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ASUS A6KM laptop

Can the latest Asus laptop perform as well as previous models? We check out the ASUS A6KM

by Stephen Patrick published on 30 January 2006

We have reviewed Asus notebooks before on Pocket-Lint and have never failed to be amazed at how well built they are. It's not so much they are solidly built, usually with plenty of brushed aluminium and neat curves on show but they also have a pleasing design. The A6KM differs from the more expensive machines by virtue of the fact it's constructed of toughened plastic instead of aluminium, which has been reserved for use on the touchpad. That said, it does cost £849 (inc. VAT), making it a tempting and affordable notebook. Solid and firm to the touch, this 3.2kg chassis will take the knocks of occasional travel. It's weight may limit the number of times you take it on the move with you and the battery life of just over 2 hours we got in daily use didn't really impress. Asus informed us that they offer the chassis with either an Intel or AMD bias, so you can choose your preferred processor. Our review unit came with an AMD Turion 64 MT-30 chip and backed by 512MB of memory. This is a 64-bit chip that is more than capable of handling office tasks with ease. The 60GB of storage is average for the price but should meet most user's needs. One of the big selling points, at this price point, has to be the use of the Nvidia GeForce Go 7300 graphics card. It isn't high-end like the 7800, as is aimed at the entry-level market for users who like to play the odd game now and then. Designed to replace the ageing 6600, you'll find that card supports Turbocache, so as well as coming with 256MB of dedicated memory, when your system needs a performance boost, it can source up to 128MB of additional system memory. As a 16-pixel pipe card you'll find performance is outstanding for the price. We used the system for playing Civ IV on and found it handled well. You won't be able to play anything quick on this notebook but strategy games are fine. The GPU powers the 15.4-inch screen, which comes with the now commonplace Super



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-TFT coating for stunning image representation. A 1.3-megapixel webcam is built into the panel, positioned above the main display, and comes with a microphone built-in, making web-conferences or simply chatting with family and friends that little bit easier to set up and maintain.

VERDICT

Considering it comes in at well under a grand, there is little to fault with the Asus A6. True, it might not be the fastest notebook on the planet, nor is it blessed with the best battery life but at this price, it offers more than we were expecting. It also wins extra points for being solid as a rock and not too shabby in the looks department either.

At a glance

What is it?

Budget notebook

Good

Great performance, solid build

Bad

Poor battery

Verdict

With great looks and a solid build quality, there is little to complain about here - the price is highly competitive too

Price £849

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10