

Pocket Rockets! Portable computers that want to change the way we work.
By Iain Farrell for The List 2003

At Macworld in January Steve Jobs, head of Apple announced to the world that "...someday notebook computers will be 50 percent of all PCs that we ship," adding that 2003 was "the year of the notebook". As portables become more powerful the ability to take your work anywhere with you makes laptops a versatile choice of computer and now the industry wants to make **you** want one. Clever new features, stylish design and the promise of wireless internet access in your local coffee house are just some of the ways they want to tempt you.

We look at the latest Apple portables which, as we've come to expect combine beauty and power with ease of use and check out the latest tablet PCs which Microsoft promise are going to revolutionise the way work. We also take a sneaky peek at a couple of products which will be worth looking out for in the future.

iBook

The laptop which fits in your 'backpack and your life' the iBook is the laptop for the masses. It combines the fabulous Mac OS X operating system with an ample 700/800mhz G3 processor and loads of free software. What this means in real terms is that out of the box your laptop will happily check your mail, browse the web burn CDs and play DVDs. It's light too at 2.2kg and it's 12" screen and 6 hour battery life make it an ideal college or university companion.

<http://www.apple.com/uk/ibook>

12" Powerbook

The worlds smallest fully featured notebook the 12" powerbook is everything the iBook is but with bigger teeth. Designed with the computer professional in mind the entry level machine at £1,399 is not beyond the consumer and given the powerful G4 processor and built in Bluetooth if you want to do more with your machine both at home and at work this is for you.

<http://www.apple.com/uk/powerbook/index12.html>

17" Powerbook

The world's first 17" portable. At just over 3kg it's not light but then you no longer have to leave your office in the office. At £2,598.99 it's not cheap aimed at the pro user with it all. Along with the important professional features such as a 1ghz processor and DVD writer comes the innovative ambient light sensors which automatically adjust the illumination of the screen and keyboard so you can see what you're typing in the dark!

<http://www.apple.com/uk/powerbook/index17.html>

Tablet PC TC 1000

The tablet PC revolution wants to get us all writing again and this latest from Compaq does it in style. Not the nippiest of tablet PCs what it lacks in power it makes up for in being less than 3lbs and is aimed more squarely at consumers than business users. It runs the tablet edition of Windows XP and although it doesn't ship with much else in the way of software it's going for the handy home user.

<http://www.compaq.com/products/tabletpc>

Toshiba Portege 3505 Tablet PC

Widely regarded as the pick of the tablet PCs on the market. At 4lbs it's reasonably light, sports a 40gb hard drive and a bright 12" screen. What makes this machine so very special is the fact that it can be a traditional notebook or tablet depending on what you want to do. A hinge at the base of the screen allows you to swivel the screen around and lay it flat over the keyboard for use as a tablet.

<http://www.toshiba.com> - the URL was very long and complicated

Smaller portable gadgetry which is going to help us to stay connected and is worth looking out for:

nVoy e100 from Pogo - <http://www.pogo-tech.com/>

A miniature communications device this fits in the palm of your hand and will allow you to send and receive messages, browse the web.

OQO - <http://www.oqo.com>

Branded as "Ultra Personal computing" the OQO is being designed to appeal to real people as a simple and durable portable computer. Hopefully it'll make it into manufacture this year. Backed by Microsoft this is one to watch!