

Top 10 Power & Budget notebooks

	Power notebooks	Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh) Weight	Battery type	
		Dual-speed		Hard disk capacity			
BEST BUY 1	 ACI Centurion 020 8830 1958 www.aciplc.com Last month 1	• £1,750 inc VAT • 1-year collect & return warranty • First review Oct 03	1.5GHz Intel Pentium M	116	768MB	330x273x29mm	lithium-ion
		Speedstep	60GB	2.6kg			
WorldBench 4		118					
RECOMMENDED 2	 Dell Inspiron 8600 0870 152 4615 www.dell.co.uk New	• £1,880 inc VAT • 3-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 03	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	130	512MB	359x274x38mm	lithium-ion
		Speedstep	80GB	3.3kg			
WorldBench 4		130					
3	 AJP D480W 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk Last month 2	• £1,616 inc VAT • 1-year parts & labour, 2-year labour-only warranty • First review Oct 03	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	115	1GB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion
		no	80GB	3.8kg			
WorldBench 4		124					
4	 Rock Quaddra DTS 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com Last month 3	• £1,526 inc VAT • 3-year collect & return warranty • First review Oct 03	3.06GHz Intel Mobile Pentium 4	107	512MB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion
		Speedstep	80GB	3.6kg			
WorldBench 4		127					
5	 Hi-Grade Notino C6700-1700 020 8532 6120 www.higrade.com Last month 4	• £1,761 inc VAT • 2-year collect & return warranty • First review Oct 03	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	129	512MB	352x260x30mm	lithium-ion
		Speedstep	80GB	2.7kg			
WorldBench 4		129					

	Budget notebooks	Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh) Weight	Battery type	
		Dual-speed		Hard disk capacity			
BEST BUY 1	 Toshiba Satellite Pro A10 0870 444 8944 www.toshiba.co.uk New	• £586 inc VAT • 1-year return-to-base • First review Nov 03	2GHz Intel Celeron	91	256MB	332x293x40mm	lithium-ion
		no	30GB	2.8kg			
WorldBench 4		95					
RECOMMENDED 2	 Multivision Solus 1010 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk Last month 1	• £939 inc VAT • 2-year collect & return warranty • First review Sep 03	1.86GHz AMD Mobile Athlon XP 2500+	116	512MB	328x283x27mm	lithium-ion
		PowerNow	60GB	3.1kg			
WorldBench 4		118					
3	 Advent 7027 0870 546 4464 www.pcworld.co.uk Last month 2	• £1,300 inc VAT • 1-year collect & return warranty • First review Oct 03	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	116	512MB	325x285x39mm	lithium-ion
		no	40GB	3.3kg			
WorldBench 4		118					
4	 Mesh PowerView 15.1 Plus 0870 046 4747 www.meshcomputers.com Last month 3	• £1,174 inc VAT • 3-year collect & return warranty • First review Oct 03	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	104	512MB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion
		no	40GB	3.2kg			
WorldBench 4		112					
5	 Pico Innovator 0870 729 6111 www.picosystems.co.uk Last month 4	• £1,174 inc VAT • 1-year return-to-base, 2-year labour only warranty • First review Oct 03	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	111	512MB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion
		no	60GB	3.2kg			
WorldBench 4		122					



The Best Buy ACI Centurion makes an ideal travelling companion

Buying advice

Notebooks

If you're planning on using your notebook largely at home plugged into the mains you'll want a desktop replacement system. These often use processors designed to be used in desktop PCs and feature larger-than-average screens, although they tend to have poor battery life.

If, on the other hand, you're after something to use on the move, go for

an ultra-portable device. They are smaller, lighter and generally offer better battery life. Bear in mind, though, that fewer screen inches mean it can be quite difficult to use such systems for long periods of time.

- **Processor** Desktop replacement models tend to use Intel Pentium 4 chips - you can get anything up to a 3GHz processor at the moment, even in the Budget category. There are also two mobile chips available from

Screen size	Graphics card	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate DVD read rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
Maximum resolution	Memory			
15.1in 1,400x1,024	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	24x/24x/10x 8x	Windows XP Professional	With its long battery life – a shade under four hours – and weight of 2.6kg, the Best Buy ACI Centurion is the perfect travelling companion for the busy executive. Its slim profile and silver casing are easy on the eye, but the ACI isn't just a pretty face – it's capable, versatile and offers excellent performance.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			235	
15.4in 1,920x1,200	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5650 128MB	24x/16x/10x 8x/1x/1x	Windows XP Home (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	The Inspiron 8600 isn't cheap but it's very powerful and the battery life is the best we've seen on a notebook. The wide screen may not be to everyone's liking but it gives a good image that's complemented by the graphics card. You might not be impressed by the bulk if you want to use it on a train.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			147	
17in 1,440x900	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	32x/16x/8x 8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/+R/+RW)	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0	Sporting a 17in widescreen display, the AJP is a desktop replacement system. With specifications that wouldn't be out of place in a desktop PC, its performance score shows it's up to the task. AJP has an ace up its sleeve in the shape of a DVD writer – ideal if you need to back up large amounts of data.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			111	
17in 1,440x900	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	24x/24x/10x 8x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002, Panda AntiVirus Titanium	The Quaddra's 17in widescreen and multimedia facilities are the real selling point of this model. With five speakers outputting strong audio, it also doubles up as an entertainment centre. The internal floppy drive is a cheap way to store small files and the CD-RW takes care of higher capacity backup needs.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			107	
15.2in 1,280x854	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5200 64MB	32x/16x/8x 8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0, Panda AntiVirus Titanium	The second most expensive model, the Hi-Grade Notino's performance score is also second speediest. Battery life is good – we got just over three hours. For backup, the CD-RW drive doubles as a DVD writer, managing dual-speed burning rates to DVD-R media and single-speed to DVD-RW discs.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			181	

Screen size	Graphics card	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate DVD read rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
Maximum resolution	Memory			
14.1in 1,024x768	Intel 825GM 64MB	n/a 8x	Windows XP Home	Coming in at £586 inc VAT, the Toshiba Satellite Pro seems too cheap to be true. It isn't the fastest or most feature-packed notebook, but in terms of essentials per pound it's hard to beat. If you want a basic model that performs well and are prepared to sacrifice the bells and whistles, the A10 is the only choice.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			161	
15in 1,400x1,050	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	24x/24x/10x 8x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002	When it comes to giving you the most for your money there are few manufacturers that can compete with Multivision. If your focus is on power you'll be hard pushed to find a better deal. The Solus 1010 impresses with its low price tag, all-round specification, stylish black casing and decent performance.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			168	
15.1in 1,024x768	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	32x/16x/10x 8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	Windows XP Home	Though the Advent nearly hits the price ceiling of our Budget category, it is good value and throws in a couple of extras. The DVD writer makes backing up large amounts of data quick and easy. It houses a powerhouse of a processor and, although this chip is designed for desktop PCs, offers excellent battery life.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			180	
15.1in 1,400x1,050	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	24x/24x/10x 8x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2003	The chunky PowerView isn't going to win any awards for its looks. Storage is disappointing but the 15.1in screen is good quality and visuals are handled smoothly. Other nice touches include Bluetooth and Wi-Fi facilities, a built-in camera and an internal floppy drive – seldom found in notebooks these days.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			111	
15.1in 1,400x1,050	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	24x/24x/10x 8x	Windows XP Home	The Innovator is based on the same chassis as the Mesh with a different combination of components. In theory, its 2.8GHz Pentium 4 chip isn't as powerful as the Mesh's 3.06GHz P4 but in practice it helps the Pico to a speedy WorldBench 4 score of 122 – the highest result in the Budget notebook chart.
MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)			123	

Intel - the Mobile Pentium 4 and the Pentium M. The former can run at anything up to 3GHz but the latter runs at a much lower frequency. Centrino notebooks use the Pentium M and include wireless networking. In terms of AMD processors, the Mobile Athlon XP is a good chip but struggles to challenge the dominance of Intel's range at the moment.

- **Memory** The standard offering in both categories is 512MB, although

some Power notebooks offer more. The more memory you have, the smoother your laptop will run.

- **Hard drive** It's very difficult to upgrade a notebook's hard drive so you need to make sure the one you buy is big enough for your needs. If you are buying a desktop replacement, go for at least 80GB. If you will be using it on the road you won't need as much.
- **Visuals** What you intend to use the screen for dictates the screen

size you'll need. If you're after a desktop replacement go for at least 15in. For DVD movie playback, 17in widescreen models are perfect. For ultra-portables, look to get something no bigger than 14in.

If you want to play games or watch DVDs, choose the 64MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 or one of the 64MB or 128MB GeForce FX Go cards. If you won't be doing such high-intensive visual work, an integrated onboard chip is adequate.