

ASUS

Portability for peanuts

PRICE **\$410**

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EEE PC 4G



The Eee PC 4G from Asus is designed for parents looking for an inexpensive notebook solution for their kids, as well as for cash strapped users who need a portable PC.

On the portability front, the Eee PC is a real winner; it weighs less than one kilogram, is only one-inch thick, and in testing, we found the system's battery was good for roughly three hours of work. The only issue is due to the Asus's compact size, the keyboard's keys are all quite tiny and thus quite clumsy to work with if you have stubby fingers. The keys are perfect for children however, so the Eee PC is definitely a good option if you're looking to inexpensively get your kids on the IT bandwagon.

Considering its asking price, the Asus isn't stacked spec-wise but cleverly, the Eee PC uses a version of Linux rather than any variant of Microsoft's resource heavy Windows OS. Thanks to this, the PC is quite swift and in terms of productivity, you get version 2.0 of Open Office. This includes document, spreadsheet and presentation apps, which are compatible with Microsoft's respective file-types.

Mozilla's Firefox is installed as standard and this, like Open Office's apps, looks very similar to Microsoft's competing software. As a result, the learning curve, if you're already a Microsoft user, is far from steep. The 7" LCD, while good enough for everyday app use, isn't really adept at displaying photos.

PERFORMANCE
FEATURES
VALUE FOR MONEY



REQUIREMENTS

Intel 900MHz Mobile processor, 512Mbytes of DDR2 memory, 7" LCD screen, 4Gbyte

SSD, 802.11b/g wireless Ethernet adapter, 10/100Mbps Ethernet adapter, 0.3megapixel camera, 0.9kg, three-year warranty.

VERDICT An inexpensive machine that you can use yourself or give to your kids to cut their IT teeth on.

APACER AUDIO STENO AU860

One player to rule them all

PRICE **\$80**

CONTACT +9714 397 8035

WEB www.apacer.com



We've often said that focused products fair better than those that try to do everything and, to date, we've been proven right countless times. The new Audio Steno AU860 from Apacer however is one product that actually impressed us despite packing in a raft of features.

Though positioned as an audio player, the AU860 actually packs in voice recording and FM functions along with video and photo playback. In terms of audio support, the player can tackle MP3s and WMA files and playing both, the AU860 produces clear and punchy sound via its headphones.

Video playback comes in the form of WMV/AVI/MPEG-1 and MPEG4 support.

Before you can actually watch movies and videos however, you'll have to convert your existing files first, as the 1.8" screen offers a native resolution of only 128 x 160 pixels. The process, using the included software, is painless and when it comes to playback, the screen does a good job of rendering motion video. Photo quality is decent too though owing to the small screen size, you're not going to see a whole lot of detail.

Aesthetically, the AU860 looks the business with its unique shape. (It's comfortable to hold too.) The interface is logically laid out and makes good use of the LCD and thus, in-conjunction with the responsive touchpad, interaction is no problem at all.

PERFORMANCE
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SPECIFICATIONS

Media player, 4Gbyte storage capacity, 1.8" colour LCD screen (128 x 160 pixel

resolution), USB2.0 interface, touch-pad interface, carrying bag, Windows ME/2000/XP/Vista compatible, two-year warranty.

VERDICT Don't let the low price fool you, the AU860 boasts a surprising number of useful and useable features.