











Top 10 Power & Budget notebooks

			Power notebooks	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		
PC ADVISOR 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 • First review Oct 03	116	1.5GHz Intel Pentium M	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	768MB			1,400x1,024			64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)				
				WorldBench 4		118				MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)		235		
PC ADVISOR 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 • First review Nov 03	130	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	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	512MB			1,920x1,200			128MB	8x/1x/1x (DVD-ROM/+R/+RW)				
				WorldBench 4		130				MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)		254		
	3		AJP D480W 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk Last month 3	• £1,616 inc VAT • 1-year parts & labour, 2-year labour-only warranty • First review Oct 03	115	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	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	1GB			1,440x900			64MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)				
				WorldBench 4		124				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 • First review Oct 03	107	3.06GHz Intel Mobile Pentium 4	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	512MB			1,440x900			64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)				
				WorldBench 4		127				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 • First review Oct 03	129	1.7GHz Intel Pentium M	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	512MB			1,280x854			64MB	8x/2x/1x (DVD-ROM/-R/-RW)				
				WorldBench 4		129				MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)		181		
			Budget notebooks	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		
PC ADVISOR 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 • First review Jan 04	121	1.3GHz Intel Pentium M	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	512MB			1,024x768			64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)				
				WorldBench 4		120				MobileMark 2002 battery life (minutes)		277		
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	2		Multivision Solus 1010 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk Last month 2	• £939 inc VAT • 2-year collect & return warranty • First review Sep 03	116	1.86GHz AMD Mobile Athlon XP 2500+	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	512MB			1,400x1,050			64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)				
				WorldBench 4		118				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 • First review Jan 04	90	1.4GHz Intel Pentium M	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	256MB			1,280x1,024			64MB	8x (DVD-ROM)				
				WorldBench 4		121				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 • First review Oct 03	116	3.06GHz Intel Pentium 4	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)			
				WorldBench 4		118				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 • First review Jan 04	109	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	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)			
				WorldBench 4		111				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 Go cards. If you won't be doing such intensive visual work, an integrated onboard chip is adequate.