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Creative Live! Cam Notebook Pro webcam

Need a webcam on the move?

by Chris Hall published on 22 April 2008

With the raising popularity of online chat options, webcam use has never been more popular. For those road warriors, a webcam is a link to home. But should you take the Creative Live! Cam Notebook Pro with you on the move?

The compact design is based around an expanding clip that easily attaches to a wide variety of notebook screen sizes (from about 8mm to 16mm thick), which as the name suggests, is where this webcam is targeted. A short USB cable saves having too much spare wire dangling around, but the clip and cable length mean that you can't really site the webcam anywhere but on the screen of your notebook.

It will also fit to the side of the screen and you can then flip the image to be the correct orientation, which is a useful consideration if you are looking over the top of your screen whilst in your video conference, perhaps with another colleague, or even watching EastEnders whilst chatting to your mother-in-law.

The webcam is based around a VGA (640 x 480) CMOS sensor that will give you 800 x 600 video at 30fps, and still images at 1.3MP. Of course, these options come with the caveat that this is the result of software enhancement, so lower settings yield better results.

Focusing is a manual effort, rotating the silver bezel on the front of the cam. There is also a built-in microphone so you get everything you need in the one unit.

In the box you get a handy travel case which will neatly protect the webcam whilst knocking around in your luggage. You also get a headset which features dual plugs for the headphone and the microphone sockets, meaning you can have a



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video conference without disturbing the rest of the office.

Performance-wise there are no real surprises here and it is difficult to set the webcam apart from similar spec models from rivals; indeed, some notebooks ship with an integrated webcam to rival the offering here. Balancing exposure remains a problem and an even lighting certainly helps the results, i.e., not sitting side-on to a window.

However, in the box you get a whole host of software options, to control various options from basic settings, to recording video, taking photos and time-delay or motion detection. You may not want your webcam solely for conversations over the net, you might want to shoot video diaries or any number of possibilities. Generally speaking, the Creative software will let you do it.

You also get SightSpeed and muveeNow! bundled in the box, the first presents a video chat solution, but you'll probably be looking to use a more common application like Skype; the latter piece of software allows you to create basic movies, to edit your video diaries for example.

Unfortunately none of this software comes with an uninstall option menu option, so it is a case of removing it all via the long route - with so many different applications, this can be a bit of a chore.

VERDICT

Creative were making webcams long before people had a real need to use them. The Live! Cam series provide a reliable option, in this case tailored specifically for notebook users. This isn't the top of the range, so there is little to get excited about, but it should certainly meet the needs of those notebook users who need to keep in touch with colleagues and friends.

At a glance

What is it?

Notebook webcam

Good

Efficient clip, software options, protective case, included headset

Bad

Potentially too much software, dirty uninstall

Verdict

There is little to get excited about, but it should certainly meet the needs of those notebook users who need to keep in touch with colleagues and friends

Price £29.99

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10