

NEC Versa S9100 notebook

Does this offering impress?

by Stephen Patrick published on 31 July 2008

NEC is best known for its range of business notebooks and even those tend to be on the rather dull and basic side. This makes the release of the Versa S9100 all the more interesting, as it's an ultraportable notebook that manages to mix a fair degree of style, for NEC, with business features.

If you compare it to the likes of the Toshiba R500 or Sony VAIO ranges, it comes across as rather square and understated, but we like it all the same. The construction is solid and feels more than worth the asking price. It's not a particularly slim notebook but it feels compact. We carried it around for a couple of days and found that it more than lived up to expectations.

Weighing 1.3kg, it's certainly light enough to carry around with you every day. Match this with a battery life in excess of 5 hours and you have a great machine that can be used in and out of the office.

To keep the weight down, NEC has used a 12.1-inch LED Super-TFT panel, which looks remarkably sharp and clear. We found it bright and easy to view in most situations but did need to turn it down when using the Versa on the train.

What really sells this notebook, though, is the keyboard. The size of the screen limits the size of the keys and they initially feel rather cramped. However, once you're accustomed to them, they have a great feel to them. Curiously, they have large letters printed on the keys, which looks odd but makes perfect sense when trying to type in dark situations, such as on a plane.

As you would expect from such a compact design, when it comes to performance this isn't the quickest machine on the market. NEC has opted to use the Intel 1.2GHz Core 2 Duo U7600,



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which is an ultra-low voltage chip better suited to saving battery power than raw processing power. However, with 2048MB of memory in support, we found it loaded and ran smoothly. You'll find the hard drive offers 160GB of storage, which should be more than enough for most needs. When it comes to the operating system, it ships with Windows Vista Business by default.

Alongside a DVD rewriter fitted, you'll find the standard array of ports, and there is also a fingerprint scanner fitted logically above the keyboard. This can either be used to add security to your notebook or can be programmed to launch assigned applications at the swipe of a finger. Gigabit Ethernet and 802.11a/g wireless LAN allow for connectivity to networks.

VERDICT

The NEC Versa S9100 isn't going to change most people's perception of the NEC brand, it's rather too run-of-the-mill in looks and specification for that. However, underneath the rather basic spec-list is a machine that is comfortable and easy to use for the long-term, making this a great investment.

At a glance

What is it?

Business notebook

Good

Great battery life, good screen, comfortable keyboard

Bad

Standard legacy ports, poor graphics

Verdict

It is a simple but highly practical business notebook that offers a comfortable keyboard and great battery life for the price

Price £1291

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10