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Averatec 3715 notebook

Can the bargain price of the Averatec 3715 really be too good to be true or have too many corners been cut?

by Stephen Patrick published on 20 March 2006

Averatec is essentially an American notebook manufacturer that is backed by Taiwanese money and know-how. The premise behind this partnership is to bring a range of machines that are not only attractive to look at but also affordable. The 3715 costs a mere £699 but the cool white look of the casing doesn't come across as cheap. Using an AMD Sempron 3000+ processor, which runs at 1.8GHz, makes savings. The Sempron is a budget processor - similar to Intel's Celeron chips in many respects so don't buy this machine expecting it to handle heavy number crunching. It's paired with 512MB of memory, which is standard these days but the addition of the 80GB hard drive is generous at this price point. For writing documents and generally surfing the Internet, this machine is ideal. In daily use it's comfortable to use and the 12.1-inch screen, while not having a high-gloss coating, is clear enough for sharp images. As you would expect at this price, graphics aren't high on the agenda and use the ageing Via UniChrome Pro chipset, which can use up to 32MB of the main system memory. While it's ok for work and watching DVDs don't even think of loading a game on this machine as it will simply refuse. The screen is a standard 4:3 aspect ratio panel, so you don't get a keyboard that takes advantage of the extra width of a widescreen but it's well built and has responsibly spaced keys. The keys have good travel and we found it comfortable to use. Weighing in at 1.9kg, this is classed as an ultraportable notebook that can be slipped into your briefcase and carried without too much effort. However, for it truly to be ultraportable, a machine should match its light weight with a long battery life - after all, why take it on the move with you if you can't rely on it lasting? Sadly, this is where the 3715 will let the user down. We managed to get a little over 2 hours from a full charge, which may be ok in some instances but



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isn't ideal. In terms of connectivity, the 3715 has everything you could want in an ultraportable. Three USB ports and a separate Firewire port line the sides of the chassis, and a 4-in-1 memory card reader makes it easy to transfer files from your mobile or camera. Wi-Fi 802.11g and Ethernet are in place for connecting to wireless and fixed networks. You'll also find a dual-format DVD burner in place.

VERDICT

What looks on the surface like a real bargain, failed to impress in the case of the Averatec 3715. In many respects it still seems that you get what you pay for and while Averatec has managed to put together a lightweight and highly portable machine this is at the sacrifice of performance. If you're on a super-tight budget and need the portability the 3715 has to offer, there is a pleasing machine to use, just don't rely on it lasting too long.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultraportable notebook

Good

Light, cheap, attractive

Bad

Poor battery, average screen

Verdict

A reasonably specified machine perfect for getting the job done on the move

Price £699

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10