

TRENDINGCES 2025Qualcomm Snapdragon XIntel Arrow LakeBest laptop deals

Laptops > Business Laptops

Lenovo ThinkPad R500 Review

★★★★★ Reviews By [Jamie Bsales](#) published August 20, 2008



When you purchase through links on our site, we may earn an affiliate commission. [Here's how it works.](#)

Laptop Mag Verdict ★★★★★

Speedy performance, extra-long battery life, and top-notch ergonomics and build quality make the R500 an excellent bang-for-your-buck business notebook.

Pros

+ Good performance

+ Long battery life

+ Comfortable keyboard

+ IT-friendly extras

+ Built-in Wireless USB

Cons

- Bulky, plastic chassis

- Tiny touchpad

- Mediocre Wi-Fi range

04:19

×

Advertisement

Why you can trust Laptop Mag 🟢 Our expert reviewers spend hours testing and comparing products and services so you can choose the best for you. [Find out more about how we test.](#)

Built for business users who roam the office halls more than they roam through airports, the [Lenovo ThinkPad R500](#) delivers everything we like about the ThinkPad line, just in a larger package than we're used to. The big screen and standout keyboard mean that desk jockeys won't have to [switch](#) to dock-connected replacements if they don't want to, and the \$1,237 price is very reasonable for the performance and features our tested configuration delivered.

Lenovo ThinkPad R500 Design

As expected, the R500 sports the familiar and classic black casing. Unlike the more expensive [ThinkPad X200](#) and [X300](#), which feature a grip-friendly rubberized matte coating on their mag-alloy shells, the R500's pebbled chassis is decidedly plastic-feeling, as if polymer beads destined for the Lenovo-branded side of the factory made their way into the ThinkPad hopper by mistake. The lid is also particularly chunky, adding to the visual heft. Lenovo could have done a little more to pare the 6.6-pound R500's 14.1 x 10.2 x 1.4-inch dimensions, but buyers who care more about portability could just as easily opt for the 1.2-inch-thin ThinkPad T500, which also features a 15.4-inch display.

Advertisement

Sponsored Links

Why CVS Hides This Cheap 87¢ ED Medication

Public Health Forum by Friday Plans

Pop the latch on the right (sorry, lefties) and lift the angular lid, and you'll find the always-welcome ThinkPad keyboard, which features a near-flawless feel and the handy ThinkLight LED illuminator (now in amber) for added visibility in dark rooms. While we appreciate the dual pointing devices (both touchpad and TrackPoint pointing stick) that are the norm on corporate models, we again bemoan that the extra mouse buttons force the touchpad and its mouse buttons to be smaller than they should. Lenovo has included dedicated volume and mute buttons, too.

04:19

×

LATEST VIDEOS FROM LAPTOPMAG

PLAY SOUND

Display and Sound

The R500 comes with a 15.4-inch matte widescreen available in 1280 x 800-pixel (as on our test unit) or 1680 x 1050-pixel resolutions. The latter gives you more pixels to display large documents or multiple windows, though by the time you up the zoom level in your app to read the text comfortably, you might be better off with the lower-res panel. We found the 1280 x 800 screen very readable, though the antiglare coating did rob some pop and color vibrancy. The panel offered decent off-axis viewing, though, with just a slight brightness shift when viewed from the side; the R500 could certainly serve as your presentation device for a small group. In DVD playback on the included multiformat DVD burner (a Blu-ray burner is an option for an extra \$400), the panel exhibited natural color reproduction, though motion blur was evident. The up-firing stereo speakers deliver enough volume and good quality, though we'd appreciate more bass punch.

Webcam

Our build included the optional 1.3-megapixel webcam. The Lenovo Camera Center icon leads you to a download link for Skype (for videoconferencing and video calls), or to the preloaded Roxio Media In utility for capturing stills and video. The camera's low-light performance was impressive: In a dark room, all that was needed was the light from screen to see the subject clearly. Unfortunately, that sensitivity translated into poor color saturation and blown-out highlights under normal light conditions, and tweaking the gain, brightness, contrast, and other settings in the camera utility had little impact.

Other Features

MORE FROM LAPTOP MAG...



1 MSI's new series of Venture AI PCs arrives at CES 2025 — can they top last year's Copilot+ PCs?

2 MSI kicks off CES 2025 with new RTX 50 series gaming laptops: Specs, design, and everything we know so far

3 HP's Omen 16 Max earns its name with a blend of high-end hardware and new cooling tech

4 The Dell XPS 13 drops in price by \$200

5 Pick up the near-perfect Lenovo Yoga Pro 9i with \$610 in savings

Advertisement

04:19

×

connector (which, unfortunately for Lenovo, is losing ground to the more popular HDMI standard for high-def video connectivity). There's an ExpressCard/54 slot and another spot for a SmartCard or PC Card reader, as well as a memory card reader. The bottom dock connection accepts the Lenovo Advanced Mini Dock solution (for an additional \$175). To augment the standard Bluetooth 2.0 wireless connectivity, Lenovo even makes available built-in wireless USB.

Manageability and Security

The ThinkPad family has IT features that are second to none. The blue button above the keyboard launches Lenovo's ThinkVantage Productivity Center suite of user and IT tools. Menu choices in the list let you find Wi-Fi networks within range (arranged by signal strength) and identify which are secured and unsecured, as well as toggle on or off the machine's built-in radios. Other menu choices include the ability to launch backup, restore, system update, and system maintenance tasks. Best of all, the Productivity Center is customizable by a company's IT department, so an administrator can add or hide tasks or substitute links to a company's own support sites instead of Lenovo's.

As for security, the R500 includes a fingerprint reader and TPM circuitry to help keep data and corporate networks secure. You can also order the R500 with software encryption for the hard drive that seamlessly (and automatically) encrypts stored data, no user intervention required.

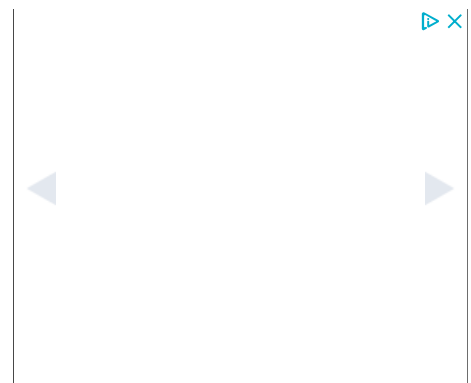
The 160GB hard drive on our test model is on the small side, but other 5,400-rpm models up to 320GB are available, as is a 7,200-rpm 160GB drive. Any one you pick comes with Lenovo's active hard drive protection to protect data if the machine gets dropped. To protect other internal components, the R500 features a plastic chassis reinforced with carbon fiber to improve rigidity.

Performance

The R500 features Intel's latest Centrino 2 platform. The 2.53-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo T9400 processor with 6MB of L2 cache and a 1066-MHz FSB, 2GB of RAM (expandable to 4GB), and integrated Intel X4500 graphics delivered above-average productivity performance compared with other mainstream models we've tested.

The R500 scored 3,666 on PCMark Vantage (which tests application performance in Vista). That's about 500 points better than the average this class. The hard drive's internal data transfer rate of 15.7 MBps is ξ and the R500's one-minute boot time into Windows Vista Business is tolerable. Its relatively low scores of 3,175 on 3DMark03 and 1,037 on 3DMark06 mean you'll have to dial back the resolution and effects set in demanding 3D games if you want to see playable frame rates. However,

Advertisement



04:19

X

Wireless and Battery Life

Our R500 came with the extended nine-cell battery (a \$79.20 add-on when configuring your system online). It protrudes about half an inch out the back of the machine and adds about 5.5ounces to the weight, but the nearly 6 hours of runtime we saw on our LAPTOP Battery Test is worth the bulk. In wireless testing, the 802.11a/g/n-equipped R500 delivered above-average throughput at 15 feet from our access point (18.9 Mbps) but below-average throughput at 50 feet (12.6 Mbps).

Software and Warranty

Beyond the ThinkVantage software, the R500 comes with Adobe Reader, Roxio's OEM CD/DVD media suite, and a 90-day trial for McAfee Anti-Virus. Of course, with corporate notebooks, this is often a moot point, since a corporate IT department will load its own software image on it. Lenovo covers the R500 with a one-year warranty.

Lenovo R500 Verdict

For all the comforts of a desktop in a machine that can travel when duty calls, the Lenovo ThinkPad R500 fills the bill. We wish it were a bit more svelte (and stylish), but we have no quibbles with its performance, endurance, security features, and overall value.

Lenovo ThinkPad R500 Specs

Bluetooth	Bluetooth 2.0
Brand	Lenovo
CPU	2.53-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo T9400
MORE	

Jamie Bsales

Social Security Recipients Under \$2,384/Mo Now Entitled To 12 "Kickbacks" In January (Tap for List)

Super Saving Online | Sponsored

Holy crap! This \$449 Lenovo laptop with a 10th Gen Core i7 CPU is a Cyber Monday steal [Update: Still live!]

Lenovo's IdeaPad S340 with a 10th Gen Core i7 CPU is on sale at OfficeMax for just \$449.

Laptop Mag

Forget Furosemide, Use This Household Item To Help Drain Edema Fluid

WellnessGuide | Sponsored

[Learn more](#)

Why CVS Hides This Cheap 87¢ ED Medication

Public Health Forum by Friday Plans | Sponsored

If You Drink Almond Milk Everyday, This Is What Happer Revealed: The secret dangers hidden in plant-based milk alternatives. Click here to learn more!

Experts In Getting Slim | Sponsored

[Learn M](#)

04:19

×

Hatmeo | Sponsored

[Shop Now](#)

This \$499 HP Envy 13 is the laptop deal of the year

HP's excellent Envy 13 laptop is on sale at Microsoft for \$499 after a \$350 discount this Black Friday.

Laptop Mag

Windows 11 has a secret Start menu — here's how to access it

Looking for Task Manager or the Run Command? Windows 11's secret Start menu makes it easily accessible — and all it takes is a right-click.

Laptop Mag

Ooni Curious? Find your perfect match.

Tailor your cooking experience with the Ooni Oven range, offering both gas and wood-fueled options. Find out more today.

Ooni Pizza Ovens | Sponsored

[Learn More](#)

Top Doctor: If You Eat Eggs Every Day, This Is What Happens

Top US Doctor: Sugar Is Not The Problem (This Is)

GundryMD | Sponsored

[Learn more](#)

Nvidia GeForce NOW just made the Steam Deck and Quest 3 headsets gaming powerhouses

Laptop Mag

Best laptops 2021

Laptop Mag

Lenovo's Legion Glasses put an 86-inch display in a tiny pair of eyewear

The Lenovo Legion Glasses put a big-screen TV in a tiny pair of glasses all for your gaming pleasure.

LATEST

04:19

✕



Pick up a Samsung monitor from as low as \$94 in these amazing Amazon sales ►



MSI's new series of Venture AI PCs arrives at CES 2025 — can they top last year's Copilot+ PCs? ►



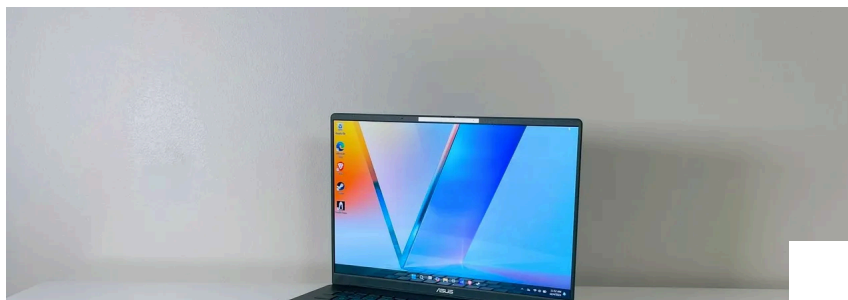
MSI kicks off CES 2025 with new RTX 50 series gaming laptops: Specs, design, and everything we know so far ►

[SEE MORE LATEST ►](#)

MOST POPULAR



Acer Swift Go 14 AI review: Hot and messy and disappointing



Asus Vivobook S14 (Q423) review: A few surprising streng and one critical flaw

04:19

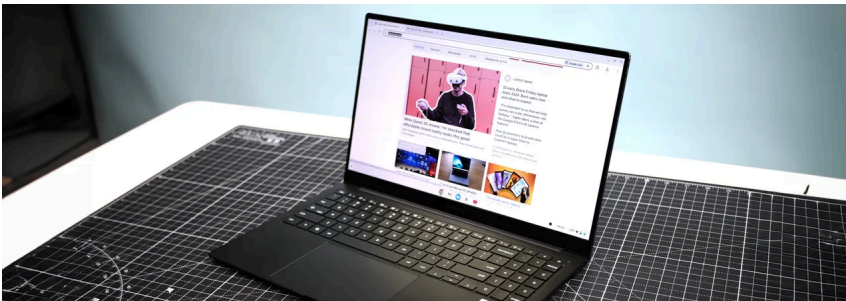
×



Lenovo Legion 5i 16 Gen 9 review: A solid budget-friendly entry in the Legion family



Acer Nitro V 15 review: Compromises in all the wrong places



Samsung Galaxy Chromebook Plus review: A lightweight Chromebook with a little extra



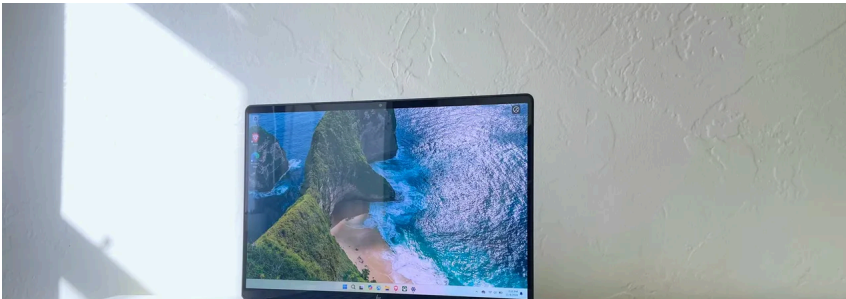
Lenovo ThinkBook 16 Gen 7 (G7 QOY) review: Can over 21

04:19

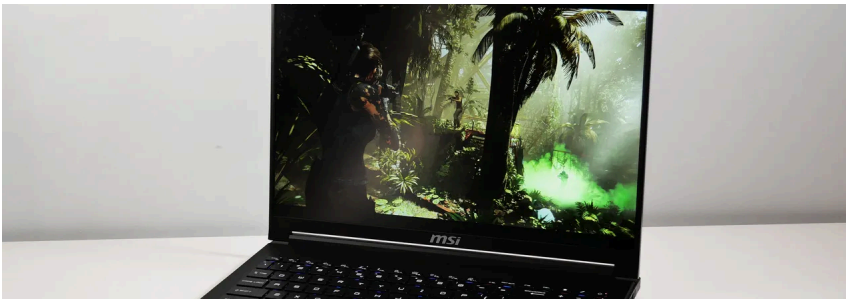
×



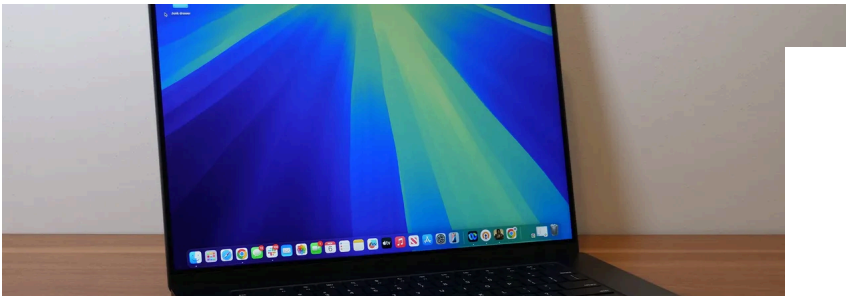
Acer Swift 14 AI (Intel) review: A good laptop with one crucial flaw



HP Omnibook Ultra Flip 14 review: A productivity laptop with a surprising strength and a critical flaw



MSI Stealth A16 AI+ review: AI won't help make this anything other than mediocre



04:19

Apple MacBook Pro 16-inch (M4 Pro, 2024) review: Peak M

✕



Apple MacBook Pro 14-inch (M4, 2024) review: Is this the perfect laptop?

Laptop Mag is part of Future US Inc, an international media group and leading digital publisher. **Visit our corporate site.**

- [Terms and conditions](#)
- [Contact Future's experts](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Cookies policy](#)
- [Accessibility Statement](#)
- [About us](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Do not sell or share my personal information](#)

© Future US, Inc. Full 7th Floor, 130 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036.

04:19

