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Acer Aspire 9802WKMi laptop

Can Acer's 20-inch laptop impress?

by Stephen Patrick published on 23 October 2006

How large do you want your notebook screen to be? If you're looking to carry it about, smaller is definitely better but if you're thinking of the ultimate desktop replacement, then there is no other option than to go for a 20.1-inch screen.

Acer and Dell are the only two companies to offer such a panel size but the advantage the Aspire 9802WKMi has is one of price. At £1399 (inc. VAT), it's more than £700 cheaper than the Dell equivalent.

That doesn't mean Acer has skimped on the components, as you'll find this 7.8kg monster has plenty in its favour. Powered by an Intel Core Duo T2300 processor running 1.66GHz, you'll also find 1024MB of DDR2 memory and a 100GB hard drive. No doubt Acer will upgrade the CPU to the faster Core 2 Duo at some point in the future but even so, in its present form, this is a powerful machine for the price.

The build quality is high, as it needs to be to bear the weight of the screen. With such a large chassis, the user interface is spacious but could have been larger. The keyboard measures 356 x 109mm, and includes a full number-pad. All keys are strong and responsive. Typing is comfortable at all times, but bigger keys would have been preferable.

With an eye on the multimedia market, you'll find a pair of Acer 3DSonic speakers fitted. Bass is boosted by an integrated Acer BasSonic subwoofer, adding weight to game and movies DVD audio. While laptop audio can't match a full desktop speaker set, sound quality is powerful and clear.

Perhaps the only thing that stops this being such an all-round desktop replacement is Acer's choice of graphics card, the Nvidia GeForce Go 7300. This card is fine if you're going to do little more



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than watch DVDs and play really basic - read old - games, as what you're not going to get is a decent gaming experience. True, Acer isn't billing this as a gaming machine but we feel a desktop replacement should be exactly that, a replacement in all aspects, which means good graphics.

The selling point, naturally, is the screen and with a resolution of 1680 x 1050 pixels it's good but it's not exactly high-definition. One problem with having such a large amount of screen on a notebook is how close you'll actually find yourself to it. It's fine for short periods but we recommend not sitting in front of the panel for long periods of time without frequent breaks.

VERDICT

When it comes to breaking new ground, Acer is never scared of a challenge and while a 20-inch notebook won't be most peoples idea of a portable computer, it's a great machine at a great price - just don't sit too close to the screen.

At a glance

What is it?

20-inch notebook

Good

Big screen, great spec, good price

Bad

Average graphics

Verdict

The largest notebook screen to date on a surprisingly affordable machine, with stunning results

Price £1399

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10