

Top 10 Power & Budget notebooks

PC Advisor	Rank	Model	Price	Warranty	Power notebooks		Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxhxd)	Battery type	Screen size	Graphics card	CD-ROM/-R/-RW drive speed	Operating system, software and extras include	Comments
					Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity										
BEST BUY	1	ACI Centurion 020 8830 1958 www.aciplc.com Last month 1	£1,609 inc VAT	1-year collect & return lifetime labour warranty	1.5GHz Intel Pentium M	116	768MB	330x273x29mm	lithium-ion	15.1in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	24x/24x/10x	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 is capable, versatile and offers excellent battery life.		
	Speedstep	60GB	2.6kg	1,400x1,024	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	235								
RECOMMENDED	2	Dell Inspiron 8600 0870 152 4615 www.dell.co.uk Last month 2	£1,880 inc VAT	3-year return-to-base warranty	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	130	512MB	359x274x38mm	lithium-ion	15.4in	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5650	24x/16x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0	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.		
	Speedstep	80GB	3.3kg	1,920x1,200	128MB	8x/1x/1x (DVD-ROM/+R/+RW)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	254								
	3	AJP D480W www.ajp.co.uk Last month 3	£1,616 inc VAT	1-year parts & labour, 2-year labour-only warranty	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	115	1GB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion	17in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	32x/16x/8x	Windows XP Home	Sporting a 17in widescreen display, the AJP is a desktop replacement system. With hardware specs that wouldn't look out of place in a desktop PC, its performance score shows it is 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.		
	no	80GB	3.8kg	1,440x900	64MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	111								
	4	Rock Quaddra DTS 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com Last month 4	£1,526 inc VAT	3-year collect & return warranty	3.06GHz Intel Mobile Pentium 4	107	512MB	329x275x37mm	lithium-ion	17in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002, Panda AntiVirus Titanium	The Quaddra's 17in widescreen and multimedia facilities are the 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.		
	Speedstep	80GB	4.2kg	1,440x900	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	107								
	5	Hi-Grade Notino C6700-1700 020 8532 6120 www.higrade.com Last month 5	£1,644 inc VAT	2-year collect & return warranty	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	129	512MB	352x260x30mm	lithium-ion	15.2in	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5200	32x/16x/8x	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.		
	Speedstep	80GB	2.7kg	1,280x854	64MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	181								

PC Advisor	Rank	Model	Price	Warranty	Budget notebooks		Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxhxd)	Battery type	Screen size	Graphics card	CD-ROM/-R/-RW drive speed	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
					Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity										
BEST BUY	1	Acer TravelMate 290 0870 900 2237 www.acer.co.uk Last month 1	£975 inc VAT	2-year return-to-base warranty	1.3GHz Intel Pentium M	121	512MB	333x276x32mm	lithium-ion	15in	onboard	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Pro	The TravelMate is portable yet sturdy and usable enough to be a desktop-replacement system. It performs well when plugged in to the mains and thanks to its Pentium M processor it lasts a long time when running from the battery. Overall then, the Acer is a fast performer that won't cost the earth.		
	Speedstep	30GB	2.8kg	1,024x768	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	277								
RECOMMENDED	2	Multivision Solus 1010 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk Last month 2	£939 inc VAT	2-year collect & return warranty	1.86GHz AMD Mobile Athlon XP 2500+	116	512MB	326x283x27mm	lithium-ion	15in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	24x/24x/10x	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.		
	PowerNow	60GB	3.1kg	1,400x1,050	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	168								
	3	Rock Pegasus DTS 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com Last month 3	£1,175 inc VAT	3-year collect & return warranty	1.4GHz Intel Pentium M	90	256MB	355x255x45mm	lithium-ion	15.4in	onboard	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002, Panda AntiVirus Titanium	The Rock Pegasus DTS is the ultimate entertainment notebook - ideal for watching DVDs on the move. Not only does it have a 15.4in widescreen, there's also a 4.1 speaker sound system and subwoofer. And because it houses a Centrino processor, it can hook up to wireless networks with the minimum of fuss.		
	Speedstep	30GB	3kg	1,280x1,024	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	192								
	4	Advent 7027 0870 546 4464 www.pcworld.co.uk Last month 5	£1,099 inc VAT	1-year collect & return warranty	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	116	512MB	325x285x39mm	lithium-ion	15.1in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	32x/16x/10x	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 powerful processor and although this chip is designed for desktop PCs it offers excellent battery life.		
	no	40GB	3.3kg	1,400x1,050	64MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	180								
	5	Toshiba Satellite P10-504 0870 444 8944 www.toshiba.co.uk Last month 4	£1,299 inc VAT	1-year return-to-base warranty	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	109	512MB	363x275x39mm	lithium-ion	15.4in	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5100	24x/24x/12x	Windows XP Home, Toshiba utilities & drivers, WinDVD, Microsoft Works 7.0	Meet the Toshiba Satellite P20's smaller, cheaper but just as sexy sibling. The P10-504 is certainly a stunner and packs in a 15.4in widescreen. But it's a little under-specced for the money and the one-year warranty is a let-down. That said, the Satellite P10-504 will cope with any task you throw at it.		
	no	40GB	3.62kg	1,280x800	32MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	179								



Invest in the ACI Centurion and make your business travelling companions green with envy

Buying advice

Notebooks

If you're planning on using your notebook largely at home plugged in to 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 means 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

Intel - the Mobile Pentium 4 and the Pentium M. The former can run at anything up to 3.2GHz 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 have 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 PC 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 cards. If you won't be doing such intensive visual work, an integrated onboard chip is adequate.