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Asus F5V Laptop

Can this budget notebook perform?

by Stephen Patrick published on 10 September 2007

We've grown accustomed to notebooks costing less than £500 and offering basic power for the price, so what happens if you increase your budget a little? The Asus F5v costs £629 (inc. VAT) and comes with a chassis that is well-built and looks good too. The silver and black design may give it a corporate look but we feel it'll look equally as good in the home.

Weighing 2.7kg, it proved fairly portable and can be carried around with ease but we were less than impressed with the battery life. We managed to get a little over 2 hours from an average charge, which is fine if you're just sat on the sofa surfing the web but not so good if you need to work on the move.

What makes this notebook enjoyable to use is the large and sturdy keyboard. It's sat far back on the chassis, so there is plenty of room to rest the palm of your hands, and with a solid keystroke, we found it great to use.

The reason for such a large keyboard is that the F5v comes with a 15.4-inch widescreen panel, which has a super-TFT coating. So, while there is a degree of glare under sharp lights or when you're out and about, in the main we like these screens as colours tend to be more true and images sharper to look at. When it comes to the graphics, you'll find a dedicated card has been included but it's only an ATI Mobility Radeon X2300, which is an entry-level card at best. So, while you'll find it runs the latest mainstream games and utilities, you won't be able to run anything at full screen resolution, which is a shame as the display on the Asus is stunning. Movies and watching TV (you'll need to add your own TV tuner) proved great, though.

When it comes to power, you'll find at this price you'll get a dual-core processor but it isn't the fastest available, with the Core 2 Duo T2250



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being a 1.73GHz variant. It's fast enough for most tasks but with 1024MB of memory it may be worth getting an upgrade so you'll see a real performance boost. The specification is rounded out by a 120GB hard drive and you'll find the standard connectivity options of 802.11g Wi-Fi and fixed Ethernet present.

The DVD rewriter is backed by Nero disc software and the notebook comes bundled with other software that includes applications for internet security and disc creation. Proprietary Asus tools make system monitoring and maintenance simple. For home office use, you only get a 60-day trial version of Microsoft Office, so you'll need to add your own software.

VERDICT

The Asus F5v is a pleasant notebook to use and while its screen and keyboard are highly usable, it's not the most portable or user-friendly of machines.

Aside from the poor battery life, the main problem was it just lacked out-and-out power, which was something we were hoping for at this price.

At a glance

What is it?

Budget laptop

Good

Well built, great screen

Bad

Not as powerful as we'd hoped, poor battery life

Verdict

It's portable enough to carry but the battery life let down what is an otherwise good all-round machine

Price £629

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10