

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2760/packard-bell-easynote-xs20-laptop>

Packard Bell EasyNote XS20 laptop

Can this out-perform the Asus eee?

by Stephen Patrick published on 3 December 2007

Asus may have grabbed all the headlines in recent weeks with the release of its Eee PC but it's not the only company to be thinking small as Packard Bell has introduced its own 7-inch notebook.

Packard Bell may not be known as an innovator but it's taken quite a different stance from Asus with its EasyNote XS20. The 945g device is made from really solid plastic that feels like to the touch.

Sure, it uses a 7-inch panel but the display sits on two rather long legs. This raises the screen to a more natural eye-level, so easier to view, but has actually been put in place to allow for a larger battery cell without it having to stick out. This is a great detail and really adds to the overall design quality.

The larger battery means that in use you can expect over three hours of charge, which isn't ideal but is longer than we were expecting from such a small notebook.

Running Windows XP natively, while the Asus runs a modified version of Linux, users will instantly warm to this machine. True, it takes longer to boot-up and load average applications but as a simple word processor this machine is fantastic.

It would have been easy for Packard Bell to make the notebook the same size as the screen but fortunately, the panel has a wide bezel around it, which leaves plenty of room for a webcam, which is a nice touch. More importantly, it means the wider design allows for a keyboard that is slightly larger than the one found on the Asus.

The keyboard isn't full-size and still takes a little while to grow accustomed to. Even then, you'll find yourself pecking at keys rather than touch



...cont.

typing. In order to make the best use of space the touchpad and mouse buttons have been separated and moved above the keyboard. The tiny touchpad on the right-hand side with the mouse buttons on the left. Due to the size and weight of the EasyNote this isn't as cumbersome as it first sounds, as you end up holding the device rather like a gamepad controller.

The design and the build of the EasyNote may be innovative but when it comes to performance we were a little less impressed. Powered by a VIA C7 -M CPU, which runs at 1.2GHz, this isn't the most powerful of notebooks. It's fine as a word processor and email client and makes perfect sense as a second machine but you won't really want to rely on it as your sole PC. While Asus went for Flash storage, you'll find a 30GB mechanical hard drive in place.

Considering the size, connectivity is impressive with two USB ports, DVI-out and ExpressCard slot along with support for fixed and wireless networks.

VERDICT

The Packard Bell EasyNote XS20 is a great notebook and we feel that Asus has some serious competition on its hands.

True, it's twice the price and aimed at business users instead of the youth market but the overall design is highly impressive and more than usable - we just wish it had a little more grunt power.

At a glance

What is it?

7-inch notebook

Good

Great screen, comfortable keyboard

Bad

Slow to boot, lacks power

Verdict

This Windows notebook has a great design that is easy to use making it an ultraportable worthy of note

Price £499

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10