

The \$9 computer wants you. CHIP heats up on Kickstarter

May 12 2015, by Nancy Owano



Headlines about a computer's pricetag beyond consumer imaginations have been rolling in this week. They're calling it the Raspberry Pi killer. The crazy-cheap computer. The every-hacker's dream toy. By now you

may have seen the stories about this \$9 computer called CHIP. The computer is up on Kickstarter and aims to make some history and enough dollars to get it to market. CHIP is also making news simply based on its quick climb up to its crowdfunding goal, and far beyond. The team hoped to raise \$50,000, to help them buy components, they said, "in extremely large quantities." They instead gathered \$858,147 at the time of this writing with 25 days still left to go.

The company behind CHIP is the Oakland, California-based Next Thing Co. They stated that Dave Rauchwerk, Gustavo Huber, and Thomas Deckert began the company as three friends building hardware and software. After launching Otto, an animated GIF camera, on Kickstarter in May last year, the team expanded, with teams in Shenzhen, China and Oakland.

But what can you possibly get in the way of computing for nine dollars? How are they able to shrink the price down to that? A cooked plate of spaghetti and meatballs costs a bit more. Their response: "To sell C.H.I.P. for \$9, we need to order tens of thousands of CHIPs. By using common, available, and volume-produced processor, memory, and wifi CHIPs, we are able to leverage the scales at which tablet manufacturers operate to get everyone the best price."

CHIP runs Linux and comes with Linux installed. What can you actually do with the little computer? The video tells the story. "Save your documents to CHIP's onboard storage. Surf the web...Play games with a Bluetooth controller. But wait. there's more." The camera shifts to a mannequin's pocket, and the presenter says "This is PocketCHIP. It makes CHIP portable. Take CHIP, put it into PocketCHIP and you can use CHIP anywhere."

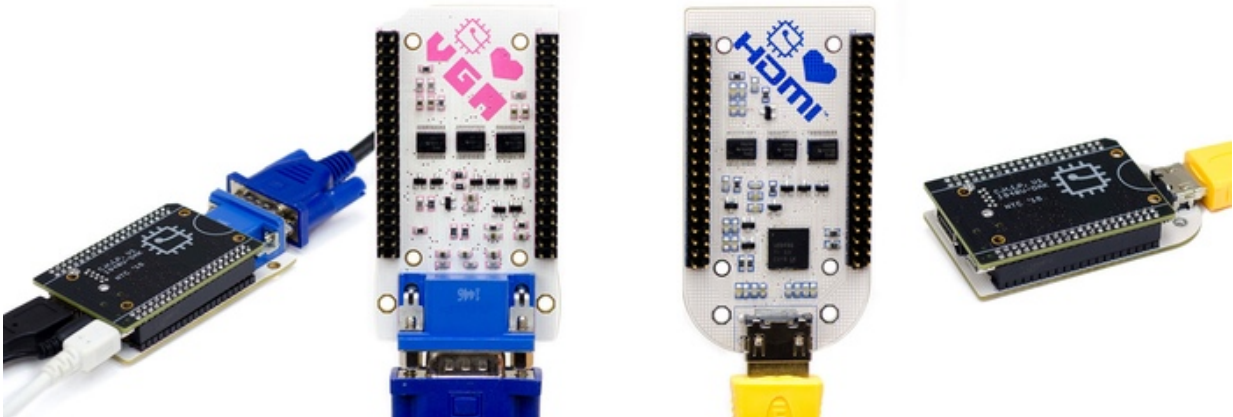
Engadget managing editor Terrence O'Brien said the PocketCHIP was

truly [impressive](#). It's the same versatile board, but it comes with a case that's home to a battery, a keyboard and 4.3-inch touchscreen.

PocketCHIP gives CHIP. a 4.3" (470px x 272px) touchscreen, QWERTY keyboard, and five-hour battery in a case small enough to fit in your pocket.

CHIP has built in WiFi and Bluetooth. For those who want to accomplish work tasks with CHIP, one can work in LibreOffice and save the documents to onboard storage. Web surfing and email checking can be done over the WiFi. They said dozens of applications as well as tools are pre-installed. (It comes preloaded with Scratch. This is a language teaching programming basics by making animations, games and stories.)

They said you just attach a 3.7v LiPo battery to CHIP and you go mobile. Any single-cell (3.7V) LiPo battery will work with CHIP.



As for specs, they said you get a 1GHz processor with 512MB RAM and

4GB storage. They designed CHIP to work with any screen; it has a built in composite output or add an adapter for VGA and HDMI monitors.

Estimated delivery dates vary depending on the nature of the pledge option taken, but they are generally next year, most in May 2016. Prices vary too. For example, a pledge of \$19 presents the option of a CHIP with a VGA adapter; or for a mobile-enabling CHIP with one battery pack; or \$24 for a CHIP and an HDMI adapter; or \$49 for the PocketCHIP (includes one CHIP).

More information: [www.kickstarter.com/projects/1 ... lds-first-9-computer](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1...lds-first-9-computer)

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