

Top 10 charts

Smaller cases, slimline flat-panels and wireless keyboards are just some of the recent innovations that have prevented our PCs from further encroaching on our desks. But if you really want your computer to deliver maximum productivity then you're going to have to sacrifice some of that hard-won space to house a printer, scanner and, should your work require it, a fax. And just how inconvenient is it when all of your devices are manufactured by a different company? More often than not, each peripheral demands you master a different (and possibly incompatible) user interface.

The answer is a shiny, all-in-one MFD (multifunction device). But are MFDs really a worthy solution or are they hotchpotches of ageing technology masquerading as a new (and sometimes expensive) product? This month sees the introduction of an MFDs chart, so turn to page 216 to see how our first five contenders fared.

However successful the MFD becomes, there'll always be a place for the standalone scanner. Should you yearn for the latest technology, the highest scan speeds and, of course, the best prices, you're certain to find your perfect scanning partner in this month's newly refreshed chart on page 216.

The falling cost of technology has persuaded us to drop the maximum price in our Superbudget PC category by £150. Turn to page 210 for some stunning deals that'll leave you feeling in the pink rather than out of pocket.

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The Top 10 chart awards

Top-ranking products are eligible for either Best Buy or Recommended awards. A Best Buy product takes the number one spot thanks to a superlative combination of features, performance, value for money and customer service (where we have the data). Those that earn a Recommended are pretenders to the Best Buy crown. Almost as good, they offer great value, quality and performance.

Chart rankings are based on a calculation of features and performance compared to price, so the highest scoring products also represent the best value for money.

Prices

Our price categories for PCs, notebooks and digital cameras include VAT and are as follows:

PCs

Power PCs	over £1,410
Budget PCs	£700-£1,410
Superbudget PCs	sub-£700

Notebooks

Power notebooks	over £1,200
Budget notebooks	sub-£1,200

Digital cameras

Professional	over £700
Intermediate	£300-£700
Beginners	sub-£300

All prices printed in *PC Advisor* are quoted by the manufacturer or distributor and include VAT. Prices are only intended as a guide and you may see products on sale for less or more than our quoted price.

If you're interested in purchasing any of the products reviewed in *PC Advisor* then please contact the manufacturer or supplier direct, mentioning both the magazine and the issue in which you saw the product.

If it won't supply the product as reviewed, contact us at reviews@idg.com. Please note manufacturers are under no obligation to feature reviewed products on their websites.

PC Advisor's recommendations are for guidance only and are not a guarantee of suitability. The publisher takes no responsibility for purchasers' decisions.

What is PC WorldBench 4?

WorldBench 4 is the latest version of our benchmarking software. It has been updated to allow us to test PCs running Windows XP and also contains an upgraded base system against which results are compared.

The PC WorldBench 4 benchmarking software tests how well a system runs 11 different applications and provides the best indication of its real-world performance.

The 11 packages are: Photoshop 5.0, PhotoPaint 8.0, Quicken Deluxe 99, Lotus 1-2-3 9.0, Lotus Word Pro 9.0, Access 2000, Excel 2000, PowerPoint 2000, Word 2000, Netscape Communicator 4.73 and Visio 5.0 SE.

Test results are then collated and compared against a reference system - namely a Gateway Select 1200 PC, with a 1.2GHz AMD Athlon processor, 128MB of RAM, 20GB Quantum Fireball hard drive and VisionTek GeForce3 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.

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