new products

As ever, there are some great new gadgets on the market this month, so you might want to consider adding to your home or office setup. To help you sort the duff from the desirable, we share our views on some of the more interesting product releases

ADS Technology USB Instant DVD
Video-to-DVD format converter

ADS Technology's nifty device lets home video enthusiasts capture and convert analogue video into full-resolution DVD format. The USB Instant DVD is an external device that plugs into a PC via a USB cable, allowing users to record, archive and duplicate home movies into DVD, Mpeg-2, Mpeg-1, VCD (video CD) and SVCD (super video CD) formats.

Video images can be imported from any analogue source including VHS tapes, camcorders, laser discs and television using the software interface. The captured images can then be edited on a PC and burned to a CD-R or DVD-recordable disc. Video and DVD editing requires serious data transfer, so it's a shame this device is only USB 1.1-compliant rather than supporting the faster 2.0 standard.
ADS Technology: www.adstech.com
Price: £194 ex VAT

Brother MFC-9760
Multifunction device

Brother has updated its multifunction device range with the release of the MFC-9760. A replacement for the 9750, this model combines a laser printer, laser copier and colour scanner in one unit. It's designed for home office or small workgroup use and offers a claimed 14ppm (page per minute) print and copy speed. The Brother's supplied 8MB of memory can be upgraded to 40MB for high-volume printing and it provides 600x600dpi (dots per inch) resolution for printing documents. The MFC-9760 supports a USB connection, but Brother has sensibly left users the choice of parallel connectivity. The 9760's copy function has what looks like an impressive zoom facility ranging from 24 to 400 percent and its enlargement feature allows A4-size prints to be blown up into poster-size documents.
Brother: www.brother.co.uk
Price: £594 ex VAT

Archos Cesar
External CD-RW drive

Weighing in at 400g and with a diameter of only 135mm, the Cesar external CD-RW is built for portability. The 24-/eight-/eight-speeds (read/write/rewrite) are respectable and it's one of the smallest drives on the market, so it's ideal for use with a notebook. The Archos can be hooked up to any portable, desktop PC or Mac via the USB cable and it supports the faster 2.0 standard. As an optional extra this CD-RW is supplied with a choice of swappable interfaces, such as FireWire and PC Card. The Cesar is also self-powered – Archos has patented a technology called Micro Power Management system, which eliminates the need for an external power supply.
It's bundled with Nero burning software and incorporates Justlink technology. This prevents buffer underruns, to ensure smooth data transfer.
Archos:
www.archos.com
Price: £170 ex VAT
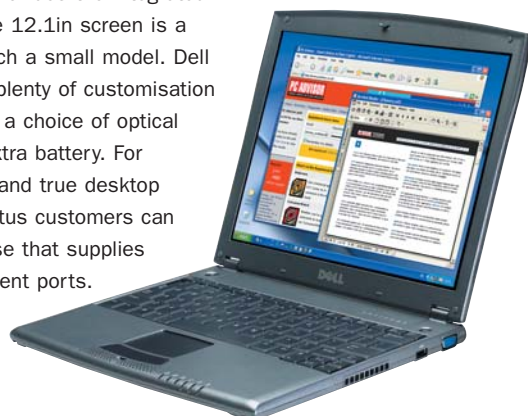

Dell Latitude X200
Notebook

TO BE REVIEWED

Dell's ultra-portable Latitude X200 notebook is the thinnest and lightest in the series, featuring a sleek design similar to the C400. It's powered by a Mobile Pentium III chip running at 800MHz, 128MB of SDRAM and a 30GB hard drive. The X200 measures under 2cm thick and weighs 1.27kg so it's geared up to be truly portable. The lightweight yet durable magnesium alloy case helps keep the weight down and should offer good protection when travelling. Intel's 830MG provides the integrated graphics and the 12.1in screen is a good size on such a small model. Dell is also offering plenty of customisation options such as a choice of optical drives and an extra battery. For full connectivity and true desktop replacement status customers can buy a media base that supplies a range of different ports.
Dell: www.dell.co.uk
Price: £ 1,445 ex VAT

HP Jornada 728
Handheld PC

We've been impressed by most of the Jornada handhelds that have been put through their paces in our Test Centre, so we're looking forward to getting the 728 in for a full review. This HP device uses a 32bit StrongARM processor running at 206MHz and features 64MB of memory. It supports serial or USB connectivity, includes slots for CompactFlash Type I and PC Cards and is also wireless-ready, so it'll work with a range of WAN, LAN and Bluetooth solutions.

The Jornada, with its sleek two-tone metallic charcoal and granite case, weighs in at just 515g, making it convenient for travel and light enough to slip into your pocket unnoticed. The clamshell design opens out to reveal a 640x320 colour screen and a three-quarter-size touch-type keyboard. HP has included a better battery than its predecessor, which it claims will provide up to 14 hours of life. The Windows CE operating system comes with Pocket Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and a media player for sound or video files.
HP: www.hp.co.uk
Price: £594 ex VAT

IBM ThinkPad TX4MPUK
Notebook

TO BE REVIEWED

The ThinkPad TX4MPUK is an ultra-slimline notebook that will be fully reviewed next month. The specification of the TX4MPUK is far from cutting edge – there's no sign of DDR (double data rate) memory or a Pentium 4 processor. Instead, IBM has plumped for 256MB of SDRAM, a Mobile Pentium III CPU running at 1.13GHz and a 30GB hard drive. On the plus side, IBM's choice of hardware components should mean the ThinkPad will consume less power, with IBM claiming a battery life of just over four hours. Initially it appears a little expensive for such average specifications, but subnotebooks are all about portability rather than power. The ThinkPad manages to carry a standard size keyboard while retaining svelte dimensions and weighing a mere 1.7kg. It comes with a 12in XGA screen and the case has a titanium composite cover for extra protection when travelling. An 8MB ATI Mobility Radeon card takes care of the graphics, while the SoundBlaster Pro 16 is a decent integrated audio solution.
IBM: www.ibm.com/pc/europe/thinkpad
Price: £1,709 ex VAT

Xerox 8200DP
Network printer

The 8200DP is a solid-ink colour printer that backs up Xerox's claim that there are now no excuses for businesses not to migrate to colour printing. Xerox believes that the competitive cost per page for colour and mono printing on this single-pass model will attract attention from workgroups looking to upgrade their office printers. The 8200DP contains a 300MHz processor that, Xerox claims, allows print speeds of 16ppm (pages per minute) in fast colour mode. Colour printing in standard mode at a higher quality can still churn out a claimed 10ppm. Xerox has opted to include the unique Phaser 8200 Colourstix solid-ink cartridge, which is shaped to ensure there are no mistakes when a user loads a replacement. It comes with a Centreware embedded web server to aid print management and Printing Scout – a software feature that instantly pops up a help window when the printer needs attention. On release the Xerox 8200DP will be covered by a one-year onsite warranty.
Xerox: www.xerox.com/officeprinting
Price: £1,676 ex VAT

Theme Scene H55
Home cinema projector

Making home viewing a truly cinematic experience, the Optoma group has launched the Theme Scene H55. This light and compact home cinema projector promises a near-silent 32dB running noise, so it shouldn't interfere with your aural pleasure when you're listening to movies. Inside the machine is Texas Instruments' single chip DLP (digital light processing) – something used only in high-end products to get the best in digital visual displays, so picture quality ought to be excellent. An impressive contrast ratio of 1,000:1 colours are a good bet for vivid colours and deep blacks, while the 1,000 Ansi lumens should offer optimum brightness. As if this weren't enough, the H55 has an adjustable colour matrix that regulates the colour channels independently of one another. This means that reds, blues and greens can be finely tuned to get the best setup. The Theme Scene has provisions for an analogue or digital signal and is compatible with surround sound or DVD components.
Optoma: www.themescene.tv
Price: £3,350 ex VAT