











Top 10 Power notebooks & Budget notebooks

PCADVISOR BEST BUY		Evesham Voyager 64 3200+ 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com Last month 1	• £1,349 inc VAT • 1-year onsite, 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Mar 04	Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Battery type		Screen size	Graphics card	CD-ROM/-R/-RW drive speed	Operating system, software and extras include	Comments
				Dual-speed		Hard disk capacity	Weight			Maximum resolution	Memory	DVD drive speed		
				2GHz AMD Athlon 64 Mobile 3200+		512MB	337x280x43mm			15.1in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	24x/16x/8x		
				PowerNow		60GB	3.9kg			1,400x1,050	64MB	8x/2x/1x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW/-RAM)	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works	With its great specs and price tag, the Voyager 64 scoops this month's Best Buy award hands down. We were impressed by the raw speed of the processor and the Evesham's WorldBench 4 score of 133 makes it the fastest in the chart. Graphics performance is also very strong and the 15.1in TFT screen gives a superb image. A top machine that's great value for money.
				WorldBench 4		133			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)				192	
PCADVISOR RECOMMENDED		ACI Centurion 020 8830 1958 www.aciplc.com Last month 2	• £1,609 inc VAT • 1-year collect-and-return lifetime-labour warranty • First review Oct 03	1.5GHz Intel Pentium M	116	768MB	330x273x29mm	lithium-ion		15.1in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Professional	Excellent battery life and a weight of 2.6kg signals the ex-Best Buy Centurion as the perfect travelling companion. Its slim profile and silver casing are easy on the eye, but the ACI isn't just a pretty face – it's a capable and versatile notebook too. The 15.1in screen gives a good image and the 64MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 card handles graphics very well.
				Speedstep		60GB	2.6kg			1,400x1,024	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)		
								WorldBench 4		118			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		AJP D500P 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk Last month 4	• £1,557 inc VAT • 1-year return-to-base, 2-year labour-only warranty • First review Mar 04	3GHz Intel Pentium 4	125	1GB	329x290x44mm	lithium-ion		15.1in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	32x/16x/8x	Windows XP Home	The D500P is a great contender for games enthusiasts. A 3GHz Pentium 4 processor and 1GB of DDR RAM provide a stable and fast system for any title. The graphics card and monitor team up to produce very sharp visuals. If you are prepared to overlook the poor battery life, software bundle and one-year warranty then you're getting a brilliant feature set for your money.
				no		60GB	3.7kg			1,600x1,200	128MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)		
								WorldBench 4		127			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		AJP D480V 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk Last month 5	• £1,658 inc VAT • 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Mar 04	3.2GHz Intel Pentium 4	106	1GB	399x275x37mm	lithium-ion		17in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, six-in-one flash memory drive, built-in webcam	Given that the D480V's Pentium 4 processor runs at 3.2GHz, the system's turn of speed is poor. This notebook's most striking feature is its 17in widescreen – ideal for working with spreadsheets and for entertainment. Indeed, the AJP does a great job with games and movies. Despite its price drop of almost £200, though, the lack of a DVD writer and software bundle remains a disappointment.
				no		60GB	3.8kg			1,440x900	128MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM)		
								WorldBench 4		115			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		Dell Inspiron 8600 0870 152 4615 www.dell.co.uk Last month 3	• £1,880 inc VAT • 3-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 03	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	130	512MB	359x274x38mm	lithium-ion		15.4in	nVidia GeForce FX Go 5650	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0 (DVD-ROM/+R/+RW)	Despite dropping down the chart, the Inspiron 8600 has shown impressive longevity. At nearly £1,900 inc VAT this model isn't cheap but it's very powerful. The overall spec is strong, resulting in the second-highest WorldBench 4 score of 130. The 8600 has the best battery life in the chart, lasting over a mammoth four hours. The software bundle and warranty are good additions too.
				Speedstep		80GB	3.3kg			1,920x1,200	128MB	8x/1x/1x		
								WorldBench 4		130			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	

PCADVISOR BEST BUY		Advent 7039 0870 546 4464 www.pcworld.co.uk Last month 1	• £1,199 inc VAT • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 04	Processor	WorldBench 4 score on battery	RAM	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Battery type		Screen size	Graphics card	CD-ROM/-R/-RW drive speed	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
				Dual-speed		Hard disk capacity	Weight			Maximum resolution	Memory	DVD drive speed		
				1.8GHz AMD Athlon 64 Mobile 3000+		512MB	326x290x39mm			15in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	24x/24x/10x		
				PowerNow		40GB	3.7kg			1,024x768	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0	The 7039 is a high-quality system with great specs and, with its low price tag, we were delighted to see it powered by a 64bit processor. The WorldBench 4 score of 129 is the highest in this chart and when we disconnected the Advent from the mains it completed the tests in almost exactly the same time. The warranty is only one year long but the software package is very generous.
				WorldBench 4		129			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)				153	
PCADVISOR RECOMMENDED		Packard Bell EasyNote E5 138 01628 512 400 www.packardbell.co.uk Last month 2	• £999 inc VAT • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 04	1.3GHz Intel Pentium M	109	256MB	326x277x37mm	lithium-ion		15.1in	onboard Intel Extreme	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Norton Internet Security 2003, 4-in-1 flash memory drive	At a shade under £1,000 the EasyNote is a very good deal. It's been designed primarily as a desktop-replacement model but, with a weight of just 3kg, this system will also prove a relatively light travelling companion. We would prefer to see a larger hard drive – 20GB of space isn't really enough space for modern applications – but the inclusion of a DVD writer is a bonus.
				Speedstep		20GB	3kg			1,024x768	64MB	4x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)		
								WorldBench 4		114			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		NetHighStreet EliteBook PA 999 0870 777 5252 www.nethighstreet.com Last month 3	• £999 inc VAT • 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Spr 04	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	119	512MB	340x280x40mm	lithium-ion		15in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home	Even though the EliteBook is short on extras and there is no software bundle included, this system offers a feature-rich set of specs and good value for money. A 3.06GHz Pentium 4 processor powered this model to a healthy WorldBench 4 score of 123. If you plan on using it on the move, though, be warned: 113 minutes in our battery life tests is disappointing.
				no		60GB	3.5kg			1,400x1,050	64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)		
								WorldBench 4		123			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		Rock Quaddra XT Pro 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com Last month 4	• £1,174 inc VAT • 3-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 04	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	96	512MB	340x280x40mm	lithium-ion		15in	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2003, Panda Titanium AntiVirus 6-in-1 flash memory drive	Visuals on the Rock are very impressive, making this system the best mobile gaming platform in the chart. Specs are good as well, with the Quaddra boasting 512MB of DDR RAM and a spacious 60GB hard drive for storing your data. A six-in-one flash memory drive gives you plenty of backup options. There's no DVD writer included but the ample software bundle is welcome.
				no		60GB	3.5kg			1,400x1,050	128MB	8x (DVD-ROM)		
								WorldBench 4		114			MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	
		ACI Acclaim Pro 020 8830 1958 www.aciplc.com Last month 5	• £1,174 inc VAT • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 04	1.3GHz AMD Athlon XP-M 1500+	80	384MB	275x245x30mm	lithium-ion		12.1in	onboard S3 ProSavage	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home	The Acclaim Pro is the only ultra-portable model in the Budget notebook chart, but strangely it offers no built-in Wi-Fi technology. It also seems expensive considering it doesn't have Centrino technology. The 12.1in screen isn't ideal for prolonged use, the keyboard is too small, the lack of ports limits connectivity and the high price tag is the final nail in the ACI's poorly designed coffin.
				PowerNow		40GB	1.9kg			1,024x768	8MB	8x (DVD-ROM)		
								WorldBench 4	81				MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)	



Buying advice

Notebooks

If you're planning on mainly using your notebook at home plugged in to the mains you'll want a desktop replacement system. These often use processors designed for desktop PCs and feature larger-than-average screens. However 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 3.2GHz 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 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 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 Go cards. If you won't be doing such intensive visual work, an integrated onboard chip is adequate.