



## Reviews and Commentaries



## Why Build a PC Yourself?

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One night a caller to the radio "Digital Goddess" asked a question about building his own PC. Her answer? Entirely negatory, good buddy. Why spend the time and effort, she responded, when you can purchase an equivalent PC, ready made, for the same amount of money or less? In reality, however, you cannot purchase an OEM platform that will match the quality of a home build PC.

There are many advantages gained by building your own PC. This is especially true for high end gaming and simulation platforms. It is true that it is hard to compete with OEM prices. You'll probably spend an extra hundred dollars or more, but the extra expenditure is amply justified.

- **You will get a high quality motherboard.** This is perhaps the greatest advantage to building your own PC. Big OEMs design and use their own motherboards, and they often use **NON-STANDARD** parts, drivers and design rules. Additionally, parts and design often vary between one PC and another **even between PCs with the same model number!** There is no comparison, in who, between a motherboard build by ABIT, ASUS, Gigabyte, etc and an OEM mobo.
- **You will get high quality parts.** Although you may be able to specify some of the parts list for a "customized" OEM machine (such as the processor and video card) OEMs go way cheap where ever they can. You will receive a machine with the cheapest components on the motherboard, for the power supply, memory, etc.
- **Your machine will be extensively upgradable.** OEM machines often prove to be difficult or impossible to upgrade because of the use of nonstandard motherboards and cases. OEM's want you to just trash the PC when it is out of date, and buy a new one.
- **You will usually get better tech support.** When you purchase your own motherboard, video card, hard drives, power supply, etc. you can register each component with the part's manufacturer. Most PC component manufacturers, such as ASUS, ABIT or NVidia will give far superior download support and tech communication than OEM PC makers.
- **You get a clean operating system.** OEM's load up their PC's with dozens of applications which clutter up and **burden** the OS. User's often spend hours cleaning up the PC's settings, and deleting unwanted software.

- **Your machine will have better utilities** . When installing your own video card, processor and motherboard you will find these components come with numerous and useful utilities that you won't get from an OEM. Also, driver updates will be available at component maker's web sites. Often times the components come with "one click" update utilities which automatically test and update drivers when available.
- **Lastly, but not least:**
  - You can select a **high quality, standard case.**
  - You can purchase a **high quality power supply.**

In summary I will end with the another nifty aspect to building your own PC, and that is the ability to install **multiple hard disk RAID** arrays. For applications which are heavy on accessing large files a dual hard drive, RAID 0 array is sweet. Processes such as TV recording, video editing, simulations and scenery heavy gaming benefit from the high powered SATA RAID 0 setup. But try getting RAID on an OEM PC! This is an option available to the home PC builder if he has the expertise and willingness to set it up.