

A Bolt experience

Interested in the Bolt X or any other Digital Storm PC, have a look at my story.

About me

I'm a tech enthusiast growing up with the Comodore128, had my first PC prebuilt (x386) and build every PC since myself. Drove a bit into Mac territory and started playing PC on a gaming laptop again. Finally decided to get a "perfect" PC and was looking for some professionals to do it for me.

Order Timeline (see also page 11)

- Mid October 2018 Started to look at Digital Storm for my next Gaming PC. Looking for compact but maximum performance.
- Closing in on the Bolt X, not a lot of reviews, but Digital Strom (DS) has managed to create an impressive image I believed in.
- Had a few positive interactions with DS's sales to answer a few questions. Mostly about availability of the RTX208Ti as water-cooled option.
- 12/06/2018, 11:28am Punched in my order. Good communication via automatic confirmation emails. My system configuration: [2130584](#). The same configuration is not orderable today, it will throw a compatibility issue – more about this later. Full configuration attached in the System Configuration, Page 10.
- 12/06/2018, 3:50pm Received an authorization form to "our customers from fraudulent purchases". I had no issue with it, but my credit card company had already called me to verify the purchase. The form basically asks to provide copies of your credit card used for the purchase together with a signed payment authorization. I provided the form 5:28pm same day.
- 12/06/2018, 7:44pm My order moved to stage 1 (payment processed) and got a "simple order number" that can be tracked on their website.
- The estimated ship date: 10-15 Business Days (Mon-Fri) from 12/6/2018 (came with a note: *"This is only an estimation. If problems are encountered during any of the stages, we may have to hold your order for a few more days to ensure you receive a rock-solid stable problem free system"*).
- The shipping estimate contradicts the DS's stage estimate (Stages, page 11) with a best case of 21 working days.....
- 12/19/2018 First **delay** message.
- "We're aware that your order is currently still in Stage 1, this is due to the increase of orders during the Back to School season which causes a big backlog for us.....You should expect to see progress on your order within 1-2 weeks...."*.
- I was travelling over the holidays, so no big deal I thought.
- 12/26/2018, 3:45pm Order moved to stage 2 (Inventory Assignment)

12/26/2018, 3:46pm Order moved to stage 3 (Phase 1 Integration)
Estimated Shipment Date: 9-14 Business Days (Mon-Fri) from 12/26/2018
Basically resetting the clock on the original estimate.

12/27/2018 15 Business days since order have passed here.....

1/14/2019 My patience is running out. Trying to get a status update via web request. This was never answered.

1/15/2019 Since I got no reply, called customer service. Spoke to Kevin who had no status information and promised me a call back. That never happened.

1/16/2019 Since I got no call back, called again. Spoke to Angel who had no status. Was promising the same. Since they all remote, they have no direct access to the production.

1/17/2019 Out of patience to deal with no update. Called Angel again and proposed to cancel the order if I don't get an update. All he was able to do was providing me an email address from a project manager – Ronald.
I sent a strong message to Ronald and got immediate call back.
Given reason for the delay was the DigitalStorm Control board being out of stock and stuck in customs. He promised VIP handling of my case.

1/24/2019, 12:03pm Order moved to stage 4 (Final Assembly)

1/24/2019, 12:04pm Order moved to stage 5 (Stress Testing)

1/25/2019, 12:54pm Order moved to stage 6 (Quality Assurance) after only one day of testing.
According to [DS's marketing](#):
"Stress-Testing/Quality Assurance: Large brand name computer companies mass produce computers, they don't allow a level of customization as we do in order to keep operating costs low. They also stress-test units by testing random samples. Here, every machine gets tested, and when I say tested:

- 24-hour stress test on yor: processor, memory, and video card(s) (**total of 72-hours**)
- Benchmarking to ensure your system is operating at the performance it is configured for."

Not sure what really happened for my system, but I don't think my system received the advertised amount of testing/benchmarking or quality assurance as I will show later.

1/25/2019, 2:21pm Order moved to stage 7 (Packaging)

1/25/2019, 4:13pm Order marked as shipped. **35 business day after ordered. About 50 days AFTER my credit card was charged.**

1/29/2019, 9:58am Order delivered

1/31/2019 Took a couple of calls/support request to finally get all the promotional keys.

The System Review



Figure 1, Bolt X as received (front removed)

When I ordered the system, I had to make a decision whether it is worth to accept an estimated adder of about \$1600 (see Component Cost Estimate, page 13) over building my own system.

Digital Storm's marketing was making a convincing argument that I can expect the highest level of quality and engineering, flawless execution and superb support for this adder. It did not come close.

Let me start with some positive remarks

The Positive

1. The shipping and packaging was solid. The Bolt arrived undamaged and operational.
2. The primary components were high quality. The GPU was an NVIDIA made RXT2080Ti card.
3. The case looks great. Like the finish. Like the arrangement.
4. The OS was installed clean. No garbage.

The Unexpected but acceptable

1. Ordering a complex system over the holidays can certainly lead to unexpected delays. I was not thrilled over the extensive delay and poor communication, but I could live with it if the system would make up for it.
2. I did not expect “Edge to Edge Premium Tempered Glass” to be in fact acrylic glass. At least Wikipedia is on my side: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempered_glass **Very misleading**, but would not have changed my decision.
3. The pump/radiator assembly was changed from all DS web photos and reviews and does not come with RGB lights. DS is using the [Swiftech H240X3](#).
4. You would not expect the RGB logo in the front to be a part of a case LED strip tucked in a reflective case. This idea forces the strip to come out and warp in a bad angle. See Figure 1.

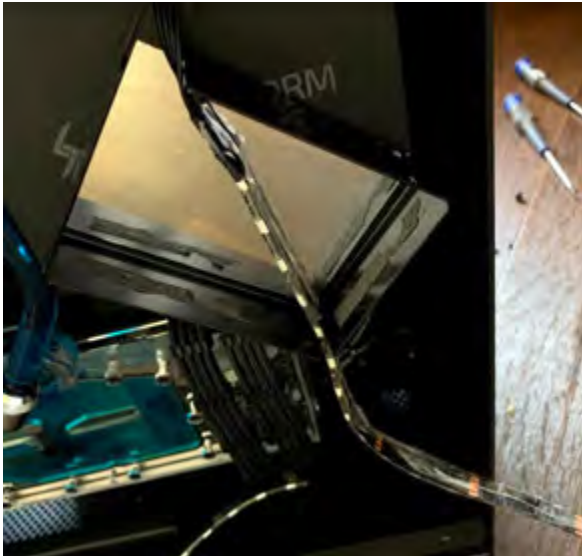


Figure 2, Front Logo RGB

5. Not a prize for optics. Two SATA connectors used, one straight one 90deg. 90 on both would have been nicer.



Figure 3, SATA connector choice

The Bad

The following comments are my personal opinion about the system that are absolutely not in line with my perceived brand image or quality. The order is not necessarily reflecting priority.

I'm already too invested in the system, fixed most of the problems myself to consider a return of the whole PC. If I had discovered all the issues right after receiving the system, I would have probably changed my mind.

1. The (left) GPU power supply came not fully attached to the card and was actually coming out on its own throwing an error message during boot. The combination of water block and cable assembly does not allow the connector to go all the way in. I had to shave off part of the connector to fit it correctly. Not sure how this passes "quality assurance"



Figure 4, GPU power supply

2. As shown in Figure 1, the LED strip used in the case is not lasting. It detached due to case temperature and started to dangle inside the case. This has been already complained about in 2017 (<https://www.digitalstorm.com/forums/new-digital-storm-customer-and-bolt-x-owner-tidf29989/>) don't understand why this is still done this way. On top of that, the bottom part of the strip is hidden behind the metal and does not have any effect.
3. The [manual of the radiator/pump assembly](#) clearly states the pump needs to connect to the CPU fan connector on the main board. It was connected to the chassis fan.
4. Even though I ordered the system with GPU and CPU overclocking, none of this was done or was there any mentioning why it wasn't.
5. The two HDDs running extremely hot. The cables management above is blocking almost all the airflow through that part of the case. This is especially a problem since this system design takes air in through the CPU/GPU water cooler heating up the case. I decided to move the right disk to

the rightmost mount to improve the flow.



Figure 5, HDD mounting

6. RGB Lighting and fan control

This is almost my biggest complain. It seems like no one has spent the extra mile to make this a setup matching the expectations.

I decided to go all out and ordered the best possible configuration:

*Airflow Control: Digital Storm Thermal Management Control Board & Software and
Internal Lighting: Software Controlled Internal + Front Panel LED Lighting (Requires Airflow
Control Upgrade)*

The Digital Storm control board (Figure 6) is providing fan control for the two radiator fans and RGB control for the LED strip. The board has 5 temperature sensors attached. Three sensors are placed in positions near GPU, back of CPU and near HDD. Two sensors were tucked away in a corner but displayed in the SW. Not sure how the board is designed to work, but it was not able to control the fans correctly. Both fans spun up and down around a certain temperature threshold – annoying to listen to.

The board was able to control the LED strip, but not the GPU water block LED. Those LEDs were controlled by a RC controller that came with not remote. I checked with support – there was no intention to provide the RC remote.

So, while I was able to control the RAM-LED and the LED strip via software, the GPU LEDs were cycling through all colors of the rainbow.

The worst part – there was no need for the DS control board and the RC controller at all. The mainboard had all necessary connectors. See Figure 8

I ended up connecting both radiator fans to the mainboard (Chassis/Pump) and the strip and

GPU_LED to the LED sockets. The mainboard is perfectly handling the fan control and the LEDs. I removed the LED strip from the case, cut it short and used it to light up the fluid reservoir.



Figure 6, Digital Strom Control Board



Figure 7, GPU Water Block LED controller

Motherboard layout

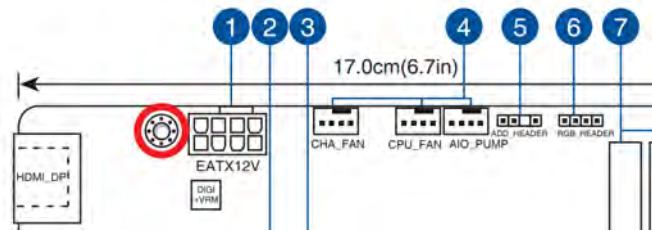


Figure 8, Mainboard Layout

Below the final look with all colors synchronized.



Figure 9, Final system with RGB fixed

What is completely unacceptable – when I was feeding all of this back to DS. The only thing they had to say “we appreciate your feedback”.

Writing this review I checked my original configuration and had to learn that is no longer compatible! So (maybe) based on my feedback, DS decided to make that change. Wouldn't you expect someone come back to you and offer a solution? Not DS.

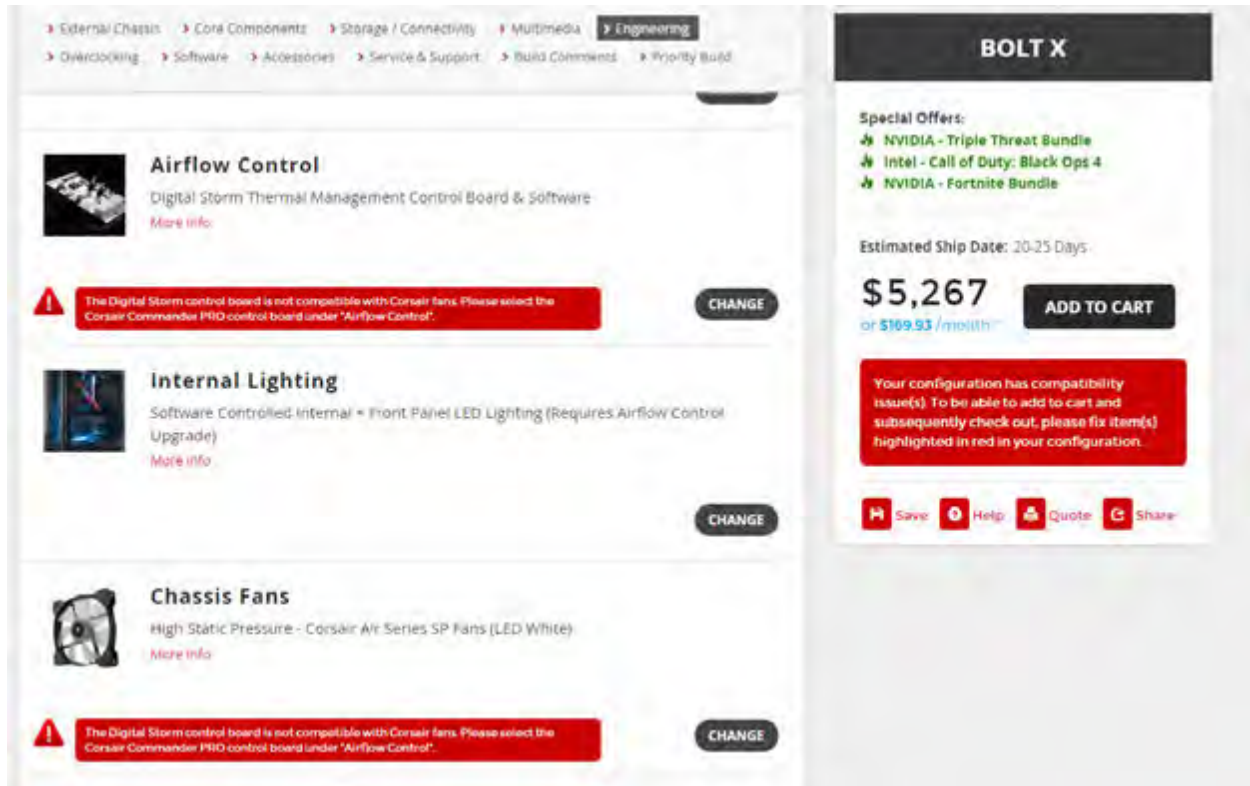


Figure 10, My configuration is no longer compatible

7. Customer survey

When you express your issues during a survey, you will receive an immediate email from management@digitalstorm.com with well sounding intentions to address your issues.

I got an immediate call from a manager (ronald.susztar@digitalstorm.com) then next morning attempting to address my issue. Unfortunately, he seemed very distracted with something else and took my offer to provide additional information via email as an option to promise me a call back after review and then never call me again.....

This is how my DS experience ended. In summary, I regret the falling for the illusion of someone professional building a system form me. With all the issues combined, Digital Storm is (in my case) not better than any other of the shelf PC. In retrospect, I should have gone with a PC like the [Corsair One](#), almost same configuration but \$3600.

Kind of ironic that the Digital Storm board, responsible for the delay of my order is now no longer compatible with my configuration and was not even needed for the system in the first place....

Appendix

Configuration

Order Contents

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| - Digital Storm Desktop - Config ID 2130584 (Config # 2130584) | Quantity: 1 - Price: \$5,267.00 |
| - Intel Bundle - Call of Duty: Black Ops 4, and more (Digital Code) | Quantity: 1 - Price: \$0.00 |
| - NVIDIA Bundle - Battlefield V (Digital Code) (Config # 2130584) | Quantity: 1 - Price: \$0.00 |

System Configuration

- Chassis Model: Digital Storm BOLT X
- Exterior Finish: - Standard Factory Finish
- Trim Accents: Edge to Edge Premium Tempered Glass
- Processor: Intel Core i9-9900K (5.0 GHz Turbo) (16-Thread) (8-Core) 3.6 GHz
- Motherboard: ASUS ROG Strix Z390-I Gaming (Wi-Fi) (Intel Z390 Chipset) (Mini-ITX)
- System Memory: 32GB DDR4 3000MHz Corsair Vengeance RGB Pro (RGB Light Bar)
- Power Supply: 800W SilverStone SX800-LTI (Titanium Rated) (Supports up to GTX TITAN Xp)
- Expansion Bay: - No Thanks, Optical Drive: - No Thanks
- Storage Set 1: 1x SSD M.2 (1TB Samsung 970 EVO) (NVM Express)
- Storage Set 2: 1x Storage (3TB Seagate / Toshiba)
- Storage Set 3: 1x Storage (3TB Seagate / Toshiba)
- RAID Config: - No Thanks, RAID Card: - No Thanks
- Internet Access: High Speed Network Port (Supports High-Speed Cable / DSL / Network Connections)
- Graphics Card(s): 1x GeForce RTX 2080 Ti 11GB (VR Ready)
- Sound Card: Integrated Motherboard Audio
- HPC Processor: - No Thanks
- Extreme Cooling: Digital Storm HydroLux PRO LITE (CPU + Graphics Card)
- HydroLux Tubing Style: HardLine Tubing (Requires HydroLux PRO Custom Liquid Cooling System)
- HydroLux Fluid Color: Blue Fluid + Clear Tubing (Requires HydroLux Liquid Cooling System)
- Cable Management: Exotic Cable Management - Black - (Cable Combs with Custom Color Sleeved Extension Cables)
- Chassis Fans: High Static Pressure - Corsair Air Series SP Fans (LED White)
- Internal Lighting: Software Controlled Internal + Front Panel LED Lighting (Requires Airflow Control Upgrade)
- Airflow Control: Digital Storm Thermal Management Control Board & Software
- Chassis Mods: - No Thanks, Noise Reduction: - No Thanks, LaserMark: - No Thanks
- CPU Boost: Stage 1: Overclock CPU - Up to 4.7GHz on All CPU Cores
- Graphics Boost: Yes, Overclock the video card(s) as much as possible with complete stability
- OS Boost: - No Thanks, Please do not tweak the services on the operating system
- Operating System: Microsoft Windows 10 Professional (64-Bit Edition)
- Recovery Tools: USB Drive - Windows 10 Installation (Format and Clean Install)
- Virus Protection: Windows Defender Antivirus (Built-in to Windows 10)
- Office: - No Thanks, Game: - No Thanks, Display: - No Thanks, Surge Shield: - No Thanks, Speakers: - No Thanks, Keyboard: - No Thanks, Mouse: - No Thanks, Branded Gear: - No Thanks
- Priority Build: - No Thanks, Ship Within 15-20 Business Days After Order Is Successfully Processed
- Warranty: Life-time Expert Care with 3 Year Limited Warranty (3 Year Labor & 1 Year Part Replacement)

Cost

- Sub-Total: \$5,267.00, Tax (7.75%): \$408.19, S&H: FREE Ground \$0.00
- **Grand Total: \$5,675.19**

Timeline

				14	0	20	0	1	0	0
				5-10BD	2-5BD	1-3BD	4-8BD	5-10BD	3-5BD	1-3BD
Date	BD?	BD#	Comment	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7
Thursday, December 6, 2018	1	0	Order placed, Stage1							
Friday, December 7, 2018	1	1		1						
Saturday, December 8, 2018	0	1		0						
Sunday, December 9, 2018	0	1		0						
Monday, December 10, 2018	1	2		1						
Tuesday, December 11, 2018	1	3		1						
Wednesday, December 12, 2018	1	4		1						
Thursday, December 13, 2018	1	5		1						
Friday, December 14, 2018	1	6		1						
Saturday, December 15, 2018	0	6		0						
Sunday, December 16, 2018	0	6		0						
Monday, December 17, 2018	1	7		1						
Tuesday, December 18, 2018	1	8		1						
Wednesday, December 19, 2018	1	9	Delay message	1						
Thursday, December 20, 2018	1	10		1						
Friday, December 21, 2018	1	11		1						
Saturday, December 22, 2018	0	11		0						
Sunday, December 23, 2018	0	11		0						
Monday, December 24, 2018	1	12		1						
Tuesday, December 25, 2018	1	13		1						
Wednesday, December 26, 2018	1	14	Moved to Stage 2 and 3	1	0					
Thursday, December 27, 2018	1	15	15BD passed (original ship estimate)			1				
Friday, December 28, 2018	1	16				1				
Saturday, December 29, 2018	0	16				0				
Sunday, December 30, 2018	0	16				0				
Monday, December 31, 2018	1	17				1				
Tuesday, January 1, 2019	0	17				0				
Wednesday, January 2, 2019	1	18				1				
Thursday, January 3, 2019	1	19				1				
Friday, January 4, 2019	1	20				1				
Saturday, January 5, 2019	0	20				0				
Sunday, January 6, 2019	0	20				0				
Monday, January 7, 2019	1	21				1				
Tuesday, January 8, 2019	1	22				1				
Wednesday, January 9, 2019	1	23				1				
Thursday, January 10, 2019	1	24				1				
Friday, January 11, 2019	1	25				1				
Saturday, January 12, 2019	0	25				0				
Sunday, January 13, 2019	0	25				0				
Monday, January 14, 2019	1	26	Tried to get an update via web request			1				
Tuesday, January 15, 2019	1	27	Tried to get an update via phone			1				
Wednesday, January 16, 2019	1	28	Tried to get an update via phone			1				
Thursday, January 17, 2019	1	29	Email to sales to get some answers, Call back			1				
Friday, January 18, 2019	1	30	Stage 3 estimate (9-14BD) passed.			1				
Saturday, January 19, 2019	0	30				0				
Sunday, January 20, 2019	0	30				0				
Monday, January 21, 2019	1	31				1				
Tuesday, January 22, 2019	1	32				1				
Wednesday, January 23, 2019	1	33				1				
Thursday, January 24, 2019	1	34	Moved to Stage 4, 5			1	0			
Friday, January 25, 2019	1	35	Moved to Stage 6, 7, system shipped					1	0	0
Saturday, January 26, 2019	0									
Sunday, January 27, 2019	0									
Monday, January 28, 2019	1									
Tuesday, January 29, 2019	1		9:58am Delivery							

Stages

Here is Digital Storm's summary of everything that happens from start to finish:

Stage 1: Pending Production (5-10 Business Days)

Your order has been placed into our backlog, our inventory department will begin to allocate the components necessary for your order and add it to our backlog. This stage usually takes the longest depending on how busy we are.

Stage 2: Inventory Assigned (2-5 Business Days)

A special component bin has been assigned for your order. We then locate components from our inventory and place them inside your component bin. If any components are out of stock, we are then waiting for them to be delivered to our storage center.

Stage 3: Initial Setup (1-3 Business Days)

The hardware components in your order are now placed into one of our specialized test benches for evaluation. The installation of the operating system, drivers and any applications that are specific to the system you ordered are completed here.

Stage 4: Final Assembly (4-8 Business Days)

One of our system builders will carefully put together your order as if it was their own, they have a passion to build every system as if it was their own and take great pride in the work they do.

Stage 5: Stress Testing (5-10 Business Days)

Our team is running a final batch of tests to verify the integrity and stability of your system. This allows us to ensure that every system we ship will be a rock solid machine for years to come. We will also install benchmark utilities and testing software to correctly monitor your system's performance throughout our stress testing process.

Stage 6: Quality Assurance (3-5 Business Days)

Your system is undergoing a very detailed quality control analysis. We're inspecting your machine for missing screws, loose cards, checking for special requests, verifying the configuration, and double checking our stress-test results. Our inspectors are trained with an eye for detail and ensure that every system leaves our facility with the art of perfection.

Stage 7: Packaging (1-3 Business Days)

Our team is carefully preparing your order to be shipped. Things include wiping down the system, preparing packaging materials to ensure safe transit, and mounting the computer and all of your accessories into a box to be assigned a shipping label and shipped. Once it ships within the next 1-3 business days, you will get an email with a tracking number at the end of the day.

Component Cost Estimate

Chassis Model: Digital Storm BOLT X	\$ 250.00	?
Processor: Intel Core i9-9900K (5.0 GHz Turbo) (16-Thread) (8-Core) 3.6 GHz	\$ 529.89	A
Motherboard: ASUS ROG Strix Z390-I Gaming (Wi-Fi) (Intel Z390 Chipset) (Mini-ITX)	\$ 193.52	A
System Memory: 32GB DDR4 3000MHz Corsair Vengeance RGB Pro (RGB Light Bar)	\$ 281.99	A
Power Supply: 800W SilverStone SX800-LTI (Titanium Rated) (Supports up to GTX TITAN Xp)	\$ 170.84	A
Storage Set 1: 1x SSD M.2 (1TB Samsung 970 EVO) (NVMe Express)	\$ 239.99	A
Storage Set 2: 1x Storage (3TB Seagate / Toshiba)	\$ 93.99	A
Storage Set 3: 1x Storage (3TB Seagate / Toshiba)	\$ 93.99	A
Graphics Card(s): 1x GeForce RTX 2080 Ti 11GB (VR Ready)	\$1,199.00	Nvidia
Extreme Cooling: Digital Storm HydroLux PRO LITE (CPU + Graphics Card)		
	GPU Water Block	\$ 175.99 A
	Radiator+CPU Block (Swiftech H240)	\$ 139.95 SW
HydroLux Tubing Style: HardLine Tubing (Requires HydroLux PRO Custom Liquid Cooling System)	\$ 50.00	?
Cable Management: Exotic Cable Management - Black - (Cable Combs with Custom Color Sleeved Extension Cables)	\$ 50.00	?
Chassis Fans: High Static Pressure - Corsair Air Series SP Fans (LED White)	\$ 23.50	A
Internal Lighting: Software Controlled Internal + Front Panel LED Lighting (Requires Airflow Control Upgrade)	\$ 13.99	A
Airflow Control: Digital Storm Thermal Management Control Board & Software	no need	
Operating System: Microsoft Windows 10 Professional (64-Bit Edition)	\$ 149.99	BB
		\$3,656.63
	Digital Storm	\$5,267.00
	Delta	\$1,610.37

A: Amazon

SW: Swiftech

BB: Bestbuy

?: Estimate