

Toshiba Portege M400 Tablet PC

Can Tosh create a Tablet PC that works?

by Stuart Miles published on 16 July 2007

With Microsoft launching Vista earlier this year with an aspect of the Tablet PC format integrated into it, it seems the software is here for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, manufacturers have been overhauling their designs, with the latest being the Toshiba Portege M400.

Aimed at business users instead of home consumers, this is a semi-lightweight machine, weighing in at 2.3kg, which has a fairly businesslike tool. The casing is made from plastic with magnesium-alloy only used on the lid, protecting the 12.1-inch digitised screen.

This size of machine isn't exactly ideal for carrying around all day but for use in and around the office, we found it quite portable. The tablet remained cool to the touch, even after being switched on for long periods of the day. The only problem we found was the battery life, which at a little over 2 hours, on average, wasn't ideal for taking out and about without the charger, which adds to the overall weight.

Tablet PCs come in either slate or clamshell designs, with the former having no keyboard, the latter looking like a laptop with a display that can be rotated 180-degrees, so the screen can be laid flat and written directly on to. The screen is a digitised display that is used with the supplied electronic pen for writing and annotating notes, as well as a host of other handwriting features.

There is one feature that really helps benefit mobile users, though, and that is the inclusion of 3G. Mobile broadband as it's being called doesn't quite offer the speeds of your home broadband connection but it's quick enough to collect your email and connect to corporate networks. Toshiba has teamed up with T-Mobile to handle the connection and the bundled software is easy to



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setup and use. If you want to connect using Wi-Fi you'll find standard 802.11g is available and Gigabit Ethernet is installed for fixed networks.

The keyboard is rather small and many of the secondary function keys are cramped together but it proved an incredibly sturdy keyboard to use.

One of the accusations made at earlier Tablet PCs was their lack of power but this certainly isn't the case with the M400. Powered by an Intel Core 2 Duo T7200 chip, this is a 2GHz processor that delivers plenty of performance. With 1024MB of memory and 100GB of storage rounding out the base specification, you can use this as your sole machine without any compromises.

A biometric fingerprint scanner is built in to the lid below the screen. Other key aspects of note are the use of a shock absorbent hard drive, which will notify you if any sudden movements may cause harm to the disk.

VERDICT

The Toshiba Portege M400 offers a great deal of performance in a semi-portable package. It may not have added to the idea of what a Tablet PC is but the addition of 3G and the powerful specification make this is a good machine for those who don't wish to compromise power when on the move.

At a glance

What is it?

Tablet PC

Good

Dual-core, built-in 3G

Bad

Average battery life, cramped keyboard

Verdict

It may bring nothing new to the Tablet PC format but the inclusion of 3G makes it a great choice when out and about

Price £1350

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10