

Creative PC-CAM 300

by Stuart Miles published on 14 November 2003

Following on from the Webcam Go Plus, Creative hopes that the PC-CAM 300 will become apart of our daily lives as more and more people take up video conferencing at home. Like before, rather than be restricted to using it only in front of your PC, the PC-CAM 300 is a fully portable digital camera coming with 8Mb of internal memory allowing up to 128 hi-res VGA images and over 250 low-res images. In addition to serving as a digital camera, the device can also record video and even sound, albeit not very much. Whilst on the surface the camera boasts a good package, it's only once you open the box that you realise that you might be in for a rough time. The first problem is the installation. Although creative have packed the accompanying CD-ROM with plenty of drivers, PC-CAM centre software and even Ulead Photo Express 4 all of these programs have to be installed separately. Admittedly, to some, the idea of being able to only install what you need is a nice option to have and saves clogging up your PC with programs that you don't want, but surely that's what the standard Custom or Typical install options are for?The other major problem you'll encounter is whilst the camera does come with a very sturdy base, the angle at which this base can be manipulated will cause you problems. If you have a flat screen TFT monitor or laptop then you'll have to prop the camera either on something nearby or on your desk. This however, will only cause you further problems as if you have the camera on its base on your desk the pivoting angle (which is only forward and backwards, not left or right) won't lean back far enough to allow you to be fully in the picture.



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VERDICT

This camera suffers from design rather than prowess. Once you've got the software installed and the camera working, the results you get are very good, the software easy to use and the overall performance fares well against other webcams. It is however, the shoddy design that causes the most problems. For some reason, creative have decided to sculpt the camera to look like a shell and if you've got a TFT monitor or laptop this will only cause you problems.

At a glance

What is it?

Combined VGA Digicam and Webcam

Good

Nice attempt to jazz up the humble webcam, butÖ

Bad

£110 buys a damn good digicam; impractical design

Verdict

It's far too maddening propping this thing up, the less showy webcams would just sit in a base and the money buys better standalone digicams.

Price £110

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10