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How to Build a Linux Gaming PC

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The free Linux operating system has been around for ages, but its inherent complexity and limited support has always relegated its use to extreme enthusiasts, programmers, and other hardcore types. That might be changing, though, as a lot of loyal PC enthusiasts are less than pleased with Windows 8, and gaming juggernaut Valve has thrown its hat into the ring by launching a Linux version of Steam, its popular online content delivery service. Given the lackluster reception of Windows 8 and the renewed popularity of

Linux, we decided to build a Linux gaming box to see for ourselves whether the OS, at this time, could be a reasonable alternative to Windows for gaming.

Choosing the Hardware

Our Linux machine was built with a low target price of \$650 because we wanted this project to be semi-easy to duplicate by anyone. With this in mind, we started with Intel's Ivy Bridge Core i3-3220 processor, as it comes at a reasonable cost, gives us a great upgrade path, and its low TDP of 55W means we won't need a massive CPU cooler or PSU. Our Asus P8Z77-V LE motherboard is also affordable while offering both SLI and CrossFire support, as well as two USB 3.0 ports. Power is provided by a CX430 Corsair power supply from the company's low-cost Builder series. Given our modest build-out, we figured anything bigger than 430W would be overkill.

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