

Asus U2E notebook

Looking for a feature-rich ultraportable?

by Stephen Patrick published on 30 June 2008

When it comes to trying something a little different with notebook design, Asus more than any other company is willing to go the extra mile. The successor to last year's U1, this year's model has a body that is made from stainless steel that not only makes it look fantastic but feel just as cool.

Then there are the leather highlights. Available in either brown or black, it is a look that divides opinion but if you like the over-the-top look it certainly makes a statement. It's not just for show, as the leather helps keep the palm rests cool to the touch and also adds a hint of comfort as you type.

Weighing 1.3kg, this is a lightweight and highly portable notebook. To hit this weight, you'll find the screen is an 11.1-inch Super-TFT panel that uses LED technology, which is essentially a row of tiny bulbs running along the bottom of the display. This technology offers better power consumption as well as a truer image. The 1366 x 768-pixel panel may be small but there is no denying the sharpness of image quality. We found it a pleasure to use on the move as well as in the office.

Below the screen you'll find a rather compact and cramped keyboard. The keys are rather small and while Asus has been forced to make some odd placement choices, such as the Shift and Page Up keys on the right-side being placed directly next to each other, which leads to frequent mistakes, this is a comfortable keyboard to use.

Lightweight notebooks are designed to be used on the move, so we were a little disappointed to only get 2 hours from the standard battery pack. Fortunately, Asus also ship a larger long-life battery that offers 5 hours when out and about. It adds to the bulk of the machine but it's our preferred choice.



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Being an ultraportable notebook, performance plays a secondary role. So, you'll find an Intel Ultra-Low Voltage processor in the form of the 1.06GHz Core 2 Duo U7500 running Windows Vista Business Edition. With 2048MB of memory, we found it loaded reasonably quickly but things started to slow down when running multiple applications. With 120GB of storage, you can store sufficient files for work as well as pleasure.

You'll find a DVD rewriter is built in as standard, which is surprising on such a small notebook. Other features comprise a webcam, biometric fingerprint scanner and even a Bluetooth mouse. For connecting to external devices you'll find support for older technologies as well as a degree of future proofing. To this end, there is a VGA-out port, as well as HDMI adapter for hooking up to high-def monitors.

VERDICT

When it comes to usability, the Asus U2E is something of mixed blessing; the keyboard takes some getting used to and if you need to rely on it every day you'll need to get accustomed to carrying the larger battery pack. That said, it is versatile enough to be your sole notebook, which at this size isn't something we were expecting.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultraportable notebook

Good

Lightweight, great design, nice keyboard

Bad

Can run slow, average battery life

Verdict

With it's unique look this is a notebook for the fashion conscious but performance can be a mixed blessing

Price £1100

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10