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5 MORE UNEXPECTED WAYS TO USE YOUR OLD COMPUTER TOWER

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As time goes on, a cutting-edge computer will quickly lose its value as newer components are released with greater power and more features. Computer cases generally don't have to worry about this, as they lack a lot of moving components or electronics other than fans and I/O ports. However, older cases have been known to cause thermal issues, and many brand-new components tend to encounter high

temperatures all on their own. On the other hand, if you purchase a tower that's damaged or flawed, you'll likely want to move your components somewhere else anyway to avoid further issues.

You don't have to just toss out or resell your old case, though. We've previously covered five unexpected uses for old PC towers, but there are a few other uses that can work for those with a creative mind and the right skillset. Whether you want to inject new life into an ancient case or you just want to make something useful out of an empty metal box, there's a lot you can do with the shell of your older build.

Spare parts



Corsair

Many modern computer cases tend to have their own dimensions, shapes, and even screws with unique fits. As an example, you might have some trouble trying to fit a Dell tower's side panel onto something like the Corsair 4000D Frame. But if you happen to shatter that case's own tempered glass panel, a new one could require an extra \$30 from your wallet. If you happen to make your old case's parts fit on a newer case, then

you might be able to avoid having to spend any money on replacements.

Swapping parts of a PC tower isn't always going to work so easily, but some pieces will fit just fine in other builds. Screws and PCI slot covers can easily be used from one case to another, which is handy if you lost the ones from a newer case in your latest build. Some towers can also be dismantled entirely, allowing you to reuse normally-untouched parts like the front panel. This is only really helpful if your new case is extremely similar to your older one, but it will still allow you to avoid issues with physical damage or factory defects.

Miniature aquarium



MetalFish

The unique MetalFish Y2 PC case attempts to let you combine a working computer with an aquarium that's able to sustain live fish. If you don't care about the computer actually working, though, you can make the aquarium part yourself with a bit of effort. Depending on how far you go with it, such a task would require knowledge of soldering and plenty of extra parts to actually make your tower into a decent fish-friendly home. You'll

probably want to avoid having any actual PC components in there as well if you don't want to cook anything living inside.

Even outside of the most ridiculous PC cases you definitely don't need, many new releases like the NZXT H9 Flow can already fit the look of a fish tank. Of course, it should go without saying that cases like these still have a lot of holes for airflow that could cause leaks if you don't seal them up. You'll also lack a lot of the features of dedicated tanks, like pumps and heaters. You'll likely need to invest some money in a project like this, but with the right care and effort, you'll have created one of the most unique fish tanks in existence.

Console build



Gaming consoles are usually pretty compact compared to full-sized PCs, allowing them to be moved around easily but also limiting how much work you can put into them. This was a crippling issue for some of the most powerful gaming consoles out there, as thermal issues could completely kill a console, and component replacements required a

lot of extra steps. But these devices are basically just computers dedicated to gaming. In other words, it's entirely possible to remove those components and place them into a PC tower, allowing for easier access to parts and better cooling.

This is actually something that was done by other companies already. Origin PC showcased its Big O build that contains not just a gaming computer, but also a PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X, and Nintendo Switch dock all built-in alongside it. While this uses a custom case, you can still get a lot out of putting a console's motherboard into an older tower to make more room for cooling. Something as simple as giving your old PlayStation 2 a Noctua fan upgrade can do wonders for its noise and thermals, so you could imagine the benefits of putting it in a full-sized case with greater room for more powerful cooling.

Hidden storage/security

Fractal

These days, some PC cases will come with a few extra features that don't have much to do with the computer itself. The Fractal Design Pop Air, for example, has a hidden

compartment allowing you to place small items inside. You can easily do this with any old emptied-out PC case, allowing you to hide valuables in plain sight — especially if you still have components inside and disguise it as an in-use computer. If a robber happens to break into your home, they might just overlook anything stashed away inside an ancient-looking computer.

Of course, a thief might still just take the whole computer. But that little bit of extra protection can help, and it is still an excellent way to keep private things away from prying eyes or valuable things in your home that aren't easy to hide. If that's true, you might even want to look into setting up a camera inside your old tower. If you were to check out something like the hidden nanny cams designed for peace of mind, you could have it peek out of your tower and get a perfectly good view of whatever else might be getting stolen from the room it's in or an idea of who is snooping around your things.

Creative artwork

Дмитрий Ларичев/Getty Images

If the more practical ideas on this list aren't applicable to you — or you simply can't find

a way for them to work out well — you could always just let your creative mind run free. Turning electronics into art is already something plenty of people do, and the lack of electronics in a PC case can give you a few more options with it. Painting and etching custom designs are just a few examples of the creative possibilities you could experiment with using an old tower. If you do a good enough job, you might even be able to sell it for a profit on websites like eBay.

What you could do with a PC case creatively is really up to your personal preference. If you really like the look of your old tower's front panel, you could simply remove it and use it as a wall decoration. You could also put far more effort into a project to redesign the case entirely, drilling custom holes for better airflow or allowing room for larger graphics cards. Modifying older PC towers is a task many enthusiasts have tried out for themselves, so even if you aren't personally the creative type, you can find plenty of inspiration out in the wild.

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