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Maxdata Belinea s.book 1 laptop

Just another Eee contender or something more?

by Stephen Patrick published on 4 February 2008

Belinea may not be a notebook name you'll instantly recognise. It's a sub-brand of Maxdata but until now it was only used for TFT monitors and matching peripherals. This new range of notebooks is aimed at the consumer and, like the monitors, will tie in to the range with matching extras.

The s.book 1 is an ultraportable designed for those who need to write while on the move. If it looks distinctly like the Packard Bell EasyNote XS that is because they both use the same VIA design reference, which means they can quickly build and release a machine as the hard work of the main board design has already been designed by VIA.

The notebook has a matt black finish and the plastic used is thick and solid and while it has the same basic look of the EasyNote, it isn't without it's own flourishes. Like the EasyNote, the 7-inch screen sits on extended arms, so there is plenty of space for a larger battery pack on the back of the machine. The s.book makes use of Skype and other VoIP technologies by having a built-in phone and numpad on the space next to the screen.

Powered by the VIA 1.2GHz C7-M, you'll find it is supported by 1024MB of memory and an 80GB hard drive. Running Windows XP, you won't be able to use this machine for anything other than basic office tasks as there isn't really enough processing power for anything more intensive.

What really makes this notebook usable is the keyboard. Because of the large screen bezel, the keyboard is larger than the one found on the Asus Eee PC, so it's easier to get to grips with. The mouse buttons and touchpad are tiny and fitted on the lip of the machine, which is less usable. This makes navigation difficult but the s.book 1



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has a final neat touch - the screen is touch-sensitive.

With a touchscreen, you can perform the same tasks as with the touchpad and we found it easier to use this method when out and about. Weighing 1kg, the s.book isn't a problem to carry around and is great for making notes in meetings or simply for keeping with you. We managed to get a little over 2 hours from the battery, which isn't ideal but a lot better than we were expecting.

You'll find Wi-Fi and Ethernet are built-in as standard and in many respects it works exactly the same as any heavy-weight notebook, just in a smaller size. Due to the lack of space you won't find many extras on the casing but there are two USB ports and even a DVI-out port for connecting to larger screens when you want to work at a desk.

VERDICT

The Belinea s.book 1 won't suit everyone, but its intended market will appreciate the light weight and overall build quality of the machine. If you need to have a Windows-based machine with you on a regular basis, this is a great option to go for.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultraportable notebook

Good

Novel design, great keyboard

Bad

Not that powerful

Verdict

It's small and compact and lacks for nothing, other than a little more processing power. However, it's perfect for the frequent traveller

Price £420

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10