Pentium 4/ 2.4GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Maxtor/ 60GB	MSI	Intel 845	56K	2
<b>10</b>  PC World Advent 3969SP 08705 464 464 www.pcworld.co.uk	8	Feb 02	120	£1,216	1-year onsite, 2-year return to base	AMD Athlon XP 1900+/ 1.6GHz	512MB DDR RAM	Maxtor/ 80GB	Gigabyte GA-7DX	Irongate 4.761	56K	2

### 1 Best Price Poweroid.com 2013

 We haven't seen a Poweroid PC in the chart for a while, but the wait has clearly paid off. The Best Price system offers a decent combination of performance, specifications and value for money, which is why the 2013 nabs this month's Best Buy award. With a good-quality LG monitor, Logitech wireless peripherals and blue case, the Poweroid is an attractive system. The case also contains an extra fan to dissipate the heat generated by the powerful components.

Most of the new entrants this month share the same basic specification and the 2013 was no exception. Its Athlon XP 2100+ processor, running at 1.73GHz,

was complemented by 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, which resulted in a mid-range WorldBench 4 score of 123. Rather than one 120GB hard drive, Best Price has opted for two 60GB Maxtor drives in a Raid 0 configuration, which offers speedier data delivery.

A top-of-the-range 128MB GeForce4 Ti 4600 graphics card is used in conjunction with LG's excellent 19in Flatron monitor, and the resulting frame rates are blisteringly fast. The Poweroid achieved a smooth and seamless 80fps (frames per second) at a resolution of 1,600x1,200. Creative's Audigy sound card and Inspire speakers ensure that audio quality is impressive – great news for anyone interested in making music on their PC. There's a generous 12 USB ports on the Best Price (including four with USB 2.0 support), while the two FireWire ports make up for the slow CD-RW speeds and lack of documentation.

← Best Price is a regular in the Budget chart, and impresses here with the Poweroid.com 2013



↑ Multivision's Vision Titan earns itself a Recommended award due to its reasonable price and a decent spec

### 2 Multivision Vision Titan

 The second-placed Multivision offers a good specification and value for money. Those looking for a well-protected investment will also be pleased to hear that the Vision Titan comes with a three-year onsite warranty – one of the best offers in the chart.

Again, we see an Athlon XP 2100+ chip combined with 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, which means you won't be wanting for performance on this system. Another addition is the KT333 chipset



	Monitor	Screen size	Dot pitch	Max resolution @75Hz	Graphics card	Graphics chip	Graphics card memory	Sound card	Speakers	No of speakers/subwoofer	DVD-ROM speed	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate	Operating system, software & other extras
	LG Flatron 915FT Plus	19in	0.24mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy Platinum	Creative Inspire 5300	5/Y	16x	40x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, StarOffice 5.2
	LG Flatron 915FT Plus	19in	0.24mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy	Videologic ZXR 500	5/Y	16x	48x/40x/12x	Windows XP Home, Lotus SmartSuite, games pack, digital gamepad
	LG Flatron 915FT Plus	19in	0.24mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy	Creative Inspire 5300	5/Y	16x	48x/40x/12x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002
	2 x NEC 75F	17in	0.25mm	1,152x 870	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy	Creative Inspire 5300	5/Y	16x	40x/32x/12x	Windows XP Professional
	AOC Spectrum	19in	0.26mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy	Creative Inspire 5300	5/Y	16x	48x/32x/12x	Windows XP Home
	LG Flatron 915FT Plus	19in	0.24mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce3 Ti 500	nVidia GeForce3 Ti 500	64MB	onboard nForce	Cambridge CSW4300	5/Y	16x	40x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works
	CTX EX950F	19in	0.25mm	1,600x 1,200	Gainward GeForce4 Ultra/750	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	128MB	Creative Audigy	Videologic ZXR 500	5/Y	16x	40x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, games bundle
	LG Flatron 915FT	19in	0.24mm	1,600x 1,200	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4400	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4400	128MB	Creative Audigy	Cambridge DTT2200	5/Y	16x	40x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0
	LG Flatron 775	17in	0.24mm	1,280x 1,024	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4400	nVidia GeForce4 Ti 440	128MB	Creative Audigy	Cambridge DTT2200	5/Y	16x	40x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002
	Samsung 957DF	19in	0.25mm	1,600x 1,200	Leadtek GeForce3 Ti 500	nVidia GeForce3 Ti 500	64MB	Creative Labs Live 5.1	Cambridge DTT2200	5/Y	16x	32x/16x/10x	Windows XP, Microsoft Works Suite 2001

from Via, which provides a much improved memory controller. Bearing this in mind, the Titan's WorldBench 4 score of 120 should strictly speaking have been faster, however it's still reasonable. As with the Poweroid, the Titan houses two hard drives in a Raid 0 configuration for speed. Multivision has packed in two massive 80GB IBM hard disks – perfect for video editing and digital photography.

It's hard to fault the Titan's visual setup. LG's Flatron 915 Plus monitor, with a 0.24mm dot pitch and a top resolution of 1,600x1,200 at 85Hz, produces a clear sharp picture. Naturally, it helps that the graphics are powered by the ubiquitous GeForce4 Ti 4600 card. The Audigy sound card is another good addition, although the Videologic speakers don't have the power of Creative's Inspire 5300.

### 3 Evesham Axis 2100+

Evesham's new entrant was just pipped to the post by the Vision Titan due to its higher cost, however it's still a great PC with an impressive hardware line-up. With an Athlon XP 2100+ processor and 512MB



of DDR (double data rate) RAM the Axis' specifications follow the top two machines, but the WorldBench 4 score of 119 couldn't match those of the Poweroid and Vision Titan. This may be due to Evesham's 120GB hard drive – it's not Raid-configured, so even at 7,200rpm (revolutions per minute) it's slower.

Evesham is yet another manufacturer to offer LG's Flatron 915 Plus monitor and nVidia's GeForce4 Ti 4600 card, so the visual setup is impressive. It couldn't equal the frame rates the Poweroid offered, but it came a close second. With the excellent Audigy sound card and powerful Inspire 5300 speakers from Creative, the audio specification is the best on the market.

There's plenty of room to upgrade and, with 10 USB ports, you can connect a vast array of peripherals. If you own Creative's Jukebox3, you can also use the FireWire port to upload MP3s and burn them on to disc using the super-fast 48-/40-/12-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW drive. Evesham wraps this package up with comprehensive documentation and a copy of Works Suite 2002.



↑ Evesham Axis 2100+ combines the impressive Audigy sound card with top-notch Creative Inspire speakers

### 4 Carrera SSC Octan 2100r

We haven't seen Carrera in our charts for a while, so it was good to see its comeback machine packed with enough features and high-end specifications to win it a deserved Recommended award. It may not be the speediest PC in the chart, but the Octan 2100r is an accomplished fourth-place machine with a decent price tag. Carrera's WorldBench score of 110 doesn't reflect the inclusion of an Athlon XP 2100+ processor, 512MB of DDR





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↑ Carrera SSC offers not one but two 17in NEC monitors with its Octan 2100r machine

(double data rate) RAM and two generous 80GB hard drives. There are also other redeeming features such as the Octan's excellent five-year warranty and the inclusion of Windows XP Professional.

A word of warning – you will need a plenty of desk space to store this system. Not only is the 2100r bundled with two 17in NEC monitors, so you can have dual-screen setup, it also comes with a monster-sized case. The silver metallic-finish tower has an unusual see-through plastic panel and houses two huge fans, so heat dissipation won't be a problem. If you want the best in visual display then the low-quality monitors may disappoint. That said, they are more than adequate in the average work environment.

### 5 Cybyte XP2000RD+

This is the first time Cybyte has graced our charts, so we didn't know what to expect from the new manufacturer. As it happens, the company turned out a good all-rounder PC that just missed out on a Recommended award.

Cybyte opted for a two-tone case with dark blue hue that avoids the trap of looking like an imitation Mac. Despite the XP2000RD+ using the slower Athlon XP 2000+ processor, clocked at 1.67GHz, with 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, the powerful system achieved an impressive WorldBench 4 score of 124, proving it's no slouch. Inside is a capacious 120GB hard drive though there's no Raid configuration.

Audio is well catered for by the Audigy sound card and Inspire speakers, but the powerful GeForce4 Ti 4600 graphics card is let down by an unimpressive AOC Spectrum monitor. The shadow mask tube technology and poor dot pitch simply can't compete with the other 19in monitors in the chart. You're also not guaranteed much protection with a two-year return-to-base warranty, and there's little in the way of documentation or software.

Overall, though, the Cybyte's speedy performance and attractive design mean this newcomer to the Power game gains a mid-table position.



↑ Newcomer Cybyte manages a mid-table placing with its speedy XP2000RD+ system



↑ Dropping to seventh place is the Hi-Grade Meridian, but it still remains one of the fastest PCs in the chart

### 6 Hi-Grade Meridian XP 2G PV05

From second to sixth place is a mighty drop and this Hi-Grade is struggling to keep up with this month's new entries. Having said that, the Meridian XP's WorldBench score of 125 remains one of the fastest. Backing up the Hi-Grade's Athlon XP 2000+ processor is 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM. The 80GB Maxtor hard drive offers ample storage – it may not be the largest disk in the chart, but it should still prove difficult to fill.

The Meridian uses the 19in LG Flatron 915FT monitor, but Hi-Grade's GeForce3 Ti 500 graphics card can't keep up with the frame rates of the GeForce4 range. The audio is also disappointing and the Creative Audigy sound card would have been preferable to the onboard nForce audio controller.

### 7 Systemax Inspire A2000BA

Another system starting to show its age is this ex-Recommended PC from Systemax. The Systemax Inspire employs the AMD Athlon XP 2000+ to assist its high score

## Memory and multitasking

**I**f you're thinking of forking out on a faster processor to enhance the performance of your PC it may be worth considering extra memory instead. Memory has a significant impact on the overall performance of a PC and this is especially true if you're running multiple applications.

For each application you open, a certain amount of real system memory is allocated to cope with the task. If you open many applications and the amount of RAM you need exceeds the actual amount of memory in the PC then your system has a nifty trick up its sleeve.

Every Windows operating system uses something called virtual memory, which is used to fool the PC into thinking it has enough RAM to run each application. It does this by writing a part of the physical memory to a swap file on the hard drive. Problems occur when your PC has to continuously shuffle RAM about to keep up with the applications.

If a large amount of virtual memory is needed, more and more swapping occurs on the drive and performance is seriously hampered. The best way to combat this is to get as much RAM as possible and buy a hard drive with fast data access.

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↑ The Systemax Inspire is equipped with 256MB of DDR RAM, but this doesn't affect its WorldBench 4 score

of 121 in WorldBench 4. Having said this, though, it is the only PC that's equipped with 256MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, rather than the more generous 512MB. However, it does offer 100GB of storage space and a 128MB GeForce4 Ti 4600 card. The 19in CTX monitor is a decent screen, while the Audigy sound card and Videologic speakers ensure the audio won't let you down. Carefully arranged internally, and equipped with USB and FireWire ports, there's also little to fault in the Systemax's presentation.

**8 Atlas Meridian XP 2100**

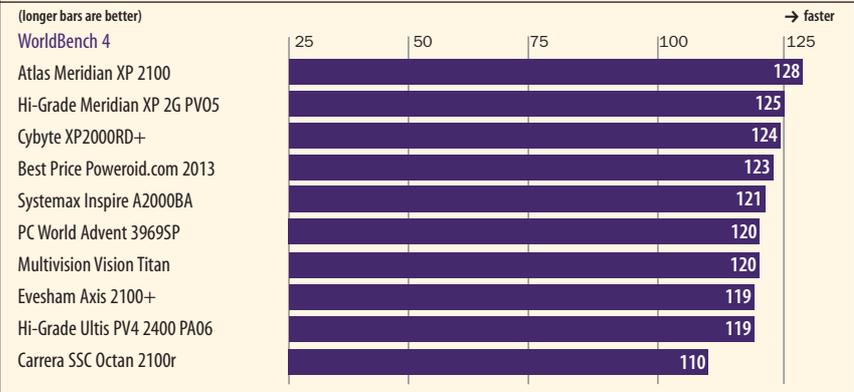
Atlas falls to eighth place as the once cutting-edge technologies found in the Meridian XP 2100 have now been superseded by better components. That said, it's still an impressive model. The Athlon 2100+ processor, combined with 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, helped it achieve an unbeaten WorldBench 4 score of 128.

Aiding this performance is the 128MB GeForce4 Ti 4400 graphics card. The 19in



↑ The Atlas Meridian XP 2100 remains the speediest system, with a WorldBench 4 score of 128

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LG Flatron 915FT Plus screen is always recommended and the DTT2200 speakers are solid. Backup duties on the Atlas are satisfied by a 40-/24-/10-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW drive and there's a 16-speed DVD-ROM. On top of all this, a three-year onsite warranty protects your investment.

**9 Hi-Grade Ultis PV4 2400 PA06**

Down to ninth place and still hanging in is the Ultis from Hi-Grade. The PV4 2400 PA06 was the first system we saw to use Intel's 2.4GHz chip. Equipped with 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM the Ultis only managed a WorldBench 4 score of 119 – a full nine points short of the Atlas Meridian XP 2100. Both systems employ the same 128MB GeForce4 Ti 4400 card and, although it provides blistering frame rates, the Athlon still kept its edge over the Pentium 4 processor.

Sound comes from the Creative Audigy and DTT2200 speakers, and there's a TV card thrown in for good measure. On the optical front you'll find a 16-speed DVD-ROM and a 40-/24-/10-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW. In addition to a copy of Windows XP Home there's Works Suite 2002 – and it's all covered by a three-year onsite warranty. Overall, the Ultis is let down on performance and value for money.

**10 PC World Advent 3969SP**

At number 10 this month is PC World's Advent. With a rock-bottom price to match its place at the end of our chart, the 3969SP only just costs enough to qualify for our chart. Despite its low placing, the Advent's WorldBench score of 120 is still a good achievement from the Athlon XP



↑ The Hi-Grade Ultis PV4 needs to improve its price performance ratio to feature further up the chart

1900+ 1.6GHz chip and 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM. The 80GB hard drive is generous enough, but the system is let down by the Samsung monitor which is no match for the high-quality screens found on some of its rivals. The GeForce3 Ti 500 also can't compete with its big brother, the GeForce4. If you are interested in this system, remember that it's a build-to-order system, so ask for it as such when you go to the store.

↓ PC World has equipped its Advent 3969SP system with a below-average Samsung monitor

