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# HP EliteBook 8440p Review



By Michael A. Prospero |



Editors' rating: ★★★★★

### The Pros

Strong Core i5 performance ; Stylish design ; Meets military durability standards ; Loud speakers

### The Cons

Not the fastest graphics ; Underside runs hot ; Somewhat expensive

### Verdict

An aggressively priced business notebook that's fast and built to last.



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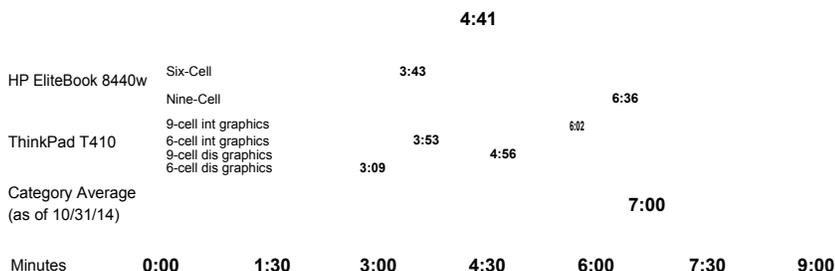
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Continuous Web surfing over wireless until battery drained. Longer is better.



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From the outside, the HP EliteBook 8440p is practically identical to its workstation sibling, the [EliteBook 8440w](#). Inside, however, are features more suited to on-the-go executives rather than graphic designers. Gone are the discrete [graphics](#) of the workstation, but in exchange, users get about 4.5 hours of battery life. (And you can always upgrade to an eight-cell battery for more juice.) A classy and durable metal case, Core i5 graphics, and an excellent keyboard for less than \$1,000 make this one of the best [business systems](#) money can buy.

**Editors' Note:** Portions of this review were taken from our earlier review of the HP EliteBook 8440w.

### Design

The 8440p continues in the same aesthetic tradition as other EliteBooks (such as last year's 6930p): the lid and palm rest are made of anodized aluminum, and the keyboard area is a matte black plastic. Unlike the Workstation line, which has a dark gunmetal gray finish, the metal on the 8440p is a brighter platinum. We actually prefer the 8440w; it looks a bit meaner. At 5.2 pounds with its six-cell battery, the 8440p is the same weight as the Lenovo ThinkPad T410, which has a plastic lid.

Above the keyboard are a select few touch-enabled controls. From the left: HP's QuickLook 3, web browser launch, wireless, touchpad, mute, and volume controls. At the bottom right of the keyboard deck is an optional fingerprint reader.

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### Keyboard and Touchpad

Since its previous EliteBooks, HP changed the key design slightly; no longer are the keys the traditional chamfered style, nor are they chiclet-shaped. Rather, they're a combination of the two: while abutting one another at their base, the keys tier up in a terraced fashion. We found the layout to be comfortable and fairly quiet. The keyboard boasts HP's DuraKey finish, which help prevent wear over the long term.

The keyboard isn't backlit, but a small light to the right of the webcam provides more than enough light when working in a darkened area, such as on a plane during an overnight flight; however, it's slightly more intrusive to a seatmate who's trying to sleep.

Like Lenovo, HP offers both a pointing stick and touchpad. However, HP's is concave rather than convex. The slight depression is intended to help secure your finger, but we found ours slipping a little more than those on Lenovo systems.

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The 2.8 x 1.4-inch touchpad is a little squashed—we had to backtrack a bit while scrolling down pages. On the plus side, it offered very little resistance, unlike the glossy touchpads found on the Mini 5102 and the Pavilion lines.

### Heat

Despite its powerful Core i5 CPU, the EliteBook 8440p didn't get very hot. After playing a Hulu video at full screen for 15 minutes, the touchpad registered 86 degrees Fahrenheit, the space between the G and H keys measured 91 degrees, and the middle of the underside reached 94 degrees. While we consider anything over 100 degrees unpleasant, the 8440p was not nearly as bad as the HP Envy 15, whose underside heated our workspace to 110 degrees.



### Display and Audio

Our 8440p's matte display came in the 1366 x 768-pixel configuration; this resolution was more than sufficient, and colors were bright and sharp, but those who desire more pixels can opt for a 1600 x 900-resolution display. The lid of the 14-inch screen can dip back 180 degrees from the closed position; at 40 degrees from the vertical, images started to reverse. However, side-to-side viewing angles were excellent.

For a system geared toward working professionals, the audio on the 8440p was superb. Alicia Keys' vocals came through clearly in "If I Ain't Got You," as did midrange piano notes. Even cymbal crashes were free of any distortion. And this [laptop](#)  was more than loud enough to fill a large office.

### Business Features

The metal lid on the 8440p is not just for looks; it also helps protect the notebook from the hazards of travel, being able to withstand up to 300 pounds of pressure. Also, a spill-resistant keyboard with drains keeps small amounts of liquid from damaging the system. The optional HP fingerprint sensor in the lower right-hand corner of the keyboard deck also lets users secure the notebook without the need for a password. Other security features include HP ProtectTools, HP Spare Key, and HP Disk Sanitizer.



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### SkyRoom

A new HP [collaboration tool](#) , SkyRoom, has also been added to the EliteBook 8440p's suite. This videoconferencing app lets users share not only high-definition video, but also applications running on either system. While we were not able to test it on the 8440p—you need at least two computers running the software—we were impressed by the video quality when watching a demonstration given by HP.

### Instant-On

HP also includes its QuickWeb and QuickLook 3 apps for users who want to browse the web and check e-mail without waiting to boot into Windows. With the system off, hitting the Web button above the keyboard launches HP QuickWeb, a browser-only version of DeviceVM's popular Splatstop instant-on operating system. After configuring wireless settings (the system doesn't transfer over the settings from Windows), it took 26 seconds from pressing the Web

button to start browsing.

Hitting the mail button when the system is off loads QuickLook 3, a program that lets you view your Microsoft Outlook calendar, contacts, and mailboxes. However, the program suffers from a number of caveats. It requires Outlook, and doesn't connect to the Internet to get your latest data—it merely grabs data the next time you open Outlook in Windows and connect to the Internet. We do like that the latest version of this app lets you edit as well as read info.

### Ports and Webcam

On the right side of the 8440p is a DVD drive, Ethernet, modem, and a combo eSATA/USB 2.0 port that can provide juice to USB-powered devices even when the system is off. On the left are three more USB ports, FireWire, headphone and mic, and an ExpressCard/54 slot. On the front edge is an SD Card reader, and on the back is VGA and DisplayPort connections for outputting video to a larger screen.

The 2-megapixel webcam offered very smooth, if slightly washed out visuals during video chats. Colleagues could see us clearly and hear us well as we conversed using Google Video.

### Performance

Outfitted with a 2.4-GHz Intel Core i5-520M processor, 2GB of RAM, and a 7,200-rpm, 250GB hard drive, the 8440p fared well on our tests. Its score of 5,552 on PCMark Vantage was about 1,500 points above the category average, but 1,400 points below the [Lenovo ThinkPad T410](#).

While it's no SSD, the 7,200-rpm hard drive booted into Windows 7 Professional (32-bit) in a speedy 44 seconds. That's about 15 seconds below average, and 1 second better than the T410. Its file transfer speed of 29.6 MBps was also comfortably above average (23.5 MBps).

With Oxelon Media Converter, a multithreaded app that takes advantage of the 8440p's several cores, transcoding a 114MB MPEG-4 to AVI took 53 seconds, a few seconds faster than the thin-and-light average.

This being a corporate system and not a workstation, the 8440p eschews discrete Nvidia graphics for an integrated Intel GMA HD GPU. Needless to say, its 3DMark06 score of 1,766 is a little lower than average (2,127), but above such systems as the ThinkPad T410 with integrated graphics (1,374).

These performance figures were justified in our gaming tests. In *World of Warcraft*, the 8440p delivered 50 frames per second with the resolution at 1024 x 768, and graphics at their optimal settings. However, with the screen set to its native resolution of 1366 x 768 and effects maxed, the notebook managed just 10 fps.

### Battery Life and Wi-Fi

On our LAPTOP Battery Test (web surfing via Wi-Fi), the 8440p's six-cell battery achieved 4 hours and 41 minutes of runtime, which is about 10 minutes less than the thin-and-light average. By comparison, the T410's six-cell battery lasted 3:53, and it's nine-cell battery lasted 6:02. HP sells an eight-cell extended life battery that connects to the bottom of the notebook for \$159; it adds 1 pound to the overall weight and should more than double your endurance.



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The 8440p's Intel Centrino Advanced N 6200 Wi-Fi radio saw fairly strong results. The 802.11n Wi-Fi throughput of 31.9 Mbps at 15 feet from our router was comfortable above the average (25.1 Mbps); same too for its throughput at 50 feet (24.6 Mbps), which was about 6 Mbps faster than average.

The notebook can also be configured with Bluetooth 2.1 and Gobi wireless broadband.

### Green Testing

It took the 8440p's six-cell battery 1 hour and 5 minutes to charge to 80 percent, and 1:51 to fully charge. During that time, it drew an average of 40.3 watts. Its LAPTOP Battery Efficiency Rating (total watts divided by battery life; lower is better) of 15.9 is about 7 points better than the category average of 22.5.

### Configurations

HP makes the 8440p highly customizable, but the Smart Buy configurations make the most financial sense. The highest-priced Smart Buy (\$1,359) has all the same specs as our review unit, but includes Bluetooth 2.1, Gobi mobile broadband, and Nvidia NVS 3100 graphics with 512MB of video memory.

### Software, Warranty, and Support

In addition to SkyRoom, QuickLook 3, and QuickWeb, HP includes a number of utilities, including Recovery Manager (for Windows 7 and Vista systems), Power Assistant, Client Manager Software, Client Configuration Management Agent, OpenView PC Configuration Management Solutions, and HP Performance Tuning Framework.

HP backs the 8440p with a three-year limited warranty and 24/7 toll-free phone support. To see how HP fared in our [Tech Support](#) Showdown, [click here](#).

### Verdict

For business users on a [budget](#), the HP EliteBook 8440p represents a very good bargain. You get excellent Core i5 performance, decent battery life, and a stylish, sturdy chassis for less than \$1,000. Considering an identically configured Lenovo ThinkPad T410 costs about \$150 more but lacks the metal lid and deck, we feel that the 8440p is the better deal, both in the short and long term.