

Toshiba Satellite M50 laptop

by Stephen Patrick published on 24 October 2005

There was a time when Toshiba was seen as a company that was only appealing to the business user. Thankfully, those days are over, with Toshiba offering machines to suit all walks of life. The Satellite M50 is aimed at home users who are looking for a notebook that can be used by the kids for doing homework, or used for surfing the Internet. However, the key aspect has to be price, which the M50 meets well. At this price point you won't get an all-singing, all-dancing machine. For instance, the graphics come in the form of an integrated solution, so while you'll be able to watch DVDs, or surf and get a great picture on the 14.1-inch screen, which is a widescreen format for easy viewing. However, if you load up a game you better be ready for disappointment. So, what do you actually get for your money? Quite a lot in terms of performance, as you'll find an Intel Pentium M 730 processor, which runs at 1.6GHz, coupled with an ample 60GB hard drive running at a 5400-rpm rotational speed. Rounded out with 512MB of DDR SDRAM, you'll find plenty of power to get the job done. On the downside, such power isn't exactly cutting-edge but we feel that it'll suit the average family for the next couple of years easily. With a weight of 2.4kg, this is a lightweight machine that can be easily carried around. With mobility comes the need for battery life and we managed to get more than 3 hours from the M50, which is about right for a machine at this price point. The build quality is good, so it'll take the occasional knock and the keyboard is firmly mounted, so will take the damage of kids hitting it when doing homework. We were also impressed with how quietly the notebook ran, with the fan being hardly noticeable even when running more than two applications. This Centrino-certified laptop is fitted with the PRO/Wireless 2200BG adapter for connecting to 802.11b/g Wi-Fi networks. The older 10/100 Ethernet port for fixed networks is perfectly suitable in the home environment. Four USB ports and a mini-FireWire port are located on the side and rear of the chassis for hooking up



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a wide array of peripherals. You'll also find an external monitor port for displaying images on a spacious screen and an S-video connector for hooking up analogue camcorders. Bluetooth is an unexpected feature on this value-for-money laptop, useful for wirelessly transferring files and connecting to peripherals. There is even a DVD rewriter built-in, which is ideal if you want to share data - family photos, projects, etc., with loved ones.

VERDICT

The Toshiba Satellite M50 is a great machine for the family who isn't looking for anything other than a general day-to-day notebook. True, you can't play games on it but isn't that what your PS2 is for, anyway?

At a glance

What is it?

Budget notebook

Good

Excellent price, good performance

Bad

Average graphics and battery life

Verdict

It may not be the world's most powerful notebook but it's a lightweight machine at a price that won't damage the bank account

Price £750

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10