

Choosing a new development machine

Asked 16 years, 4 months ago Modified 16 years, 3 months ago

Viewed 827 times



I'm not sure how this question will be recieved here but lets give it a shot...

6



It's time for me to get a new dev PC. What's the best choice these days?



I typically have 2-3 Visual Studios open along with mail and all that stuff. Ideally I would imagine 2+ GB of RAM would be nice as my current XP box is dying. =)



I hopped on the Dell site (my days of building PC's are behind me. I just need something that gets the job done.) and started browsing around only to be confused from all the processor choices. What does a typical dev box need these days? Duo? Quad?

Is it worth going to 64 bit Vista as well?

It's been a while since I got a new machine so I'm just looking for some guidance.

Thanks

cpu

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asked Aug 19, 2008 at 2:33



Alex

1,594 ● 3 ● 15 ● 29

8 Answers

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3



I just built a quad core - 8 GB of RAM and run Server 2008 with Hyper-V on it. I have VMs for my build server, dev platform, and deployment options (XP, Vista, Server 2003/2008) with snapshots at the various service pack levels. What's nice is you can spin up a VM whenever you need it, and re-allocate the resources when you don't.. So if I want to have 4 or 5 GB of ram and four processors available for my dev platform, no problem.. when I need to test some installs, I can save my status and spin up my test machines.. (and it only ran about \$800 US).

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answered Aug 19, 2008 at 4:25



Steven Murawski

11.3k ● 43 ● 54

You built an 8G rig for about \$800 US? Please tell us how!

– Taptronic Sep 21, 2008 at 15:32

I started with this blog post, updated a couple of components (the list is a bit old) and took it in to the local computer store. I asked the manager if he could beat the prices I found online.

He had some suggestions for components and we got it down to \$800. – [Steven Murawski](#) Sep 21, 2008 at 16:43



3



Jeff's ultimate developer rig series is great, but it's out of date. If you want to build your own ultimate developer rig, you can do hours of research to get the perfect list or use the tricks below to come up with a great component list in a short time.



Credits: [Mehul](#) taught me this method and it's a huge time-saver.



The Basic PC Builder Shopping List

Start with the basic system builder shopping list:

- Computer case
- Power supply
- Motherboard CPU
- Video card
- RAM
- Hard Drive
- DVD-ROM
- Monitors
- Optional: Extra fans
- Optional: Windows

(This list is good for most of us. Add/remove for your specific needs.)

The Short Version

Make a wish list at NewEgg.com to track your component choices and estimate price. For each item on the shopping list above, go to the NewEgg.com category and list the top sellers sorted by most reviews. Read some reviews on the top 3 items listed and add one to your wish list. You may want to check Dell.com and deal sites for monitor options. When you're finished you'll have a solid list of great components that have been well reviewed by a large group of talented system builders.

The Detailed Version

Start at Gear Geek Heaven:

Go to NewEgg.com, create an account and start a wish list to keep track of your selections. NewEgg.com selection, prices and service are good, but you don't have to buy at NewEgg.com. You're going to use the site to keep track of your component choices and get a good price estimate.

Let the Wisdom of the Geeks Narrow Your Options

The biggest problem with spec'ing a new developer rig is that there are too many options. To narrow your options, observe the behavior of a large group of hardware enthusiasts, record their preferences and use that data to guide your decision. (Everyone who comments at NewEgg.com isn't an expert, but there are many intelligent buyers here who write helpful reviews.)

In other words, find the top selling and best reviewed items on NewEgg.com, a popular hardware site for system builders.

Score = (Sales-Rank + Review-Count) * Rating * Price

NewEgg.com is the right place to learn what the system builders are doing, but it's not obvious at first glance how to do that. You'll have to drill down a bit to see the top selling items. You also need something more helpful than just the top selling items, you want gear that's been used and reviewed by a large group of active and enthusiastic gear geeks so you'll want to factor in customer reviews, too.

Find Top sellers in the item category, then sort by Most Reviews

Use the NewEgg.com top level menu to navigate to the category for that item type. Then use the left sidebar menu to drill down to a little more specific sub-category. Click the Top Sellers link on the left sidebar to list the top selling items for that category. Then sort by "Most Reviews" by selecting the dropdown next to the search box on the upper right part of the page. Don't input any search text.

Hands-On Example

Example: On the top menu bar of NewEgg.com, select Computer Hardware/Motherboards then click a sub-category linke on the left sidebar like Intel Motherboards. In the sub-category, you should see an option on the left sidebar for "Top Sellers" select that link

to list the top selling items in that category. The search listing should now show the top selling items in the category. Sort this listing by "Most Reviews". At the top of listings on the upper right is a search box, next to the search box is the dropdown box with the option, "Most Reviews". Leave the search box blank and select the "Most Reviews" sort option from the dropdown box.

Down to the Finalists One of the 2 or 3 products at the top of the list should be a good choice for your new system. Scan the reviews to see if the general buzz makes you comfortable with the component. Use the sidebar links and search to filter the results if the top sellers are out of your price range or you need to refine the specs.

Judge the Judges

When you scan the item reviews look at the range of ratings, you want to see more than 100 reviews with mostly 4 and 5 star ratings. Steer clear of items that have a high average but also have a lot of low ratings. Avoid very new items and watch out for older items that are on special and may be closing out. You want something that's been out for 6 months or a year. The price will be lower and the reviews will be more realistic.

Pro-Choice

When you're satisfied that the item is what you want and the price is right, add it to your wishlist.

Foreach component in system-shopping-list do

Repeat this process for each item. It's fast and fun.

If item == Monitor { search("Dell.com") };

Dell often has good monitor specials, so you might want to check that site for monitors. The best Dell deals are usually found on sites like techbargains.com and DealFire.com.

Go Forth and Multi-buy

When you're finished you'll have a solid list of popular components that are favored by enthusiastic system builders that frequent NewEgg.com. Order them from NewEgg.com or your favorite dealer and get building!

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edited May 23, 2017 at 12:01



Community Bot

1 • 1

answered Sep 15, 2008 at 23:58



Smithee

61 • 1 • 3 • 5



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Not looking to travel. I'd rather get a powerful desktop for my dollar. I have a nice big panel here so problem with that. The majority of my development is ASP.NET stuff with some winforms projects.

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answered Aug 19, 2008 at 2:43



Alex

1,594 • 3 • 15 • 29

Please edit the original question to clarify what information you want. – user5913 Sep 16, 2008 at 0:01

I'd recommend adding these updates back into the question itself so that other people coming to this question can see all the information without having to find your "answer" to know what you want. – [nickf](#) Sep 16, 2008 at 0:02



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Jeff built an [Ultimate Developer Rig](#) for Scott Hanselman a while back. You can check out his requirements and see if it matches closely to what you are looking for.



From what you've mentioned, an Intel Q9450, 4 or 8gigs of ram and a couple good sized hard drives will suit you well. I would say there is no reason not to get Vista x64 at this point. The ability to utilize more than 3.2gb of ram is very important for a developer.



If you're in the more than two monitor club, you'll need two video cards as well.

Hope this helps!

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answered Aug 19, 2008 at 2:48

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[Kevin Chan](#)

873 ● 6 ● 13



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I recently built a version of the UDR as well but used Vista x64. It works great with the VMs. Just get lots of memory (8gbs) and fast hard drives. I've heard good things about Win Server 2008 but not sure if driver support is available. On a older dell laptop that I tried





installing WinServer 2008 and it kept crashing on the nvidia drivers. Good luck.

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answered Sep 15, 2008 at 22:53

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Mehul

848 ● 4 ● 13



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People are probably going to yell at me...but I've found that Vista 64 is mostly worth it. The main reason for me though is that I'm always maxing out my memory and having a 64bit OS allows me to go past the <4GB limit of 32bit.



But even if you don't get 64bit, just buy 2 2GB RAM cards anyways....you will be able to use most of it (my system shows 3.5GB on 32bit) and then you've got it for if you upgrade later and (if your system has 4 slots) you'll have room to expand to 8GB later on....

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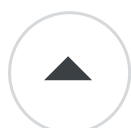
answered Aug 19, 2008 at 2:37

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Adam Haile

31.3k ● 60 ● 195 ● 290



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There are some additional questions that would make our answers more complete.

- Are you going to want to travel with it?
- How important is screen real estate to you?
- Will you be doing interpreted or compiled?





- Is it web based development, or client based?

I've seen some great deals on 17" HP laptops lately - one at Best Buy that had 4GB of RAM and a monster hard drive along with a 2.4+ Ghz Core 2 Duo for roughly \$800 after tax.

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answered Aug 19, 2008 at 2:39

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[knowncitizen](#)

1,603 ● 2 ● 18 ● 21



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You didn't provide a budget or other considerations like sound footprint. You also didn't say if you actually can use more than a few cores at one time with the applications you are developing. So, everything below is a guess. If you have the budget, the Mac Pro with Bootcamp(or a vm if you are so inclined) might be a consideration. You won't want to upgrade your HDD or memory from Apple, but, the parts are easy enough to find at Newegg. I know this seems a little crazy, but, you can get a good value if you need the dual processors at 4 cores each. It is currently \$2800 for 2 x 2.8GHz 8 cores total.

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answered Aug 19, 2008 at 4:36

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[Brian Whitlock](#)

151 ● 2 ● 4