



Space-Saving PCs

There's a welcoming spot on many students' desks for these versatile performers.

BY CHRISTINA WOOD

A LAPTOP IN EVERY BACKPACK IS A GREAT GOAL, but for some budgets and situations it may not be fiscally practical. The alternative: compact desktop PCs—some of which are all-in-one boxes. True, you can't slide them into a tote, but they are compact, powerful, and inexpensive. (Four of the seven units here list for \$1,000 or less.)

The systems we profile are the best values from the best-known and most reliable players in the market. They tout the latest processors, plenty of RAM, ample hard drives, and large screens with crisp displays. For the classroom, in which limited space and budget often dictate product selection, they make sense.

Smaller PCs bring state-of-the-art computing power onto the desk without eating up space students need for books, papers, pens—and, of course, their personal high-tech gadgets. The power for their size was a motivating factor behind the Brandywine (DE) School District's purchase of low-profile HP systems. They're easier to move around and can be upgraded or serviced in the classroom.




A full-size desktop creates problems of “real estate,”

says Pat Bush, Brandywine's director of information systems. “They take up too much of the desk, leaving no room left for kids to work around them,” he explains. Not all students need a personal desktop PC, but some will most likely request access to full-size technology at some point. After a day of gathering data with a Palm or Pocket PC, a science student might head for the desktop to crunch numbers on fish populations, weather, or temperature fluctuations. A photography student will want a place to upload images. An AlphaSmart user might want to port over her notes for an article running in the school newspaper.

These units meet and exceed those demands. In fact, they may make some students happy about not having to carry around laptops after all. →

They're Keeping





THE COMPUTERS listed in this chart represent the most compact choose an all-in-one system or simply one with slim components,

DESKTOPS			
			
	Apple eMac	Apple iMac	Acer Veriton 3600GT ³
PROCESSOR ¹ (GICAHERTZ)	PowerPC G4 1.25GHz	PowerPC G4 1GHz	Intel Pentium 4 3.2GHz
RAM MEMORY (STD/MAX; MEGABYTES/GICABYTES)	256MB/1GB	256MB/1GB	512MB/2GB
HARD DRIVE (GICABYTES)	40GB	80GB	80GB
MEDIA DRIVES	Combo (DVD- ROM/CD-RW)	32x Combo (DVD- ROM/CD-RW)	CD-RW
SCREEN SIZE (ON INCLUDED DISPLAY WHERE APPLICABLE)	17" CRT flat panel	15" LCD flat panel	N/A
NOTABLE FEATURES	Integrated design fits on school desks; few parts to inventory.	Its slick, round design takes up only 10.6 inches in diameter.	Press recovery button to restore system's factory settings.
THE SKINNY	Inexpensive, portable, and all-in-one; its components are also together forever.	An odd new look for computers, but we like that big, adjustable screen.	A solid business-class machine with great features for the money.
COST ² /CONTACT INFO	\$749 www.apple.com (800) 800-2775	\$1,199 www.apple.com (800) 800-2775	\$922 www.acer.com/us (800) 571-2237

¹Sample configurations listed; other processors may be available. ²Educational discounts may be available at certain companies. ³Pictured with optional monitor.

a Low Profile

units from some of the best-known names in the business. Whether you you'll save space without compromising one bit on performance.

 <p>Dell OptiPlex SX270</p>	 <p>Gateway Profile 5M-C</p>	 <p>HP Compaq D530³</p>	 <p>IBM ThinkCentre S50³</p>
Intel Celeron 2.4GHz	Intel Celeron 2.6GHz	Intel Celeron 2.6GHz	Intel Celeron 2.8GHz
256MB/2GB	256MB/1GB	256MB/2GB	256MB/2GB
20GB	40GB	40GB	40GB
24x CD-ROM	1.44MB floppy, 24x CD-ROM	1.44MB floppy, 48x CD-ROM	48x CD-ROM
15" LCD flat panel	15" LCD flat panel	N/A	N/A
Slim chassis can hook up with a Dell LCD screen to create an all-in-one PC.	All-in-one design; powerful; serviced easily in a classroom.	Chassis attaches to display—but each upgrades separately.	Comes with 2,000 titles of classic literature pre-installed.
A powerful system with a slim profile. Simple design provides easy access to components.	Comes with considerable power right out of the box.	Despite its low price, CRN.com says “it looks like it cost a fortune.”	CNET praised this system’s simple modular design.
<p>\$1,300 www.dell.com (800) 999-3355</p>	<p>\$1,149 www.gateway.com (800) 846-2000</p>	<p>\$845 www.hp.com (800) 888-3224</p>	<p>\$999 www.ibm.com/ industries/education (888) 839-9289</p>