

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/4108/acer-aspire-one-531-review>

Acer Aspire One 531 notebook

Just another netbook, or something more?

by Stephen Patrick published on 17 June 2009

Acer has impressed on several occasions with its cut-priced netbooks, but its Aspire One lags behind rivals when it comes to quality and usability. The Aspire One 531 looks set to change this, with a highly attractive design, decent mobility and good quality.

The form factor is average, with a 10.1-inch screen, but it's one of the better netbook displays we've seen. With LED backlighting, colours are brilliantly bright and vibrant. The 1024 x 600 pixel resolution results in reasonably crisp images. It's a glossy panel though, so be aware that reflections will play a part in sunny conditions.

The One 531 features a stylish design, and at under 19mm in depth, it's one of the thinner machines currently available. It offers a nice mix of matt and glossy plastics, and has a tidy and cohesive design. At 1.1kg, it's also a highly portable choice, and slips easily into bags and cases.

The keyboard features impressive quality, with sturdy keys that are all firmly attached. We found no sign of the board flexing as we typed, and all of the keys proved responsive. That said, it's not the largest keyboard, and those with big fingers will still have to spend some time adapting to it. The touchpad suffers from no such issues, and is large enough for comfortable use.

Within the One's casing, Acer has stuck with the tried and tested Intel Atom N270 processor and 1024MB of memory. Performance is respectable, if unexceptional, although the use of a 3-cell battery limits use away from a power point to around 3 and a half hours.

The left-hand side of the chassis sees one USB port, a 5-in-1 memory card reader, and a second SD card reader intended to expand storage



...cont.

space. It's a nice touch, and with a 160GB hard drive already in place, it offers more potential storage than most.

There are another two USB ports on the right-hand side, with all ports featuring marking above them on the chassis for ease of use. The rear corners of the chassis are angled back slightly, offering a distinct look, with a VGA-out port and Ethernet socket neatly integrated. Wi-Fi is limited to 802.11g, but optional 3G/HSDPA makes this a useful tool for business users.

VERDICT

The Aspire One 531 doesn't offer anything genuinely new, but it's one of the nicest netbooks available when it comes to styling and quality. Although it comes in at the top end of the Aspire One range, it's well equipped, with the option of 3G/HSDPA, and if you're in the market for a mid-range netbook it comes highly recommended.

At a glance

What is it?

10-inch Netbook

Good

Thin and neat design, build quality, bright screen

Bad

Keyboard could be larger, not revolutionary, average battery life

Verdict

A high-quality and stylish netbook. Battery life could be better, but it's still highly recommended

Price £350

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10