

Title:

Cheap New Laptops: Three Of The Best

Word Count:

971

Summary:

I realize that "cheap" is in the eye of the beholder. Not only that -- the laptops in this article might not even be as cheap as something you could get off eBay or even as inexpensive as a refurbished laptop.

But, face it: new laptops are almost always going to be more expensive than the equivalently configured desktop PC because of the need for miniaturization of the components. And laptops have to use different (more expensive) technologies to maximize battery life.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

I realize that "cheap" is in the eye of the beholder. Not only that -- the laptops in this article might not even be as cheap as something you could get off eBay or even as inexpensive as a refurbished laptop.

But, face it: new laptops are almost always going to be more expensive than the equivalently configured desktop PC because of the need for miniaturization of the components. And laptops have to use different (more expensive) technologies to maximize battery life.

Bottom line: you're going to pay more for a laptop; or you're going to get less laptop for your dollar compared to a desktop PC.

That said, these three laptops -- Sony VAIO, HP Pavilion, and Dell Latitude -- are all solid buys in a range of prices that is very competitive for brand new equipment. And they come from decent companies and offer you a range of features as well.

Let's get started...

Sony VAIO N170GT

This Sony model is that it doesn't have a lot of junky frills on it. It is a clean looking design. It is stylish, too. The screen is very bright. It doesn't get a lot of glare. The speed and performance is okay. In fact, for the price, it's not bad. The battery is good for probably around four hours. Not super, but enough to watch a movie on a plane flight.

On the downside, this laptop uses an older Intel Core Duo processor. It comes with integrated graphics, which means that the performance is not that great. But you're not paying a lot of money for this laptop either. If you're going to install Windows Vista on this machine you're going to want to upgrade the memory.

Overall, this model of Sony's VAIO gives you a good price, but not a really powerful processor. But the laptop looks great. It's very stylish and attractive.

If looks count and you want to save some bucks, this is a great machine. Brand-new, this model costs about \$1100 plus tax and shipping.

HP Pavilion DV6205US

This laptop is part of the HP Pavilion DV6000 series. It is designed to appeal to the mass market. It is a very stylish laptop with a shiny finish -- designed to appeal to the same customers who might consider a Sony or an Apple laptop. It's got a series of high-end components and multimedia features at a price that's lower than the comparable Dell laptop.

This laptop has some pretty nice stereo speakers from Altec Lansing. They're located above the controls. But be aware that if you close the top the sound gets can get muffled.

This laptop also has a 1.3 Megapixel WebCam built right in, as well as two microphones.

There is a row of buttons above the keyboard that launches different features like the media player, volume-control and playback. The keys look nice, but they make a really annoying beeping sound when you press them (and you can't really turn that off either).

This laptop weighs a little over 6 pounds -- lighter than the comparable Dell laptop. When you add the AC adapter, it brings the whole thing up to a little over 7 pounds.

The screen is 15.4 inches wide. It has a shiny finish that makes colors very bright and vibrant. It does give it a bit of glare in bright sunlight or next to a window.

The keyboard is very comfortable. The touchpad has an on-off button. This is very cool because it keeps your cursor from flying off in the wrong direction if your hand passes over the touchpad while using an external mouse.

It has a decent number of ports including a FireWire port, a VGA port, S-video and 3 USB 2.0 ports. You also get a microphone jack and two headphone jacks.

As far as processors go, you have a couple of choices. You can do a 1.86 GHz Celeron or a 2.0 GHz Core Duo. This laptop can be configured for up to 2 GB of RAM, and it'll work with hard drives of up to 200 GB in capacity.

Bottom line: it's got lots of entertainment features, you can configure it lots of different ways and it is very affordable. Brand-new out-of-the-box, you can get one for as little as \$600-\$800 plus tax and shipping.

Dell Latitude D600

The D series laptops from Dell use the Pentium M which comes in 1.3GHz, 1.4GHz, and 1.6GHz speeds--all paired with Intel's new 855PM chipset. You can this laptop with between 128MB - 2GB of fast 266MHz DDR SDRAM. It also comes with a faster 40GB hard drive, or a choice of 20GB, 30GB, and 60GB drives running at slower speed.

It's got a 32MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 graphics chip. There are a number of swappable modules for the single internal bay, including CD, DVD, CD-RW, DVD/CD-RW, floppy, a second hard drive, or a second battery.

The average-sized, 14.1-inch screen isn't super. But it comes with a pretty good 1,400x1,050 native resolution. (You can also save a few bucks by opting for the 1,024x768 display instead.)

It's very fast, and it includes an integrated wireless antenna that is of the dual-band type. This means that if you are within range of a Wi-Fi hotspot that runs either "b" or "g" wireless protocols, this laptop will be compatible with either protocol. It also has built-in Bluetooth.

On the downside, this laptop is part of the D-series notebooks for Dell which means it will not be compatible with C-series Dell laptops. This means that if

you have a C-series docking station, you're out of luck. And if you have media modules that are for another C-series notebook you'll have the same limitation.

Overall, this is a very thin and light notebook computer at a fantastic price -- \$400, plus tax and shipping.

Conclusion

No matter how you define "cheap," these three laptops give you a great value.