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Acer Aspire 3810T notebook

The choice for portability?

by Stephen Patrick published on 22 June 2009

With skinny designs and the promise of great battery life, Acer's Timeline range is perfectly suited to corporate users. We were highly impressed with the 14-inch Aspire 4810T, but it's the smaller 3810T that promises to be an even better portable partner.

Outside of high-end ultraportables, it's one of the thinnest laptops we've seen, slipping into bags almost as easily as Apple's super-slim MacBook. The depth of under 30mm - considerably less towards the front of the chassis - comes at a price, however, as there's no sign of an optical drive.

The 13.3-inch screen offers excellent clarity, with sharp images. LED backlighting helps to conserve power, and also results in more accurate colour reproduction. As with most recent laptops, the 3810T's display features a 16:9 aspect ratio, with a resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels. Great for watching movies on, there's also an HDMI port for outputting to external displays. The glossy finish won't suit all users - it's fine indoors, but can be annoying in sunny conditions, with prints and reflections proving intrusive.

The wide design is beneficial when it comes to the keyboard, with a spacious layout on offer. The keyboard uses the same distinctive design as the Aspire 4810T - with each of the flat keys raised from the board itself. There's no sign of flex during use, and it's responsive and comfortable, but the design allows detritus to fall between the keys, and the flat finish also makes it difficult to distinguish between the keys when touch typing.

The quality of this machine places it above many similarly priced laptops, and also above most previous Acer products. An aluminium lid offers a premium feel, and also helps to protect the screen. The plastics inside are also of a high standard. Weighing 1.65kg, it's also a highly



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mobile choice.

Mobility is a key part of the Timeline series, with battery life placed ahead of performance. As such, you'll find an ultra-low voltage Intel Core 2 Duo U9400 processor used, running at 1.4GHz. With 4096MB of memory, performance is reasonable, but it gets a bit sluggish when running multiple applications. It's a price worth paying for frequent travellers, however, as the 3810T lasts for a staggering 10 hours between charges - one of the best results we've seen from any laptop, and offering true all day usability.

The 320GB hard drive offers plenty of storage space, with a memory card reader for adding further storage or transferring files. Networking is comprehensive, with 802.11n Wi-Fi and Gigabit Ethernet both in place.

On the left-hand side of the chassis sits a VGA-out port, headphone and microphone sockets and a single USB port. The right-hand side offers a further two USB ports, an HDMI-out and an Ethernet connection. There are no ports on the rear of the 3810T, with the display swinging down over it when open. The front features an inch-wide plastic strip, behind which sit several coloured LEDs, indicating charging status and battery life.

VERDICT

Although more expensive than other Acer offerings, the Aspire 3810T is a great choice for portable workers. Stylish, well made and highly mobile, with that fantastic battery life, there's a lot to like here. It's worth trying before you buy, however, as the sluggish performance and distinctive keyboard won't suit everybody.

At a glance

What is it?

13.3-inch notebook

Good

Outstanding battery life, slim and portable design, quality

Bad

Lack of optical drive, keyboard won't suit all tastes, slow

Verdict

Although not the perfect all-rounder - slightly let down by poor performance - the 3810T is a great laptop, offering good quality and a truly outstanding battery life

Price £690

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10