

## Toshiba Portege A600-122 notebook

### An office ultraportable?

by Stephen Patrick published on 8 June 2009

Toshiba's PortégÉ A600-122 is the company's mid-range ultraportable offering, targeting corporate users wanting a similar experience to the range-topping PortégÉ R600 at a cheaper price. It's not quite as thin as its more expensive sibling, but it's still a highly portable choice, with a 12.1-inch display.

The screen is a standard TFT panel - a technology that's becoming increasingly rare. Colours are slightly muted, but most business users will appreciate the fact it can be used in bright conditions - such as on a train or near a window - without reflections becoming a problem. It also uses LED backlighting, consuming less power and leading to an enhanced battery life.

This is a feature that runs throughout the A600-122, with most of the components optimised for the best possible battery life. The graphics card is an integrated Intel chip, resulting in limited 3D capabilities, although office performance and DVD playback is fine.

The biggest difference between this and most laptops, however, is the use of an ultra low-voltage processor. With Intel's Core 2 Duo SU9300 chip and 2048MB of memory in place, performance falls behind what we've come to expect from a modern business machine. The lack of performance is further exacerbated by the inclusion of Windows Vista, and running multiple applications sees the system slow noticeably.

That said, there are benefits from running a ULV processor - the main one being battery life. Along with all the other power saving components, it helps the A600-122 to achieve a highly impressive 8 hours between charges, so as long as your needs aren't too demanding, you'll be able to work for a full day out of the office.

The A600's keyboard offers excellent comfort,



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with large and well-shaped keys that are responsive and near silent in use. It's not the most robust system we've seen, but the silver keys look good and we've no qualms about the ergonomics. The touchpad is also precise and responsive.

Toshiba has constructed the Portégé A600 from magnesium alloy, as with the more expensive Portégé R600. It helps to keep the weight down to an impressively light 1.5kg, but it feels suspiciously like plastic. Bendy plastic at that, with both the chassis and the lid flexing disturbingly under little pressure. It may help to prevent the screen from cracking, but it doesn't feel like a £1000 laptop.

The Toshiba impresses more when it comes to features. Wireless networking is excellent, with integrated 3G/HSDPA letting you browse the web at speed wherever you go, and an 802.11n Wi-Fi adapter offering speedy connections once in the office.

The A600 falls behind most machines when it comes to ports, however, with just two USB ports, an eSATA interface and a VGA-out for hooking up an external display. Many business users will notice the lack of a multi-card reader but there is an SD card slot, and Bluetooth is provided, letting you transfer files wirelessly. An ExpressCard slot is also provided.

## VERDICT

If you're seeking a very light laptop with impressive connectivity and a battery life that enables all-day use, then the Portégé A600-122 is worth a look. It also offers a comfortable keyboard and a screen that can be viewed in most lighting conditions.

It's not the perfect all-rounder, however, as performance is stunted by the ULV processor and Windows Vista OS. The build quality also leaves a lot to be desired, the pursuit of lightness resulting in a laptop that feels flimsy to the touch.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

12-inch notebook

### Good

Battery life, light weight, small size

### Bad

Poor performance, flimsy build

### Verdict

With a low weight and all-day battery life, this is an ideal tool for busy corporate users, but those needing a powerful machine to multi-task on should look elsewhere

**Price** £1044

**Our score**

**7/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**