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HP Pavilion HDX laptop - First Look

Is this the Home Entertainment offering we've been waiting for?

by Stuart Miles published on 9 May 2007

Contrary to the rumours that surrounded the launch of the latest home entertainment laptop from HP, the HP Pavilion HDX is not its first gaming laptop that's about to take on Dell and Alienware.

Launched at the company's Making Connections event in Shanghai, Pocket-lint was given access to the new computer. Here is our first look.

To say the HDX is anything but large would be an understatement. Sporting a 20.1-inch screen on its own adjustable stand and weighting in at almost 8kg (15.5 pounds) it's no portable offering, but then again it's not supposed to be.

"This is very much a desktop replacement", Alberto Bozzo Vice President, Commercial Products Personal Systems Group, Europe, Middle East and Africa told us.

He isn't wrong, it's a big beast and one that we wouldn't recommend lugging around the house let alone on a plane with you for your business travel abroad.

That screen, which is HD-ready up to a resolution of 1080p by the way, is backed up with a HDTV tuner and an optional HD DVD drive. Blu-ray fans will be disappointed however as there's no option for Sony's format currently. When asking a number of HP representatives around the show floor it seems the overall opinion is HD DVD is more consumer friendly and a cheaper option, however HP hasn't ruled out including a Blu-ray drive later on if the demand becomes apparent.

Unlike Dell's XPS M2010 launched at CES in 2006, the HDX doesn't offer a detectable keyboard, nor a handle to carry the laptop, instead HP has opted for a very plastic touch Media Center remote control and docking station



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to the left of the keyboard.

This, which in practice was very awkward to get out, also has the rather disorientating element of shifting the keyboard to the side and not central to the screen. It's by no means a deal breaker, but we do expect that over time would be something that would become annoying.

Other annoyances are the lack of a screen catch to lock the laptop screen down, and a powerpack that's almost the size of the computer.

However it's not all bad news judging from our first look experience. The HDX features a built-in webcam for video conferencing and a range of upgrade features that could, if you opt for the top of the range model, make a very powerful machine indeed.

One nice feature is the notebooks ability to access the HDTV and DVD player functionality via the company's QuickPlay offering and this allows you to watch TV or movies without having to power up the computer fully.

For those that are interested this includes an Intel Core 2 Processor, an ATI Mobility Radeon HD 2600 XT graphics card with 256MB of memory, dual hard drives supporting up to 400GB of storage and 4GB of memory.

Our test machine running Windows Vista was very quick coping with video, internet browsing and opening multiple files at the same time while running some of the more graphically resource heavy facets of Vista.

The HDX will also feature four Altec Lansing stereo speakers and an integrated Triple Base Reflex Subwoofer.

VERDICT

As an entertainment powerhouse that will replace your desktop computer the performance and appearance of the HP Pavilion HDX seems to

At a glance

What is it?

20-inch laptop

Good

Screen, features

Bad

No handle, no detachable keyboard, remote control plastic to touch

Verdict

As an entertainment powerhouse that will replace your desktop computer the performance and appearance of the HP Pavilion HDX seems to match up to its billing

Price

Your score

~/10

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match up to its billing.

However, Dell's 18-month-old offering seems to offer a better designed form factor with that handle and detachable keyboard.

Expect a full review of the new HP Pavilion HDX when it comes out later in the year.