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Samsung R700 notebook

Need a desktop replacement, on a budget?

by Stephen Patrick published on 16 June 2008

Samsung has been aggressively targeting the notebook market of late with a range of machines that offer a powerful specification at low prices. We're usually wary of such bargains as packing too much power into a basic chassis can often lead to problems. However, when it comes to the R700 we found no such faults.

The casing is made from plastic with a glossy finish, which means it attracts dust rather easily. However, we found it solid and robust with big hinges firmly holding the screen in place.

Weighing 3.2kg, this isn't the lightest of notebooks but when you consider it has a 17-inch display and full-sized keyboard; it starts to feel a lot more compact and portable.

The screen has a typical Super-TFT coating and we found images to be sharp and bright. If you're looking for a machine the whole family can share this may well be it. The screen is great for movies, or homework, and the addition of dedicated graphics in the form of the Nvidia GeForce 8400M GS, means you can play games too. This is a fairly modest graphics card but it'll handle most basic games with ease.

The keyboard is a great size and the keys have plenty of space to them. The keys are firmly fitted and we found it comfortable to use for long periods. Playing games, where keys can take a good deal of punishment, the keyboard also felt reliable.

If you're opting for a desktop replacement, you'll be looking for a powerful specification to go along with the large screen. The R700 isn't the most powerful notebook we've seen but at this price point it certainly packs in plenty of power.

You'll find an Intel 2.1GHz Core 2 Duo T8100



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processor that is a dual-core chip capable of handling most tasks with ease. Backed by 2048MB of memory we found Vista Home Premium loaded and ran quickly and there were no signs of lag. The main specification is rounded out with a 250GB hard drive, which offers plenty of space for storing a family's files.

We had no problems using this notebook and found it a pleasing experience. Being a desktop replacement you may not want to take it on the move with you but we managed to get well over 3 hours from the R700's battery, which is great if you want to use it about the house.

Connectivity is mixed, as you'll find 802.11g wireless LAN supported, which is an older technology but Gigabit Ethernet, which is the latest fixed networking standard. Extra features consist of a DVD rewriter that supports LightScribe technology, so you can burn labels directly onto the disc you're creating.

VERDICT

The Samsung R700 isn't the most powerful notebook in its market but for less than £700 there is plenty to recommend it. We found it powerful and versatile to use, especially the keyboard and screen, which are both of the highest quality. Overall, this is a great machine for any family with mixed needs and a rather limited budget.

At a glance

What is it?

Desktop replacement notebook

Good

Good spec, great price

Bad

No real problems

Verdict

If you're looking for a budget desktop replacement notebook, this has all the makings of a classic

Price £699

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10