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## Toshiba Satellite L300 notebook

### Can Toshiba deliver on a budget?

by Stephen Patrick published on 21 July 2008

The price of the average notebook has dropped considerably in the last 12 months, which has forced all the major manufacturers to release machines aimed specifically at the budget market.

The Toshiba Satellite L300 is one such machine but at first appearance you wouldn't think that it costs less than £300. This is because the chassis used is the same as on more expensive versions. So, while it's made from plastic, the case is solid and robust and feels particularly tough to the touch.

Weighing 2.6kg, it's a reasonably light machine. So much so that while it becomes a bit of a bind on the daily commute, for shorter trips it's not too much of a burden.

Notebooks at this price range tend to offer a standard array of features, such as the 15.4-inch Super-TFT screen on the L300. Naturally, graphics are integrated, so you won't be able to play games on this machine. However, we found the screen bright enough for watching movies. It also has sufficient contrast ratio, so documents look crisp and sharp.

Budget notebooks tend to cut costs on the keyboard but we found this wasn't the case with the L300. What's more, the widescreen display allows for a decent sized keyboard, which we found incredibly comfortable to use. The touchpad and buttons are on the small side but, once again, we found them to be well made and responsive to the touch.

We weren't expecting much from the speakers on the L300 and while you'll want to add external speakers or headphones for true stereo playback, we found the internal speakers loud and reasonably proficient.



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As you would expect, when it comes to keeping costs down you won't find a cutting-edge specification in place. Instead, you'll find an Intel Celeron M 550, which runs at 2GHz. Backed by 1024MB of memory and 120GB of storage; this is competent for anyone whose needs are basic.

We found the L300 was fine when handling standard tasks, such as writing emails while Media Player was running in the background. However, the system will noticeably slow down if you start to run more taxing applications.

Perhaps the biggest reason for this is the use of Windows Vista Basic, which needs 1024MB merely to load sufficiently so there is very little headroom for extra applications. The best solution would be to add more memory at time of purchase or opt for Windows XP if possible.

When it comes to extras you won't find a great deal added. The chassis has the basic array of ports, including three USB, VGA-out, ExpressCard slot, and Ethernet and modem ports on offer. Inside, you'll find 802.11g Wi-Fi and standard 10/100 Ethernet.

Toshiba bundle a number of its own software tools with this notebook, which helps you manage the wireless LAN and power settings of the machine far easier but you'll need to add your own word processing and productivity tools.

## VERDICT

The Toshiba Satellite L300 won't suit everyone, as its base specification isn't powerful enough for anything but the most basic of tasks. However, if you just need something for surfing the web or responding to email, this is a great machine at a bargain price.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Budget notebook

### Good

Great keyboard, good value for money

### Bad

Not the most powerful of machines

### Verdict

For the asking price, this notebook has everything you're likely to need

**Price** £299

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**