

Asus N10J notebook

Netbook or not?

by Stephen Patrick published on 30 October 2008

Asus releases netbooks under its Eee PC sub-brand and at first glance you'd be forgiven for thinking this was just another one. However it seems Asus has gone in to competition with itself as the N10J has been released with Asus branding. The company is keen to stress that it isn't a netbook but is in fact a 10.2-inch fully-fledged notebook.

The design is compact and the use of a high-gloss finish, in a champagne colour, with chrome-effect trim is something you'll either like or loathe. However, there is no denying the build quality, which is up to the usual Asus high standard.

The screen allows for the use of what Asus calls its "Comfortable" keyboard, which is 95% full-sized. The keys have a smooth action to them and you never feel as though it's too cramped. Asus has listened to feedback on earlier Eee PC models and made sure the touchpad is larger, the result being that it's easier to use.

Weighing 1.5kg, it's one of the heavier such devices on the market and it's a rather bulky machine. The screen is the same standard 1024 x 600 pixels you'll find on a standard netbook but it has a thicker than usual bezel around it, giving the N10J a wider definition.

The need for a bulkier design is due to the introduction of dedicated graphics into the mix. This is the first machine of this size to sport such performance but if you need to preserve battery life, you can elect to run on the integrated Intel chipset.

In terms of battery life, you'll be able to get 4 hours of use from this machine on full performance. This is quite impressive considering the use of Windows Vista Business, which isn't known for its power saving features.



...cont.

Had Asus opted for an Intel ULV processor instead of the budget Atom chip, the N10J would have been seen as just a small notebook. Instead, when it comes to the specification you'll find the Intel Atom N270 chip present in most netbooks. Along side it you'll find 2048MB of memory and a whopping 320GB hard drive, which are clearly out of the range of most budget netbooks.

Connectivity options have also been beefed up. So, you'll find Gigabit Ethernet and 802.11n wireless LAN fitted as standard, there are also three USB ports and an HDMI adapter for hooking up to a digital external monitor or HD television.

VERDICT

So, has Asus managed to steal the thunder away from its own Eee PC brand? There is no denying the Asus N10J is an interesting machine, it's powerful and comes with a decent battery life. However, for the price it just doesn't live up to expectations and it's hard to see who its target audience will be. For style and portability, business users will gravitate to the Eee PC S101, while power users will prefer Sony's ultraslim notebooks.

At a glance

What is it?

Netbook

Good

Dedicated graphics, good battery life

Bad

Bulky, pricey

Verdict

Asus may not want you to see this as a netbook but it fulfils all the functions of the sub-notebooks, just doesn't match them on price

Price £499

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10