

Acer Aspire 5602WLMi laptop

Can performance come on the cheap?

by Stephen Patrick published on 11 September 2006

If you've ever tried buying a notebook from PC World or even Dixons on the high street, then you'll have come across Acer notebooks. True, they aren't the most attractive machines you'll see, being little more than grey boxes for the most part but the company has the knack of filling the box with the latest technology at a price hat's hard to ignore. Take the Acer Aspire 5602WLMi for instance; it's £699 (inc. VAT) and powered by Intel's latest and greatest Intel Core Duo processor. It may be the T2300 version, which runs at 1.66GHz, but it's more than powerful for most people and whether you're watching a DVD, editing a document or simply surfing the net, it'll let you do them all at the same time. It's because you have two cores in one chip, which allowing for multi-tasking. We found this a really powerful notebook to use. It's not only the processor that helps but the addition of 1024MB of memory, it means things never really slow down. The hard drive is 120GB in size, so you can store plenty of files and is larger than we expected at this price point. Weighing in at 2.8kg, it's light enough to place on your lap when your sat in front of the TV and because it has 802.11g Wi-Fi built in, as long as you have Wi-Fi in your house you can surf the net at your leisure. The one poor aspect of this machine is the battery life. We managed to keep around 2 hours from a single charge, which isn't ideal, so don't plan on staying away from mains power for too long. The 15.4-inch screen makes up a large part of the weight of the Acer. There are larger screens out there but this size is great for the average family, as it's not too imposing. Being a Super-TFT panel, it comes with a glossy coating, perfect for watching DVDs and really brings photos to life. The graphics card is the ATI Mobility Radeon X1300, which is an entry-level card, so is fine for mainstream games but you'll need to turn the resolution down on anything that runs too fast. We played a couple of RTS games on it and it ran fine. Located above the screen is a 1.3-megapixel camera. Moveable through 225



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degrees, users can angle the lens for optimum focus - even spinning the camera to capture a first-person viewpoint. This is a nice touch for home instant messaging and business conferencing use. A prominent strength of the Acer is its usability. With a broad keyboard and comfortable typing action, long-term use is always a pleasure. A bank of hotkeys sit at the top right of the keyboard and can be easily personalised via the included Acer Launch Manager software.

VERDICT

If you ignore the rather poor battery life of the Acer Aspire 5602WLMi, what you have is a great machine for the family. It's powerful, well specified and at the price will more than satisfy most buyers.

At a glance

What is it?

Entry-level notebook

Good

Powerful, affordable

Bad

Poor battery life

Verdict

It may be a grey box but it's packed with enough technology to keep the average home user happy for years

Price £699

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10