

Best Cheap Laptop For Mobile and Portable Ops

The best cheap laptop I could find for mobile and portable operations! Just this week I picked up a cheap HP Stream 11 laptop for mobile and portable operation. I'm tired of lugging my 6 lb. laptop back and forth between the house, camper, vehicle and outdoors. I can leave this new one in the camper. The HP Stream 11 is a small 11" notebook with great battery life and it only weighs 2.5 lbs. It came with Windows 10 Home (I replaced with fresh install of Windows 10). See my other cheap laptop choice below.



My Cheap Laptop – HP Stream 11

[On Ebay](#) they run anywhere between \$50 used and \$175 new. On [Amazon](#) \$175 (used & new from \$111). At Walmart \$109

refurbished (where I got mine). The newer models have 4 GB of RAM and most come with a 32 GB eMMC hard drive. There is a more expensive 64 GB model.

The older models come with just 2 GB of RAM and the 32 GB hard drive.

There are complaints about the 32 GB hard drive because it doesn't have enough free space to do the Windows updates. (I remember people complaining because they were forced to install Windows updates. Maybe this is the solution ☐).

To resolve that I used the Windows Media Creation Tool and installed a fresh copy of Windows 10 which ended up taking less HD space. There's no HP bloatware!

Inserting a micro SD Card will increase storage, but the SD Card cannot be used to update Windows (crazy).

Linux loads on it! I tried Linux Mint and the only issue was the WIFI. I am sure there is a solution to it. So as a Linux notebook it should work great.

HP Stream 11 Specs:

- 11.6" display
LED Backlight, HD Anti-Glare Display
- Intel Celeron N3060 dual-core processor
1.60GHz (with Max Turbo Speed of 2.48GHz)
- 4GB DDR3L SDRAM system memory
- 32GB eMMC drive
- 10 hours of battery life
- Intel HD Graphics 400
- Weight: 2.57 lbs
Thin design you can easily take on the road
- 802.11ac Wireless LAN
- microSD card reader
- Bluetooth

- 1 x USB 3.1 port, 1 x USB 2.0 port, 1 x HDMI port, 1 x headphone/microphone jack

HP Stream Likes and Dislikes

Likes: I like the screen, touchpad, battery life and weight. It is fast enough for the basics and it has 2 USB ports!

Dislike: Color and cheap plastic feel. It's growing on me though. Small hard drive.

Just the Basic Ham Software

I just have some basic software on it now, N3FJP AC Contact Log, N1MM Logger+, Fldigi and Elecrafts KX2 Utility. These are small programs and run very well on the HP Stream. I'll try HRD and DXLab Suite at some point.

You'll be seeing more of it in my [YouTube](#) videos!

Cheap Laptop and Other Choices

There are lots of other ones out there and some less expensive than the HP Stream. I read reviews and decided on the Stream because I know HP will stand behind their warranty. I've used it before ☐ HP is a reliable brand name.

The other laptop I was considering and I believe would work well is the [Acer Travelmate B117-M-C0DK 11.6" Notebook](#).

Video Update 10-21-2018

Thank you!

A big thanks to subscribers and everyone who posts questions and comments with ideas and suggestions. I sincerely appreciate it and hope this website helps Ham operators.

If you have a question or suggestion, please comment below. I will do my best to answer it and your experience will help others as well.

Do you have a dedicated laptop for portable use and if so what make is it?

73,

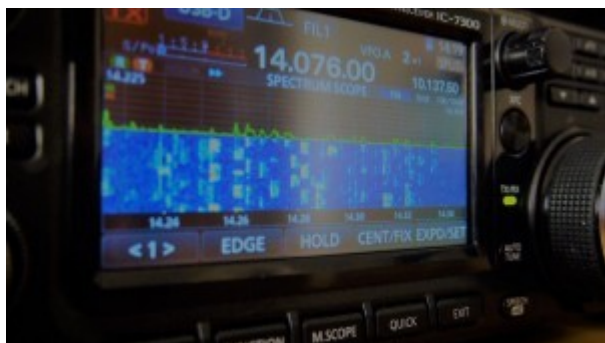
Rich, K0PIR

P.S. If you are on Instagram, you can follow me there. See [@k0pir.us](https://www.instagram.com/k0pir.us)

Icom 7300 Driving The Ameritron 1500

The pictures and captions below were sent to me by Gene, W9NMX, with the Icom 7300 driving the Ameritron 1500 amplifier. I have always been interested in the reports completed on the Icom 7300 SDR/HF 6m Transceiver. When the radio first came out there was alot of speculation. According to many, it was the first of its kind. So with an Icom 7300 reserved, I knew I was getting one, but would it have a good receiver? How about transmit audio and filtering, who knew? It was anyones guess and everyone who reserved a 7300 had high hopes.

Shortly after receiving mine I did my own on-air tests (QSO's) and waited patiently for the results of others who are much more knowledgable than I am about radios.



Test Reports of The Icom 7300 SDR Transceiver

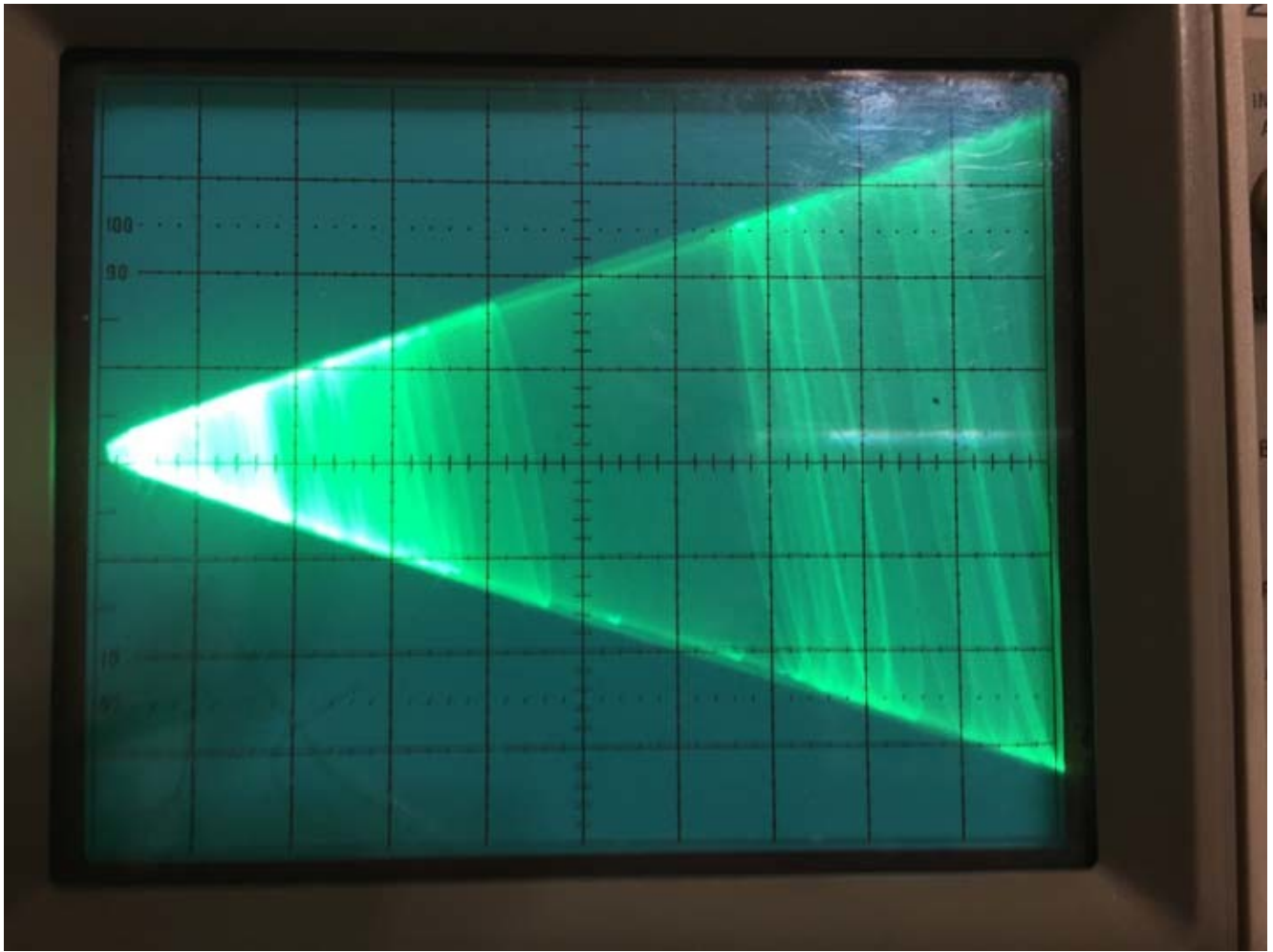
One of the first reports completed was the receiver tests run by Rob Sherwood. You can see his website and results [here](#). The full test is available for download [here](#).

I'll go out on a limb and say everyone who received an early Icom 7300 was very pleased with his findings.

Another fascinating test was performed by Adam Farson, VA70J/AB40J, and his evaluation and test report is available for download [here](#). It's definitely worth browsing and I was very pleased with his results too.

Icom 7300 Driving The Ameritron 1500

Now for my friend Gene, W9NMX. I just received an e-mail from him and he was running his own test with the Icom 7300 driving the Ameritron 1500 amplifier. This picture and caption were included in his e-mail to me and there's more to come:



Icom 7300 driving AL1500 to 1500 watts. Trapezoid from speech. Note the very straight sides and no flat topping at peaks.

Impressed Then, Impressed Now

Back in April of 2016 and after having it for only a few weeks I was impressed. It's so easy to use and audio reports with the hand mic were great right out of the box!

After having it almost a year now I am still impressed and the reports here and what I continually receive from others confirm my personal view.

The 7300 has proven to me to be a reliable transceiver and has a very good receiver. Transmit audio is excellent in my opinion. Operating on digital modes is better than ever for me. The 7300 was only \$1499 at the outset and can be had for much less today.

Thank you Gene, W9NMX, for performing the tests on the Icom 7300 driving the Ameritron 1500 and for sending me the photos! I look forward to more. You always have a wonderful signal from Florida. Here's a short audio clip of Gene with his Icom 7300 and Ameritron 1500.

Did you perform your own tests? Please comment below. I'm always happy to hear from fellow Hams. Best 73 and good DX – Rich, K0PIR

LDG AT-600ProII Autotuner M-600 Meter Setup With Short Review



sed a LDG AT-600ProII Autotuner and M-600 meter to use with my Icom 7300. The old MFJ 986 3Kw roller inductor I had was a good tuner, but it's not automatic. It takes time to tune it and the Ameritron AL-811. The LDG AT-600ProII auto tuners are fast, they hold 2000 memories and are easy to use with the Icom 7300.

Since I've only had it a week I can only make a few comments. Both the auto tuner and meter are working good and I'm happy with them. I have used an LDG IT-100 with my Icom 7000 for a long time and it has been good to me.

LDG AT-600ProII Autotuner



What you get with the LDG AT-600ProII Autotuner is a power cable. I threw it in my supply box. Hi Hi. You won't need it.

For the Icom 7300 get the the IC-PAC cable, it's a separate purchase. It supplies power from the IC-7300 and it's all you'll need. – \$10 extra.

One end of the IC-PAC connects to the back of the IC-7300 and the other end has two connectors that go to the autotuner. One is for power and the other is for the tuner itself.

Nothing needs to be done in the Icom 7300's menu. It will detect the auto tuner automatically.

Quick Start:

- a. With everything powered off, connect a coax jumper between the antenna jack on your amp to the TX jack on the back of the tuner.
- b. Connect your antennas to the rear of the tuner and connect your ground wire.
- c. Connect the IC-PAC cable between your Icom 7300 and the autotuner.
- d. Power up the Icom 7300 and go to the desired frequency.
- e. Select the correct antenna using the "Ant" button on the front of the auto tuner.
- f. Bypass the amp for now (either with it off on in stby).
- g. Tune the IC-7300 as you normally would by pressing the "TUNER" button on the transceiver.
- h. It's ready!

I like the advanced (manual) tune operation of the auto tuner. It allows for manual inductance and capacitance adjustments to get the SWR to its lowest. These settings can be saved into memory and that part appears to work very good. I'm very happy with the auto tuner so far.

LDG M-600 Meter

At first I didn't think I would need this, but after using just the auto tuner I found out in short order that a meter is needed if you're running an amp. The led bar doesn't suffice

when tuning for maximum power output.

The cable that's included with the meter hooks right up the the autotuner. I had a little trouble getting the plug connected, but it's secure now. The back of the meter is flimsy.

Quick Start:

- a. Turn off the AT-600ProII Autotuner (Powering off the IC-7300 will turn it off).
- b. Connect the mini-DIN cable to the jack on the rear of the autotuner.
- c. Connect the other end to the jack on the rear of the M-600 meter.
- d. Turn on your IC-7300 and you're ready to enjoy the M-600.

The meter is very lightweight. I just expected a heavier meter. When I touch a button on the front, the entire box moves. I'll need to secure in place somehow or hold it down when I press buttons. Other than that, it looks good, works good and has a nice big meter!

I like the meter set in "Peak" mode when operating SSB. The meter doesn't fluctuate like my old meters did, so it's taking a little getting used to.

Overall the M-600 compliments the LDG AT-600ProII Autotuner nicely and there's no need for an extra coax jumper. The supplied DIN cable is all you need.

In the clip below we go over the M-600 calibration, the LDG AT-600ProII menu, advanced (manual) tuning and saving to memory and putting the auto tuner in bypass mode. There are some examples of what the auto tuner and meter looks like while in SSB and CW mode. Thanks for watching!

Thanks for dropping by. Please comment below. What do you have in your shack?

Resources:

[LDG AT-600 Autotuner Manual](#)

[LDG M-600 Analog Meter Manual](#)

Icom 7300 Microphone Christmas Savings Plan



BM800

The Icom 7300 microphone that's included with the radio gets great audio reports, but I can't use a hand mic while

contesting or running a net. When I first received my Icom 7300 I ordered a Heil Y cable with blocking capacitor so I could continue using my dynamic microphones. They weren't real expensive mics, but I wanted to use what I had. Others purchasing the 7300 did the same thing. Mine were acceptable and sounded good, but I just couldn't get my VOX to work right. It worked, but the VOX gain had to be set near max and it was still inconsistent.

Speaking for myself, in retrospect I should have broke down and purchased a new electret condenser mic instead of spending money on the cable with blocking capacitor, but looking on the bright side, I probably would have spent too much on the new mics.

You see, I was considering a couple of Heil microphones, an Icom desk mic and another more expensive brand. All good possibilities and all excellent microphones. Well worth the money, but more than I wanted to spend.

Icom 7300 Microphone

Wanting to save a buck or two I looked for the best deals while not sacrificing on audio quality.



[Yamaha CM500](#)

I purchased a [Yamaha CM500](#) for a headset. This is a well known

headset with the Flex radios and I have heard good things about it with the Icom 7300. I wasn't disappointed. It's comfortable, pretty light and receive audio sounds good. I would say transmit audio is excellent. It's got a hot mic and activates the VOX like a mic should on the 7300. See more ham reviews at [eHam](#).

UPDATE: A friend, WB00AF, just sent me a audio recording ([k0pir-yamaha-cm500](#)) of the Icom 7300 while I 'm using the Yamaha CM500 headset. Settings: Mic Gain 40%, COMP 2, TX Bass -1, TX Treble +3, TBW Narrow 300-2500.

And just recently, WA00AF, told me about the [BM800](#). (There are many flavors of this mic around. Andy got his off Amazon and I got mine [off E-Bay](#)). He was using one with his Icom 7600 and it sounded great.

After looking into it and finding the best deal I could, I purchased one off of [E-bay](#). Again, not disappointed and I have already received a few good unsolicited compliments on audio. People have been asking me where I purchased it.

These are inexpensive electret mics.

The [BM800](#) is not as hot as the [CM500](#), but it doesn't require 48v like the spec sheet shows and the Icom 7300 is supplying it with 8v just FB. So far I really like this mic. It doesn't look or feel cheaply made.

UPDATE: WB00AF made a recording of me on the BM800. My Icom settings were Treble +4, Bass -1, Mic Gain 40%, COMP 4, TBW Narrow. Click below.

I had to replace my Y cable with blocking capacitor, so I got a replacement off of E bay. It's a [8 Pin MIC/Headset Adapter HS-01C for ICOM](#) and works very well.

There is no need for the additional phantom power supply with these BM800 mics. The Icom radios provide the needed power

through the mic jack.

Icom 7300 Microphone Transmit Settings

- TX Bass = -1
- TX Treble = +3
- TBW = Wide and Narrow (defaults)
- Mic Gain = 40%
- COMP = 1

(These are beginning settings. Refer to [setting-mic-compression.](#))

Here's a very good [article on compression](#) by G0GSF and AB40J.

The Christmas Savings Plan

Heil Pro Set = \$168 vs. [Yamaha CM500](#) = \$60. Savings = \$108

Heil iCM = \$118 vs. [BM800](#) = \$18. Savings = \$100

Total savings = \$208

As I said, the Heil mics are excellent microphones and well worth the money. Who knows how long these low cost mics will last. I used a Heil BM-10 for years with my Kenwood 570 and Icom 7000, always getting great audio reports. I still have it today using it portable and I will probably never get rid of it.

Am I happy with the new microphones? Yes! The Icom 7300 VOX works fine with both mics. How do the new microphones sound? You be the judge. I'm on the Breakfast club net every Thursday morning at 6:00 AM CST and every Saturday morning 5:00 AM CST. Come and listen and of course check-in with me. 3.973 MHz.

So saving a couple of hundred dollars I'll have enough to buy a few more Christmas gifts for the people I love. That's my kind of savings plan ☐

Interesting Sources:

[Y Cable I got off of E-bay sold by K6VHF](#)

[BM-800 Condenser off Amazon. \(I personally haven't used this one\)](#)

[BM800 I got off of E-Bay](#)

[Transmission1 Forum](#)

[Radio Ham Mic Slapdown – YouTube](#)

[Ham Nation 237: Do you want a condenser microphone?](#)

[Transmit Audio – K0BG](#)

[It's not your microphone, it's you! – WB2WIK/6](#)

[HamRadioAndVision – How To Use An ALC Meter](#)

[Icom Microphone Notes](#)

[SSB Compression](#)

I hope you find this informative and useful. Best wishes, 73 and good DX. – Rich, K0PIR

Icom 7300 One Month Review



I have been using the new Icom IC-7300 since the first week in April and absolutely love it. It has a very good receiver and I've had no overload (OVF) problems at my location. See [Sherwood Receiver Test Data](#).

Icom 7300 One Month Review

I have received the OVF one time. A neighboring Ham up the street was running 1KW and my beam was pointed in his direction. No problem! I turned my beam and the OVF went away.

I'm glad to be able to see the signal in the spectrum scope and at least I know where he is, hi hi.

Strong stations 3KHz away on 75 Meters don't bother me near as much now and neither do external pulse type or random noises. I run a net every Thursday and Saturday morning and normally have QRM from a neighboring net 3kHz away. This radio handles it very well in my opinion.

I can pull out weak stations and I've made a number of contacts with weak stations that would not have been possible with my Icom 7000. The NR and NB are excellent in this rig as well as the MNF, IF filters and Twin PBT. I'm impressed by the silky smooth tuning dial and intuitive menu system. The Icom 7300 is so easy to use! The LCD touch screen is extremely functional and the spectrum and audio scopes are a big plus.

The Icom 7300 puts out excellent transmit audio quality using the stock mic and using my old dynamic mics I have the transmit audio to my liking. I also get excellent audio reports using those mics. Tx audio includes treble and bass adjustments.

I have been using the 7300 with PSK31, RTTY (FSK) and JT65. It is an exceptional rig for digital operation. It includes very

good filtering and clean output.

The 7300 has a fast internal auto tuner, but will not tune a very high SWR. It does what it is supposed to do. It is not as good as my old Kenwood TS-570DG internal tuner, but it performs as advertised and probably a little better.

I can hear the fan come on when I key the radio, but it is not too noisy for me. It keeps the rig cool and the rig is very quiet during receive. I had no problem running RTTY (FSK) in a contest. The Icom 7300 stayed cool.

The 7300 is compatible with all of the software I've tried which includes, HRD, DM780, N3FJP, MMTTY, N1MM Logger+, Fldigi and JT65-HF HB9HQX. I'm running Windows 10 on a Lenovo laptop. I use two cables. The CI-V for rig control and USB for sound card and serial (com) port keying. This setup works great! See [my other post](#).

I'll update in a few months when I've done more. Sometimes my radio stays on 24/7 so it won't take long! Feel free to contact me.

Best 73 and good DX- Rich, K0PIR