What’s it like to use a $300 Windows laptop for a day?

The year is 2023, and my tireless quest to find a Windows laptop under $500 that isn’t a flaming pile of trash continues. While I’ve long maintained that people constrained to that category should just get Chromebooks, I understand that this recommendation makes quite a few people very, very angry.

So I’m coming to you today from the HP 14, a 14-inch silver laptop that we purchased from Amazon for $289. It has an 11th Gen Core i3 processor (yes, it’s an older chip, but that’s why it’s so cheap — such is life), 4GB of RAM, and 256GB of storage. This is just about as cheap as a Windows laptop can get. (HP’s listed MSRP for this model is $469.99, but you can get it for far less without much effort.) And to see if it’s a viable budget purchase, I spent a full workday on the device, morning to night.

Spoiler alert: it wasn’t terrible? I mean, it wasn’t great. But I was surprised by how well it went.

5Verge Score

HP HP 14

$ 199.99

ul]:my-0 [&>ul]:mb-16 [&>ul]:py-0 md:[&>ul]:mb-0 [&>ul>li]:mb-6 [&>ul>li]:leading-140 [&>p]:mb-8 [&_*]:font-

polysans-mono [&_*]:text-14 [&_ul]:font-light [&_p]:font-light [&_strong]:font-medium [&_li]:marker:text-franklin md:w-1/2 md:border-t-0 md:first:border-r md:first:pr-16 md:last:pl-16″>

The Bad

- Clunky chassis
- Small, stiff touchpad
- Thin audio
- Limited RAM and storage

How we rate and review products
First thing in the morning, I turned on the HP 14 and attempted to load the various programs I use in review testing: Chrome, Slack, Spotify, Steam, display calibration stuff, and the like. (No matter how much Microsoft bullies me about it, I will not switch to Edge, you monsters.) I was blocked from doing all of this because the HP 14 had, it turned out, come out of the box in S mode. Well, that wasn't going to fly. I turned that off right quick. The world didn't end; the laptop continued running just fine.

:last-child>:last-child]:mb-0″ readability="7″>

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*Look at that! Don't see one of those every day.*

Another thing I noticed as I worked was that I *really* like the keyboard. It's quite bouncy with a generous click and

plenty of room. You'll even find HP's signature row of hotkeys on the left side for Page Up, Page Down, and such. There *is* quite a bit of flex in the plastic chassis (what did you expect — it's $289), and my typing did slightly depress the keyboard, but that's not something that generally bothers me as much as it does some of you.

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*I was spoiled for connectivity on this day.*

At lunchtime, I took a quick break to eat and watch a few minutes of *Succession.* (I'm still catching up from last weekend, so don't spoil.) The episode was quite watchable on the 1920 x 1080 screen, which is higher resolution than you'll find on most sub-$400 Windows laptops. I

didn’t notice any colors that seemed off or washed out; brightness was a bit dim but works fine for indoor use. The bigger obstacle to media consumption on this device was honestly the speakers, which I generally had to keep at maximum volume in order to hear everything accurately. I wouldn’t try to make calls on this device outdoors or in a setting with lots of background noise; you may find yourself having to lean in.

I worked on some photos in the afternoon (the ones I shot for this review). And would you look at that — there’s an SD slot! I couldn’t be happier about this considering the number of very expensive laptops I’ve reviewed in recent months that have, like, no ports at all. And the device lasted around six and a half hours to a charge, which, honestly, should cause some **much more expensive 14-inch laptops** to take a good hard look at themselves.

:last-child>:last-child]:mb-0″ readability=”8.5″>