

Samsung X1 laptop

The Samsung X1 is a novel new take on the idea of the ultraportable, but can it deliver the goods?

by Stephen Patrick published on 9 January 2006

The Samsung X1 is a novel new take on the idea of the ultraportable, but can it deliver the goods? Samsung is a name better associated with more consumery devices such as televisions or mobile phones rather than computer equipment but its notebook line has undergone something of a re-invention of late. At one time, the company was happy to simply offer notebooks similar to other vendors - it has even licensed Sony's Memory Stick technology - but if the X1 is anything to go by, those days may be drawing to a close. It may not be the smallest such machine on the market, as it sports a 14-inch TFT screen more common on a standard machine but with a weight of 1.7kg, it's one of the lightest notebooks around with such a screen. The secret is in the size of the body. With a depth of a mere 24mm, you'll find that most of the body mass just isn't there. To do this, the optical drive has had to be moved away from the side of the chassis to be placed on the top. Samsung isn't the first company to do this - Panasonic has offered something similar for years - but it is the first consumer-focused machine to feature such a top loading drive. We were concerned that this doesn't really allow you to upgrade the drive at a later date but to be fair, who ever does upgrade their optical drive? It's a dual-format DVD rewriter, so it'll handle anything you need of it for the next couple of years, anyhow. Other than this, the X1 is all notebook, and to meet the needs of the slim case is fitted with an ultra-low voltage solution in the form of the Intel 1.2GHz Pentium M 753 (ULV). While it comes with the same branding as standard Pentium M chips, you'll find ULV processors use a 400MHz Front Side Bus, so you'll find the system runs slower than expected. Paired with 512MB of memory and a 60GB hard drive, there is enough here for average work but we found it handled tasks a little sluggishly - so you won't want to tax it with anything too



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powerful. What is an ultraportable without its battery life? And if it's working anywhere, anytime you're after, the X1 will more than live up to your needs. Supplied with two battery packs, you can opt for the small pack, which gives in the region of 4 hours of battery life, while we got 5 hours from the larger pack. So, in theory, if you're willing to take both on the road with you you'll get in the region of 10 hours of battery life. The larger battery does take the weight to over 2kg, but it's a sacrifice worth taking, for the extra battery life.

VERDICT

The Samsung X1 has an innovative look and the use of a 14-inch screen means there is no compromise to be had. However, while we liked the look of the X1, it didn't quite handle as well as we'd hoped. For instance, the keyboard proved poorly spaced and awkward to use. If you're looking for portability and a great battery life, this machine is for you just be careful and check out the keyboard before buying - as you may find it less than to your liking.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultraportable notebook

Good

Unique design, great price, good battery life

Bad

Sluggish performance

Verdict

Samsung tries an innovative new design with a mixed bag of results - great battery life but rather poor when it comes to getting the job done

Price £1199

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10