

TOP 10 POWER & BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

		Power notebooks		Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Battery type
				Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity	Weight	
1	 Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,509 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Apr 02 	1.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	313x263x36mm	lithium-ion	
			no	40GB	2.95kg		
				WorldBench 4			118
2	 Dell Inspiron 8200 0870 152 4699 www.dell.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,349 ex VAT* • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Dec 02 	2.2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	331x276x45mm	lithium-ion	
			Speedstep	60GB	3.6kg		
				WorldBench 4			100
3	 AJP 8880 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,525 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 02 	2.5GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x300x55mm	lithium-ion	
			no	60GB	5.5kg		
				WorldBench 4			112
4	 Hi-Grade Notino R5400-2000 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,509 ex VAT • 2-year warranty including accidental damage cover • First review Sep 02 	2GHz Intel Mobile Pentium 4	384MB	313x257x30mm	lithium-ion	
			Speedstep	40GB	2.43kg		
				WorldBench 4			91
5	 AJP 5600P 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,565 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 02 	2.6GHz Intel Pentium 4	1GB DDR	330x290x45mm	lithium-ion	
			no	60GB	4.5kg		
				WorldBench 4			99

*A last-minute price drop meant we didn't have time to refresh the chart. See where this price cut puts the Dell Inspiron 8200 next month.

		Budget notebooks		Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Battery type
				Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity	Weight	
1	 AJP 8640 020 8208 9700 www.ajp.co.uk NEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,149 ex VAT • 1-year parts-and-labour, 1-year labour-only warranty • First review Feb 03 	2.4GHz Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x39mm	lithium-ion	
			no	40GB	3.4kg		
				WorldBench 4			118
2	 Evesham Voyager 5700 08707 287 070 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,049 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base & accidental damage insurance warranty • First review Dec 02 	1.67GHz 2000+ Mobile Athlon XP	512MB	325x275x44mm	lithium-ion	
			PowerNow	40GB	3.8kg		
				WorldBench 4			95
3	 Rock Xeno P4M 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com LAST MONTH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,268 ex VAT • 3-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Jan 03 	2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	305x270x25mm	lithium-ion	
			Speedstep	30GB	2.4kg		
				WorldBench 4			104
4	 Multivision Visage 0870 220 2822 www.multivision.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £979 ex VAT • 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 02 	1.8GHz Mobile Pentium 4	256MB	312x275x33mm	lithium-ion	
			Speedstep	30GB	2.7kg		
				WorldBench 4			108
5	 ACI Impression 020 8830 1958 www.aciplc.com LAST MONTH 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,249 ex VAT • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Oct 02 	1.6GHz Mobile Pentium 4	256MB	312x266x33mm	lithium-ion	
			Speedstep	32GB	2.8kg		
				WorldBench 4			102

Buying advice: notebooks

If you're after a portable system to take on the road or an alternative to your bulky desktop PC then a notebook is the device for you. If you want a notebook to use on the go then a mobile processor is a must.

Specifically designed mobile models use less power when running off the battery by dropping to a slower clock speed. At the Power end look for at least

a 1.8GHz chip. For budget machines, Intel's Pentium III chips are still good although Pentium 4 is rapidly taking over and AMD's Mobile Athlon 4 is also strong. Make sure your chip is at least 1.2GHz.

Memory is important as it ensures smooth performance. Power models should have at least 256MB of RAM, however 512MB is preferable. Budget buyers can settle for 256MB or 192MB.

Since notebook users tend not to load their hard drives with huge applications and suites, 30GB of hard drive space should be fine for a Power models. If you're after peace of mind, opt for 40GB or more. For a Budget notebook 30GB will suffice too. Some manufacturers do offer Budget notebooks with 40GB, but they are rare. If you require plenty of backup, look for a combination DVD/CD-RW drive.

Screen size	Graphics card	DVD read rate	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
Max resolution	Memory				
14.1in 1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6 16MB	8x	24x/8x/4x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Office XP SBE	The Ultinote M6400-1800-I uses its 1.8GHz Pentium 4 processor and 512MB of RAM to achieve a WorldBench 4 score of 118, the fastest in our Power notebook chart. At just £9 over our starting cost of £1,500, it is a very worthy winner.
15 in 1,600x1,200	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/24x/10x	Microsoft Works	The 8200 uses Intel's newest Mobile Pentium 4 processor running at 2.2GHz and 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, notching up a WorldBench 4 score of 100. The Dell also offers a crystal-clear 1,600x1,200 15in screen and ATI's Mobility Radeon 9000 graphics chip.
15.7in 1,280x1,024	ATI Mobility Radeon 7500 64MB	8x	24x/14x/8x	Windows XP Professional, TV tuner, MP3 player	The 8880 is about as fully featured as you can get, sporting a 2.5GHz Pentium 4 desktop chip, 512MB of DDR (double data rate) memory along with built-in floppy, CD-RW and DVD-ROM drives, a TV tuner and removable MP3 player. However it's on the large side and weighs 5.5kg.
14.1in 1,024x768	S3 ProSavage DDR 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home, Works Suite 2002, McAfee AntiVirus, Microsoft Office SBE	The Notino bundles a 2GHz Mobile Pentium 4 but doesn't offer the highest performance score with only 91 in WorldBench 4. The keyboard is spill-proof and the machine passes the military 810E standard, covering shock and vibration resistance, so it's a good traveller.
15.1in 1,400x1,050	ATI Mobility Radeon 7500 64MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	The 5600P's chip runs at 2.6GHz with a whopping 1GB of DDR (double data rate) memory. However, its WorldBench 4 score of 99 was slower than that of its lower-specified sibling the 8880. The 15.1in TFT (thin film transistor) is sharp, bright and supports a resolution of 1,400x1,050.

Screen size	Graphics card	DVD read rate	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
Maximum resolution	Memory				
14.1in 1,024x768	nVidia GeForce4 MX 420 Go 32MB DDR RAM	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	It may not be particularly pretty, but the AJP 8640 supplies the best performance money can buy courtesy of its desktop Intel processor. With 512MB of DDR (double data rate) and a 40GB hard disk in tow, it leaves the rest of the chart behind. What's more, the graphics are great.
14.1in 1,024x768	S3 Pro Savage 32MB DDR RAM	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	The Evesham Voyager owes its success to the latest Athlon XP 2000+ Mobile processor. This is backed by a generous 512MB of RAM and a quiet 40GB hard drive. Integrated graphics serve the 14.1in screen well, and the 5700 offers both FireWire and USB for expansion.
14.1in 1,024x768	Sis 650 integrated 32MB DDR RAM	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Pro, McAfee Antivirus	The Rock packs plenty of features into a small space. Overall performance isn't as startling as you might expect from the 2GHz Mobile Pentium 4 chip and 512MB of DDR RAM combination. However, the Rock is feature-rich and the Wi-Fi is one of many inclusions that make it a sound buy.
14.1in 1,024x768	nVidia GeForce4 MX 420 Go 32MB DDR RAM	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Knocked to number four this month, the value-for-money Visage is still well worth a look. Thanks to a 1.8GHz Mobile P4 and 256MB of DDR RAM it's a fast performer. Graphics are top-notch courtesy of the 32MB DDR GeForce4 MX 420 Go chip.
14.1in 1,024x768	nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB DDR RAM	8x	n/a	XP Home, Lotus SmartSuite Millennium edition	ACI slips to fifth place due to stiff competition in the chart, rather than its own failings. The Impression is a fast performer with excellent graphics. It also offers handy extras like a hot-swappable floppy drive, built-in SmartMedia slot and FireWire port.

If you want to maximise portability, you might want to keep the screen size to 12in or 13in. A 14in or 15in screen will increase the notebook's size and weight enormously but, as these offer almost as much workspace as a 16in or 17in conventional monitor, such a move will pay dividends in terms of productivity. Remember that you can usually plug in an external monitor for use in the office so, depending on where

you plan to use your notebook, a large screen may not be essential.

All the machines in our Budget notebooks chart have screens with 1,024x768 resolution and 32bit colour. Resolutions beyond this are possible on some models, but they may make you scroll around because they can't fit all the information on the screen.

Notebook graphics tend to be a step behind the desktop market, but if you're

after good 3D performance then look for nVidia's GeForce 4 Go or ATI's Mobility Radeon chips.

At the Budget end, onboard graphics with user-definable memory are the most popular choice. They use system memory, which can often be pushed up to 64MB, but can be minimised if you want to favour other functions. You might be able to track down a standalone card though, as they're becoming more common at this price.