

Samsung R522 notebook

An impressive budget laptop?

by Stephen Patrick published on 18 May 2009

Samsung's R-series targets those on a budget, offering impressive features and quality at decent prices. The R522 is a 15.6-inch laptop that offers comfort, style and decent office performance.

As with most laptops we've seen recently, the R522 features a 16:9 aspect ratio display, offering reasonable if average quality. It's bright enough, but colours are slightly lacklustre, the glossy Super-TFT coating doing nothing to aid vibrancy. The 1366 x 768 pixel resolution also looks a little low on a display of this size, and image quality could be sharper.

The wide screen creates loads of space for the keyboard, but unlike some manufacturers Samsung has opted not to fit a numeric keypad. The board itself is all-but identical in style to the design previously favoured by Sony, and currently found on Dell's Studio XPS range.

This means large square keys that feature slightly raised centres, and that offer enough travel to make it a great option for long-term use. Unfortunately you'll also find similar flaws, with a noisy typing action that lacks the quality of the best keyboards from the likes of Lenovo or HP.

The touchpad features the same aspect ratio as the display, making it easy to navigate and position the cursor with accuracy. It's circled by blue LEDs that light up when you touch the pad, and dim soon after. While it doesn't add anything to usability, it's distinctive, and the fact it's not visible after a couple of seconds means it's not intrusive when watching films.

Build quality is largely impressive, with a brushed aluminium effect palm rest that offers a touch of style, and plastics that are hardwearing enough for daily use. As with all current models, you'll still find a glossy outer lid, and like its siblings this is quickly covered in prints, grime and scratches.



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Busy corporate users will appreciate the spill-proof chassis and keyboard, letting you risk drinks nearby without the worry of damage should you accidentally tip some of your coffee onto it. An antibacterial coating on the keyboard is also featured, which Samsung claims kills most germs and prevents the rest from breeding - ideal for those who snack while working.

With some of Samsung's smaller offerings - such as the Q320 - offering decent 3D performance, it's a shame to find an integrated Intel graphics card in place. It's capable enough for standard office tasks - creating documents, browsing the web or watching films - but it offers precious little in the way of multimedia power, and you should look elsewhere if you intend to play games in your spare time.

Processing power is provided by an Intel Core 2 Duo T6400 chip, running at 2GHz. It's backed by a generous 4096MB of memory, and we found it a great machine during daily use. There were still signs of lag when running a host of intensive applications, but for the most part it ran smoothly and without trouble.

Battery life also impressed: lasting for over 5 hours, this is a great choice if you need a machine for long durations away from a power point. The 320GB hard drive offers a good amount of storage space, both for business and home use.

Rather strangely for a mid-level machine, Wi-Fi is restricted to older 802.11g standards, with no support for the faster 802.11n. Bluetooth is something else that's omitted. You will find Gigabit Ethernet though, and four USB ports - one which doubles as a high-speed eSATA port. External displays can be connected by either VGA or HDMI.

VERDICT

The Samsung R522 is a capable laptop, but it's difficult to get enthusiastic about it. Styling is neat,

At a glance

What is it?

15.6-inch notebook

Good

Reasonable value, good office performance, comfortable keyboard

Bad

Integrated graphics, lacks any stand-out features

Verdict

A good all-rounder, and a very capable laptop, but for all its usability it remains an uninspiring choice

Price £600

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/4040/samsung-r522-notebook-laptop-review>

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performance is capable, features are average - in no way is it a bad laptop. Unlike some of Samsung's smaller offerings, however, it's also not a great one.