

Top 10 charts

Every month the *PC Advisor* Test Centre reviews a selection of the latest products, and those that we rate highly enough win a place in our Top 10 charts. Their position is based on how they score against other products in the same category, and these are constantly updated as new products are reviewed. All products are scored on a ratio of features and performance against price – so high scores indicate good value for money. All prices exclude VAT.

Our price categories for PCs and notebooks are as follows: Power PCs, over £1,200; Budget PCs, £700-1,200; Superbudget PCs, sub-£700. Power notebooks, over £1,500; Budget notebooks, sub-£1,500; and Subnotebooks less than £2,000. Our Digital camera price categories are Professional, over £500; Beginners, under £500.

What is PC WorldBench 2000?

Desktop and notebook PCs are tested using WorldBench 2000. This benchmarking software tests how well a system runs 11 different PC applications and provides the best indication of its real-world performance.

The 11 apps used by the WorldBench 2000 testing software are: Microsoft Word 97, Lotus Word Pro 9.0, Microsoft Excel 97, Lotus 1-2-3 Release 9.0, Microsoft Access 97, Microsoft PowerPoint 97, Netscape Communicator 4.06, Intuit Quicken Deluxe 99, Adobe Photoshop 5.0, Corel Photo-Paint 8.0 and Visio Standard 5.0.

Test results are then collated and compared against a reference system – namely an HP Pavilion 8380 PC with a 400MHz Pentium II processor, 96MB of RAM, an 8GB hard drive and an ATI Rage Pro Turbo graphics card.

To make it easy to compare, the control PC's score is set at 100, so a system that scores 150 is 50 percent faster than the control PC and so on.

In case of difficulty...

If you are interested in purchasing any of the systems reviewed in our charts, please contact the manufacturer directly and ask for the specific product we have tested, mentioning *PC Advisor* and the issue in which the product was reviewed. If, for any reason, a manufacturer is unable to match the price and specification, or make a suitable replacement, please email us at reviews@idg.com.

Reviews and customer service issues

When it comes to buying a PC or peripheral there are two main elements to take into account – the quality of the hardware and the support and customer service provided by the manufacturer or reseller. Assessing the former is a relatively straightforward job, however monitoring the latter is much trickier.

When we review a product, we test its performance, build quality, features

on offer and its value for money. We rely on a range of real-world performance tests, while our expert reviewers check out how well the product is put together. To judge how it stands up to the competition in terms of features, including warranty and overall value for money, it is scored against our database of similar products previously reviewed by *PC Advisor*. The highest scoring product in all these areas will win out, so our Top 10 charts illustrate how well each product fared against the competition.

The aim is to provide you with an exhaustive guide to the quality of the hardware, which is essential information when choosing which product to buy. However, this is only part of the equation: quality of service and support are just as important.

To get the bigger picture, you must read the *Reviews* section alongside the rest of the magazine, especially our *News* and *ConsumerWatch* pages where we cover issues such as a supplier's stability and its customer service track record.

We keep this information separate from *Reviews* because otherwise the section would become unmanageably large, making it hard to display all the data in a clear, tabular format. ■



Interactive Top 10 charts at www.pcadvisor.co.uk

Reviews

Top Power PC reviews

Model	Price	Issue	
1. Atlas Meridian A1330 PVM	£1,599	May, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Systemax A1300RV Lifestyle 0590	£1,599	May, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. NEC Powermate I-Select XL3 A1300	£1,799	June, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Evesham Axis 1.33 DDR	£1,649	May, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Mesh Matrix Pro 1.3GHz DDR	£1,599	May, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Hi-Grade Ultis PV4 1.7G	£1,699	July, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Gatewav Performance 1300	£1,260	May, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Evesham Axis 1200 Ultra	£1,749	March, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Time 1100-7x PQ Professional	£1,399	February, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. NEC Direct Powermate I-Select XL3 A1200	£1,299	March, 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>

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For more detailed chart explanations please turn to the Glossary on page 284