

Dell Axim X50v

by Stephen Patrick published on 24 January 2005

When it comes to designing Pocket PC devices there are very few unique designs. All tend to follow the example of the market leading HP iPAQ. Not Dell. Since the introduction of its Axim line, Dell has ploughed its own, some would say ugly, furrow. Not so with its latest handheld, as the Axim X50v is all about style as well as performance.

Gone is the drab over-sized body in favour of a slim and sleek silver and black casing with a neatly curved base. As a result, the X50v sits neatly in the hand and weighing in at a mere 175g, it's a reasonable amount to carry in your shirt pocket.

Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition allows for the use of larger screen sizes, so it comes as little surprise that the X50v has a 3.7-inch transfective screen that offers a resolution of 480 x 640 pixels. The OS also supports screen rotation, so you can run video clips and even Pocket Office applications in landscape mode with ease.

Such a screen wouldn't be of much use if it wasn't supported by high-end graphics, in this case the Intel 2700G chip that comes with 16MB of VRAM on-board, making the Axim capable of playing games with ease. Dell even throws in a couple of 3D games to set you off. Alternatively, if you just want to watch pocket videos, it'll smooth out frame rates, meaning fewer stutters than on previous models.

The launch buttons on the front of the case are small but usable, while the miniscule D-pad proved to be rather ineffectual. Wireless on/off and voice recorder buttons are located on the side of the device, along with a handy locking switch. The headphone/headset jack and stylus holder can both be found on the top of the unit.

Intel's latest processor, the 624MHz XScale PXA270, powers the handheld so you can make



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the most of media and office applications. With 64MB RAM and 128MB non-volatile Flash ROM (92MB user accessible) memory is on a par with what we have come to expect from the latest high-end Pocket PCs.

Expansion slots is proving a popular decision with Dell, as the X50v continues to use both SD(IO) and CompactFlash slots. Dual expansion means that you can dedicate one slot to extra memory yet still have one slot free for the addition of peripherals, from GPS to a digital camera. With built-in 802.11b you won't need to add wireless capabilities and with the inclusion of Bluetooth as well, you can pair the device to your mobile phone for the sending and collecting of emails.

Dell includes some useful software such as Data Backup, WLAN Utility, and Task Switcher. A desktop synchronisation cradle with an extra battery slot also comes in the box.

In keeping with all Dell offerings there is a range of X50 devices available to suit all pocket prices. The next model down, the 520MHz Axim X50 (£293 inc. VAT), features Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, 128MB Flash ROM and a standard 3.5-inch QVGA screen. For those who can live without wireless connectivity, the 416MHz Axim X50 (£269 inc. VAT) has Bluetooth and 64MB Flash ROM.

VERDICT

With more than enough performance to pack a punch, former Axims lacked the grace and style of HP iPAQs. With this latest evolution of the line, HP may well have a run for their money from the Dell Axim X50 range- if you're OK with only being able to buy them from one place.

At a glance

What is it?

Feature packed PDA

Good

High spec - low price

Bad

lacked the grace and style of HP iPAQs

Verdict

Dell changes the look and feel of its PDA and comes up with an affordable and portable solution

Price £340

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10