

● DLP PROJECTOR

Casio XJ-350

PC PRO
A LIST

PC PRO
RECOMMENDED



PRICE £1,568 (£1,842 inc VAT)

DELIVERY £8 (£9 in VAT)

INTERNET www.casio.co.uk

SUPPLIER ProjectorPoint 0800 073 0833

VERDICT With a high brightness level for its weight and a 2x optical zoom, this projector lets travellers tackle almost any situation.

As regular travellers will attest, even the lightest projector can seem mighty heavy after you've carried it around for a few hours. Casio's XJ-350 tips the scales at a trim 1.84kg and is packaged in a solidly built 229 x 173 x 68mm magnesium alloy casing. With the minimum travelling kit of power and D-SUB cables plus the carry case, you'll only have to lug around 2.78kg.

It's by no means the smallest or lightest projector available, but projectors that weigh around 1kg are typically half the 2,200 ANSI lumens brightness of the XJ-350. The Casio's additional power gives more flexibility for coping with large rooms and high ambient light levels, with an acceptable trade-off in weight.

Smart styling includes focus and zoom wheels set into one side of the case, and a hinged lens cap that you can't accidentally leave behind. The lens assembly is safely recessed behind the front edge, providing some protection from the bumps and scrapes that are likely on the road.

The XJ-350 takes almost a minute from power-on to display an input signal, but the picture size can be adjusted with the minimum of upheaval by taking advantage of the powerful 2x optical zoom. Auto tuning makes a good job of setting the 1,024 x 768-pixel DLP system to a laptop's signal input.

If you need something other than a standard notebook D-SUB connection, only the basic alternatives are available. Composite video and S-Video inputs let you connect equipment such as a camcorder, VCR or DVD player. The built-in 1W speaker is driven through a 3.5mm audio jack, although there's no audio cable supplied. Apart from the notebook cable, the XJ-350 ships with composite video and a USB cable (for mouse control), so you'll also have to buy cabling for S-Video if you need it. There is, however, a handy picture-in-picture feature that can spice up static slide presentations with a video clip from a second source.

Picture quality was the best all-round of the three projectors reviewed here. Where the NEC was good for movies and the Optoma was a strong business projector, the Casio was competent in all areas. Focusing fades marginally towards the top corners of the image, but colour uniformity and intensity are superb. Text remains crisp at small font sizes, with only DLP's occasional rainbow effect affecting movie playback.

With a 200W lamp in a small housing, a lot of heat is generated and the casing becomes hot to the touch. The eco mode does a good job of keeping noise within comfortable levels, but in normal mode the sound level is too high for a small room. There's also a bit of light leakage from the fan

The Casio's magnesium alloy casing is light but strong.

vent, but it aims down at the table and won't prove too distracting. Lamp life is rated at 2,000 hours, although there's no figure stated for eco mode.

Projectors are an expensive addition to your IT collection, and there are many models that will save you money over the Casio XJ-350. However, if you're heading out into the unknown, few will match the flexibility provided by combining 2,200 ANSI lumens with a 1.84kg chassis.

ROGER KIRKWOOD

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES & DESIGN	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS 0.7in DLP projector; 1,024 x 768 resolution; 2,200 ANSI lumens brightness; 200W lamp; 1,000:1 contrast ratio; 0.8-16m throw distance; 0.76-7.62m image size (diagonal); digital keystone correction; D-SUB VGA in; S-Video in; composite video in; component video in; stereo mini-jack in; remote control; 1W mono speaker. Dimensions: 229 x 173 x 68mm (WDH). Weight: 1.84kg.

RUNNING COSTS Lamp life, 2,000 hours; lamp cost, £299 (£352 inc VAT).