### ● BUSINESS PC

# HP dx5150 Small Form Factor

**PRICE** £369 (£434 inc VAT)  **DELIVERY** £10 (£12 inc VAT)
**SUPPLIER** www.pcwb.co.uk  **INTERNET** www.hp.co.uk

**VERDICT** Everything a business PC should be: quiet, cheap and well supported. It's lacking a few key features, though, so is more suited to smaller offices or homes.

When we looked at HP's current generation of Intel-based business PCs, the dc7600 series (*see issue 132, p54*), we praised their versatility and ingenious design. Based on Intel's 945G Express chipset, the dc7600 series utilises the silicon giant's Stable Image Platform (SIP). This not only standardises the process of mass rollout with a single disk image across the range, but also provides a level of guarantee for future support.

As a range, the dx5150 is based around an ATi chipset and Socket 939 AMD processors. Like the dc7600, there's a number of specifications available; in this case, everything from cheaper single-cored CPUs up to a dual-core Athlon 64 X2 3800+. Although there's no specific equivalent of SIP here, you can still use a single disk image across the dx5150 range, as the chipset is common across all models. HP is only promising the platform will be 'stable' until April 2006 though.

The dx5150 Small Form Factor sits in the



Incredibly cheap and generously specified, the dx5150 is perfect for small business and home use.



The part of the dx5150's chassis that holds the optical and hard disk drives swings up to reveal a tidy, easy-to-access interior.

### ● RESULTS

**2D SPEED**

| | 0.86 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**OFFICE:** 1.15  **2D GRAPHICS:** 0.88
**ENCODING:** 0.77  **MULTITASKING:** 0.64  **BETTER ➤**

An explanation of our new benchmarks can be found on the cover disc.

middle of the range, and our review specification included an AMD Athlon 3200+ processor and 512MB of RAM, achieving a score of 0.86 in our benchmarks. It's a fast, everyday PC though, as its score of 1.15 in our Office tests show: that's 15 per cent faster than our reference 3.2GHz Pentium D 840 PC. Those looking for after-hours entertainment will be disappointed, as the integrated ATi Radeon Xpress 200 GPU lacks the muscle for current gaming titles, but it's sufficient to have these machines running Windows Vista when the time comes.

The hard disk is an 80GB Seagate Barracuda model; restrictive compared to modern consumer PCs, but still more than enough for most office uses. If not, there's a spare 3.5in bay and a Serial ATA port on the motherboard for future expansion. The review specification also offers a DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive rather than a DVD writer, so other backup methods would be preferable for mission-critical data.

You won't have problems if you need to add external peripherals, though, as you'll find a generous eight USB ports, two of which are on the front panel along with audio input/outputs. The mouse and keyboard are connected via the PS/2 ports, thus maximising the number of peripherals you can attach.

The keyboard itself is worthy of note too, simply because of how quiet it is. Unlike many others, there's no rattling or clicking in evidence, so you can tap away in a quiet environment

with impunity. One minor objection is the mouse, though, which is a ball model rather than a more robust optical one.

But we have no complaints elsewhere. We're used to budget PCs – particularly when they're this aggressively priced – looking and feeling cheap, but the dx5150 bears all of HP's customary build quality and design features. Accessing the internals is easy, with just a slide-off tool-less lid in the way. You can then swing up the chassis containing the optical drive and hard disk, giving access to four DIMM sockets (two of which are free). There's also a PCI Express 16x graphics slot, one PCI Express 1x slot and two traditional PCI slots, all of which are half height. Unlike the dc7600 Ultra Slim Desktop, which is even smaller than the dx5150, there's no option to install a full-sized PCI card horizontally.

Sensible design and routing keep the power and data cables out of the way, and a duct on top of the heatsink/fan vents heat directly out the side, meaning there's little in the way of heat build-up in the system. This has the twin advantages of increased reliability and reduced noise: the dx5150 produces a low-level hum that's too quiet to hear in most offices and barely perceptible in a quiet room.

For businesses, the dx5150 range offers an impressively flexible set of specifications, as well as an incredibly tempting price. The downside is that ATi simply doesn't have Intel's proven track record when it comes to producing motherboard chipsets, and that will cause understandable caution over any large-scale rollout. There's also nothing to compare with Intel's comprehensive remote management features (*see issue 130, p54*), all of which leaves Dell's significantly more expensive OptiPlex 620 USFF on the A List (*see p42*). For smaller installations, though, it's a far less serious concern, especially as HP includes a three-year on-site warranty and took the PC Award in our Reliability & Service survey (*see p136*). And it isn't only businesses that will find the dx5150 an appealing proposition; it will be just as comfortable at home as in the office. For those without business accounts, **www.dabs.com** is selling this configuration for £392 exc VAT.

**DAVE STEVENSON**

### PC PRO RATINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| PERFORMANCE | ★★★★☆☆ |
| FEATURES & DESIGN | ★★★★★★ |
| VALUE FOR MONEY | ★★★★★★ |
| OVERALL | ★★★★★☆ |

**SPECIFICATIONS** 2GHz AMD Athlon 64 3200+; 512MB PC3200 RAM; MSI MS-7050 motherboard; 80GB Seagate Barracuda 7200.7 hard disk; Toshiba TS-H492A DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive; integrated ATi Radeon Xpress 200 graphics; Gigabit Ethernet; Windows XP Pro. 3yr on-site NBD warranty. Part code: EJ803ET.