

NEC HT410 Projector - EXCLUSIVE

by Stuart Miles published on 23 November 2004

Projectors are fast becoming the new wide screen television in the home cinema market. Pocket-lint.co.uk was given an exclusive chance to be the first in the UK to look at NEC's latest sub £1000 projector - the HT410. Running on a DLP Digital Light Processing (DLP) system - it is a technology that uses a tiny micro mirror device to reflect light onto a screen - the unit is small and quite. Coated in a shiny glossy finish the projector has tried its hardest to distance itself from a projector you are likely to be using at work to give a presentation. It's not as creative in its design as the Toshiba E1 but nonetheless it's small enough and manageable enough to get out for film watching without any hassle. The projector comes with all the cables you'll need to get you started - something that surprised us given the price - and alongside the unit there are more than enough connection options to plug into. 1 component, 1 S-Video, 1 video and PC VGA are all here, and that combined with the selection of long cables (even including a scart adapter) means that connecting it up to your XBox, PS2, DVD player or Sky digital box won't be a problem as the projector also supports a number of video formats from both sides of the pond: NTSC, NTSC4.43, PAL, PAL-M, PAL-N, PAL-60, SECAM, HDTV: 1080i, 720p, SDTV: 576p, 480p. After set up, which was very easy, the next job is to find a large empty wall to project on to. The image throw is fairly small, so you won't need a living room the size of a cinema to project it on - the smallest is 20in. In our tests we positioned it some 12ft (4m) away from the wall. This distance meant we could get an image around 8ft (2.5m) across although the specifications of the projector does mean it can go up to 16ft or 5.5metres, considerably bigger than our 32in widescreen television. The projection itself was bright, but not overly so, you wouldn't be able to watch it with all the lights on and the curtains open. The bulb promises 1000 ANSI Lumens, just 100 under the bulb fitted to NEC's top of the range model. Images are displayed in the widescreen 16:9 ratio, ideal for



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movies and games, and the contrast ratio is 1200:1. Contrast ratio is the ratio between the brightest and darkest areas of the image. Contrast ratios should be as high as possible. Again compared to NEC's top of the range player, which is the HT1100, its contrast ratio is 3500:1 and therefore not surprisingly costs £2700 more. The image can be adjusted according to wall, brightness, colour and every other conceivable adjustment you can think of although compared to our television we could never get the image as bright or crisp. Side by side the difference and clarity is clear to see, an hour in a film without the television on and you've got used to it. Either way playing Halo 2 8ft wide is still very impressive, likewise the latest Hollywood blockbuster. Other features include back-lit remote for the lazy, colour correction for those magnolia walls and a 3000 hour bulb life. Additional bulbs cost around £250.

VERDICT

At £829 this budget player doesn't profess to offer you the world compared to more expensive models available, however this price does make it cheaper than your average 32in widescreen television and while you're unlikely to use it to watch Eastenders on, for those looking to dabble in the home cinema experience without spending thousands of pounds, it will make a good addition to your gadget cupboard.

At a glance

What is it?

Starter home cinema projector

Good

Cables included in the bag, short picture throw distance

Bad

Will need to turn the lights out to get best viewing

Verdict

A good starter model for a budget price

Price £829

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10