

Kim Komando: Buy a computer for less than \$100

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Instead you could try an operating system based on Linux. These are free, come with everything you need for basic computing, and will run great on older hardware. If you're going to give this a whirl, check out Linux Mint. The MATE edition should run better than XP, in fact.

[...]

And in the last few years, it has been made easier for beginners to use, thanks to its whimsically named New Out of Box Software, or NOOBS, system. This helps you install a few of the various operating systems it runs, which are based on the free Linux.

You might still end up doing some tweaking, but fortunately, the Raspberry Pi site has excellent tutorials for beginners.

Via's APC Rock (\$79) and Paper (\$99) are similar systems with a bit more oomph.

When you're poking around for DIY computers, you might come across the Arduino board. While this is a fantastic system for hobbyists, it won't work as a computer.

Android computers

Android isn't just for smartphones and tablets.

There are a few companies making Android "sticks." These are the size of a USB and plug right into the HDMI port on

your TV ? similar to a Chromecast or Roku Streaming Stick.

However, these run a full version of Android, which means you can surf the Web, install apps and anything else you'd do on an Android tablet.

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