

Zoostorm FizzBook Bang notebook

A laptop for the kids?

by Stephen Patrick published on 22 October 2008

Netbooks have hijacked the headlines this year but in the rush it seems that most people have forgotten their initial intent, to be small and affordable notebooks for children. With its kid-friendly plastic design, bright green protective sleeve and neat carrying handle, there is no denying the intent of this machine.

Part of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project, this netbook is available in this country from a number of retailers but our review unit came from PC Nextday who is branding this machine under its own Zoostorm range.

Weighing 1.4kg, this is a bulky device for a netbook but it's hardly heavy. However, what impresses the most is the battery life, as we managed to get well over 4 hours from casual use. This is great for your kids, as it means they can use it all morning for classes, recharge at lunch and use it for the afternoon sessions with no problems.

The carrying handle is a nice touch and certainly makes it easier to carry around. The slipcase is fine but doesn't really protect the device itself. However, what really impresses about this device is the tough plastic that's been used. It'll stand up to being dropped on occasion and while it's not a premium finish, it feels nice to the touch.

Open up the lid and you'll find a good sized keyboard for a netbook. The keys are surprisingly robust, having a great action that makes it comfortable to use. Sure, larger fingers will find the keys tricky to use but you can pick up speed pecking away at keys.

The screen is a standard 8.9-inch panel with a 1024 x 600-pixel resolution and is certainly bright enough for the average user. It's not the sharpest netbook panel but it's good for the price.



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The specification is pretty much what we've come to expect from a netbook, so you'll find an Intel Atom N270 processor backed with 1GB of memory. It runs Windows XP and in this version you'll find a 30GB hard drive.

Ports are also the standard array we've come to expect, so you'll find two USB ports, a webcam and an Ethernet connection. 802.11g Wi-Fi is fitted but you won't find Bluetooth, which is something of a shame. To emphasis the kid-friendly aspect of this device there is also a bundled array of school software, which is great for under 11-year-olds but not so effective for older children.

VERDICT

The Zoostorm FizzBook Bang is a great little device that younger children will really like the feel of. We found it usable, with a good screen and keyboard for the price. The interesting thing about this netbook, though, is that with a little tweaking in design and finish, we could easily see adults using the FizzBook, typically in locations that need something a little tougher than your average Eee PC or Aspire One.

At a glance

What is it?

Netbook for kids

Good

Great keyboard, kid friendly

Bad

Pricey

Verdict

A tough-as-nails netbook that has been pitched directly at kids with some interesting results

Price £269

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10