

# HomeNetworking01.info

03/10/2011 |

## HomeNetworking01.info Annual Summary

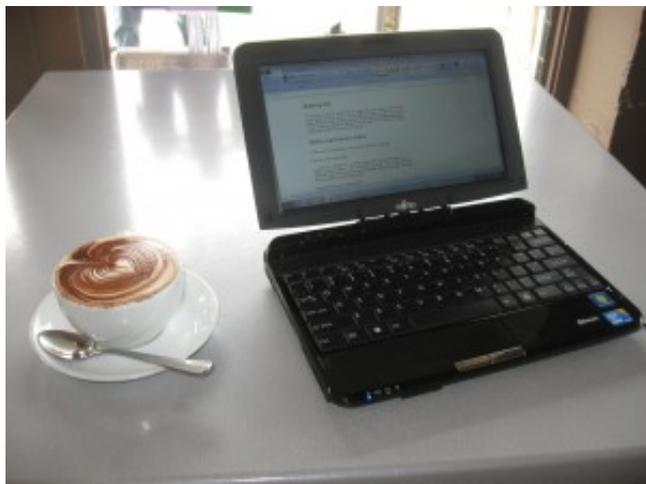
29/08/2011 11:30

Another year has passed for HomeNetworking01.info and a lot has happened over the past year, both with technology and with the content that has been written on this site.

### Technology

#### Major “under-the-hood” changes to the laptop computer

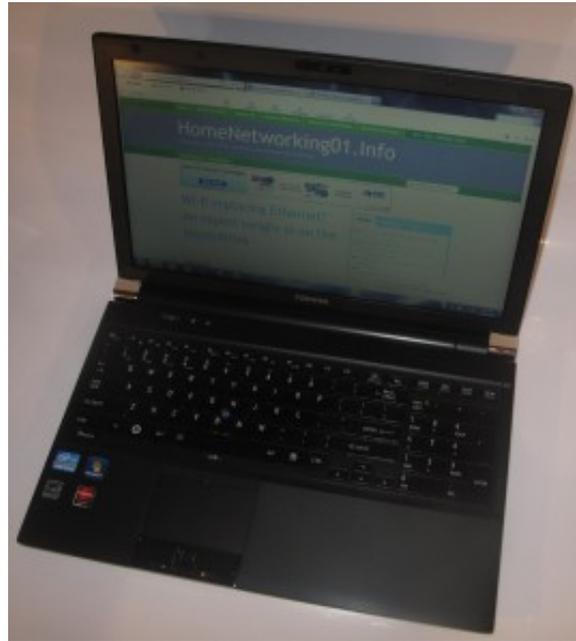
One major computing technology that has been influential over the past year are the combination CPU/GPU processors [1] from Intel, with the Sandy Bridge and AMD with the Zacate APU. These processors have yielded a major energy-saving benefit without much significant tradeoff in graphics performance. This has allowed for most graphic-intensive tasks like modest gaming or multimedia playback to be performed on laptop computers without the fear of the battery running out very quickly. Here, the battery runtimes are approaching real-world requirements especially where one intends to consider video playback on the plane or train journey for example.



[2]

This has also led to the increased arrival of “dual-mode” graphics [3] where a laptop computer can work either with a high-performance discrete graphics chipset or the integrated graphics system. It is more like operating a vehicle which has an overdrive or a transmission system that supports a “performance” operating mode alongside a “standard” or “economy” operating mode and being able to change between these modes by operating a switch of some form.

I have reviewed some laptops which have these new functions at their heart. These are in the form of two “desktop-replacement” units — Dell XPS L702x [4] which has NVIDIA graphics and the HP Pavillion DV7-6013TX [5] which has ATI graphics.



[6] But I have reviewed some laptops that use single-mode graphics such as a mainstream 15” business laptop in the form of the Toshiba Tecra R850 [7] which has single-mode ATI discrete graphics as well as an ultraportable in the form of the Toshiba Portege R830 [8]. This notebook is an example of what an ultraportable notebook can achieve on this technology, especially when it comes to extended battery life.

#### Notebook design approaching the “King of Cool”

This year, some computer manufacturers are designing notebook and laptop computer that have a lot of design similarities to Apple’s MacBook range of notebooks. This is an attempt to show up which computers can trump the Apple computers as far as having the coolest laptop computer at the Wi-Fi-equipped café is concerned.

This year, Dell has come up with a 15” laptop [9] which answers the Apple MacBook Pro range of laptops in aesthetics and functionality. There is a lot about this computer in the way it makes you think of the MacBook Pro, such as the speaker grilles flanking the keyboard and the similarly-styled trackpad. As well, Acer have lined up a 13” ultraportable [10] that looks just like the Apple MacBook Air series of ultraportables.

## Activity on the Apple Macintosh front



[11]

Rotel RCX-1500 CD receiver

Even so, the Apple Macintosh platform is not asleep as far as innovations go. They have launched the MacOS App Store [12] which is based on the successful iTunes App Store for the iOS devices. Here, one can buy and download Macintosh applications through this storefront rather than buying physical media for the programs or downloading from the developer's Web site.

A fear that I find with this trend is that it won't be feasible for developers to supply Macintosh software through their own storefront. This would include hardware manufacturers who need to provide software sets for their own devices. Nor would it be feasible for system integrators to pre-load software on to a Macintosh computer as part of setting up a standard operating environment for this platform.

It is also worth knowing that Apple has released the MacOS X "Lion" operating system [13] which offers a lot more visible improvement than what "Snow Leopard" offered. "Snow Leopard" was primarily all about "under-the-hood" improvements for the Macintosh operating system, especially tuning it for the multicore Intel microarchitecture. Here, Lion has offered a user experience that, in a lot of ways, approaches the Apple iOS platform as experienced on the Apple iPad. This includes applications delivered via the aforementioned App Store, "full screen" user interfaces without the customary top-of-screen menu bar, as well as iOS-style icon grids.

## The tablet and smartphone cause a major seachange in mobile computing



[14] One major change that has come about for mobile computing is the arrival of many smartphones and tablet computers. Infact

the smartphone or tablet computer doesn't have to be an Apple device anymore. This is due to an increased range of smartphones powered by Android or Windows Phone 7 smartphones and tablets powered by Android, especially the 3.0 "Gingerbread" version. I have reviewed an example of one of these tablets in the form of the Acer Iconia Tab A500 [15].

Apple has answered this trend by releasing the iPad 2, a 10" tablet that is slimmer and lighter than the original iPad. It still runs their iOS operating system which has been upgraded to 5.0. Here, existing iPads and other iOS devices will have the benefit of having system updates done without the need to tether the device to a computer.

As well, the tablets are placing the netbook "on notice" because they could do the same job as these computers yet run on batteries for a long time.

## Smart TV gains momentum

Another major connected-lifestyle change has been the arrival of Internet-enabled television experiences. Most of the TV industry have been focusing on the 3D viewing experience but there has been increased action on the connected TV front.

At the moment, it has been driven by manufacturers building up their own application platforms for their product lines. This is primarily in the form of user interfaces for the popular Internet video services that are optimised for "lean-back" enjoyment on larger screens. It is also including the integration of the social-networking sites in a manner that can be enjoyed that way, such as through "Twitter /Facebook tickers" or the ability to "page through" Facebook Photo Albums that you have access to.

It is also worth noting that most of these platforms are offering a Skype client which works with a camera that plugs in to these TVs. This is to allow the smart TV to provide corporate-style videoconferencing to small businesses and households.



[16] An example device that I have just reviewed is the Sony BDP-S380 Blu-Ray player [17] which offers the Internet video functionality in a form that I prefer. This is a video peripheral that can endow existing televisions [18] with the new trend of the "smart TV" and is more relevant as TV sets are known to last a very long time.

## IPv6 and Next-Generation Broadband

I have written a basic primer about IPv6 [19] and how it will affect the home and small-business computer user. This is because of the recent World IPv6 Day where web sites were encouraged to engage in "dual-stack" IPv6 hosting and there was all the talk about the Internet running out of IPv4 addresses. It is also a reality as the next-generation broadband networks that are based on fibre-optic technology come about and they may want to work towards IPv6 as a symbol of being a "cutting edge" service.

Speaking of which, I have been covering the issue of

next-generation broadband, especially as Australia and other countries are rolling out or planning these kind of Internet services. Typically these services are based on fibre-optic technology, with most of the desired setups centred around “fibre-to-the-home” / “fibre-to-the-premises” technology where the fibre-optic cable is run to the customer’s premises. There are other “part-fibre part-copper” services that are in deployment with copper-cable runs to the customer, usually from the street or the building. This technology is based typically on VDSL which is a short-run DSL system that uses telephone lines or Ethernet twisted-pair cabling.

## Website Content

### Industry Interviews



[20]

Brother HL-4150CDN colour laser printer

During the last week of October and the first week of November last year, I had visited Sydney. One of the main points of the trip was to engage further with the industry. Here, I had done interviews with two staff from Brother[21], a staff member from Bush Australia[22] and a staff member from Sony’s public-relations agent, Hausmann Communications. This allowed me to gain better insight in to what is going on with the industry and I will be making a point to work further with the companies and their PR firms when it comes to doing industry interviews.

### Product Reviews

As I have mentioned earlier, I have reviewed some of the Sandy-Bridge-powered laptops and these have lived up to the promise for Intel’s new chipset architecture.

I have also improved my review strategy by seeking out equipment from different manufacturers that serves a similar purposes. Examples of this are the 17” desktop-replacement multimedia laptop computers as well as “small-business-grade” monochrome laser multifunction printers. This allows me to compare equipment offered by different manufacturers in a better manner.



[23]

Western Digital LiveWire HomePlug AV Ethernet switch

Another review milestones that I have achieved over the past year include the first HomePlug product review for this site. My chance to review the WD LiveWire HomePlug AV [24] Ethernet switch has allowed me to affirm support for the HomePlug AV technology as a flexible reliable no-new-wires network technology.

I am increasing the number of network-enabled media devices and am looking for devices beyond the tabletop Internet radio class. One of these is the Rotel RCX-1500 [25] stereo CD receiver which represents an attempt to get more of the network-capable “big stereo” equipment for review. These are the stereo systems and components that are intended to stay in the same position, serving as a household’s main music systems rather than as an auxiliary music system.

### Other activity

As far as printing goes, I have been exposing printing technologies that allow most small organisations to be able to promote themselves more effectively. The technologies are the high-speed colour laser printer and the A3-capable colour inkjet printer.

I have established a “Small Business Technology[26]” page which is a landing page for technology articles that will appeal to the small-business. This has included the abovementioned printing technologies, setting up public-access wireless networks as part of giving your café, bar or similar business “the edge”, business-optimised laptop computers amongst other things.



[27]

I still cover issues that will pertain to home and small-business computing technology such as the recent crop of phone calls[28] that people have received from companies purporting to be genuine IT firms. As well I have prepared a quick-reference page for Twitter[29]in the same vein to what I have done for Facebook [30]. This is so that people can know who will see what they post when they Tweet or direct-message a person, especially as Twitter is becoming Facebook's sidekick.

## Conclusion

Expect to see a lot more coming through HomeNetworking01.info as different technologies start to appear. There will be equal focus on home-based "lifestyle" computing as well as computing for the small business owner who has to call the shots about their organisation's information technology.

## Links

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## Freebox Révolution—the first to be compatible with the full Apple ecosystem

26/08/2011 09:29

La Freebox Révolution est compatible avec AirPlay et Time Machine - DegroupNews.com[1]

### My Comments

It is not common for Internet-gateway equipment that is typically supplied by a communications provider or ISP to support any of the protocols that are peculiar to Apple's ecosystem. Typically a person who wanted a device to work tightly with their Macintosh or iOS device had to use a network device supplied by Apple or an Apple-approved third-party vendor.

Increasingly most network-attached storage devices started to support iTunes server functionality or Apple Time Machine backup functionality through the use of open-source components that were enabled through the device's Web-based dashboard. But the AirPlay playback function has been based on code that Apple controls and devices had to have Apple approval in order to compete with the Apple TV device as a media player.

Now Free, one of the telecommunications carriers in France's lively and competitive "triple-play" Internet market have integrated their latest Freebox Révolution customer equipment with the Apple ecosystem. This functionality is supplied for free as part of the latest firmware update for the Freebox Révolution router and set-top box.

At the moment, the AirPlay playback functionality is available through the Freebox Server's integrated speakers or an audio device connected to the Freebox Server's line output. The Time Machine network backup is done by using the Freebox Server's integrated hard disk.

There are some other slight improvements for the Freebox Player in the form of improved MKV compatibility and UTF-8 subtitle handling. But this device could really support the AirPlay

functionality better because it would ordinarily be hooked up to the TV and a good-quality home-theatre system. As well, if Apple allows, it could support AirPlay video playback from from a Macintosh computer or an iOS device.

It certainly shows how capable the consumer-premises equipment for a triple-play service can become under a highly-competitive environment for "triple-play" Internet.

### Links

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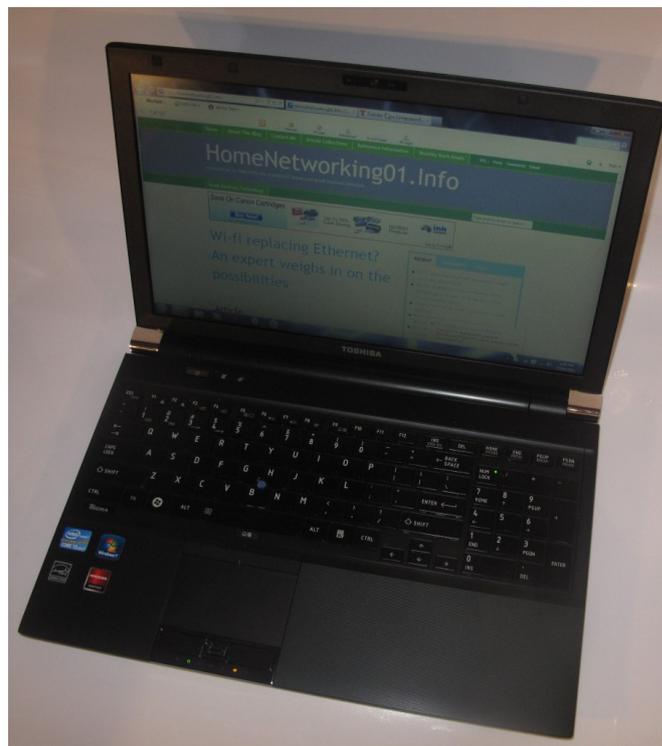
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## Product Review-Toshiba Tecra R850 laptop computer (Part No: PT520A-015003)

26/08/2011 05:22

### Introduction

I am reviewing the Toshiba Tecra R850 laptop which is a business-focused standard laptop computer driven by the Intel Sandy Bridge processor series. It has a few features that would make it appeal to small businesses who want that "work-home" laptop such as increased durability and a highly-resilient hard disk with a shock sensor.



[1]

Price

- this configuration AUD\$1738 Processor **Intel Sandy Bridge i5-2520M** Extra cost

Intel Sandy Bridge i7-2620M RAM **4Gb RAM** cheaper option

2Gb RAM shared with graphics on Intel HD setups Secondary Storage 500Gb hard disk DVD burner, SD card reader Display Subsystem **AMD Radeon HD 6450M graphics (1Gb memory)** Cheaper option Intel HD Graphics Screen **15" widescreen (1366×768)**

extra-cost

15" widescreen (1600×900) LED-backlit LCD Network Wi-Fi 802.11a/g/n Ethernet Gigabit Bluetooth 3.0 Wireless Broadband 3G optional Connectors ExpressCard 1 x ExpressCard 34 USB 3 x USB 2.0 (1 shared with eSATA), 1 x USB 3.0 eSATA 1 xeSATA shared with USB Video VGA, HDMI Audio 3.5mm headphone jack, digital via HDMI Operating System on supplied unit Microsoft Windows 7 Professional Windows Experience Index – this configuration Overall 5.1 Graphics 5.1 Gaming (Advanced) Graphics 6.3

### The computer itself

#### Aesthetics and Build quality

The Toshiba Tecra R850 series of laptops is finished in a black matte plastic finish with chrome-highlighted hinges. The lid and palm rest are finished with a fine herringbone-like ribbed texture that makes it less slippery to handle and gives a quality finish to the unit.

The unit feels very well-built like what would be expected of a good business-grade laptop, and I would expect it to withstand a lot of heavy use.

#### User interface

The Tecra's keyboard is a chiclet-style keyboard which, like the Portege R830 can be slippery to work. It could benefit from the keys having a rubber-feel capping or other rough texture on them to cut down on the slippery feel. At least you can still touch-type accurately on these computers.



[2]

Keyboard with thumbstick and trackpad

The Toshiba Tecra R850 Series uses a dual-control interface for mouse-cursor control. Here, you have the familiar trackpad but also have a "thumbstick" (joystick) that was common on IBM/Lenovo Thinkpad laptops. The latter option may be of use if you want accurate cursor control.

You can disable the trackpad if you find that the cursor jumps around as you type, which I have found with this computer. This can be done by pressing a button under the spacebar rather than going through menus.

As well, there is a fingerprint reader that is used for secure logon and works with a Toshiba-supplied "password keyring" program as well as with Windows.

#### Expandability and Connectivity



[3]

Left-hand-side connectors with USB 3.0, VGA, HDMI, ExpressCard slot and SD card reader

The Toshiba does well on expandability in that it has an ExpressCard slot for any future expansion options that may come along. As well, there is a USB 3.0 socket, a combined USB 2.0 /eSATA socket and two regular USB 2.0 sockets, which will satisfy the most peripheral-endowed workplaces.

It is also worth noting that all of the recent Toshiba laptops such as this one and the Portege R830 that I previously reviewed have the Kensington locking slot located on the right-hand hinge pin.

#### Audio and Video

The sound from the Toshiba's inbuilt speakers is typical for a laptop computer. Here, there isn't the full bass response and it comes out as very low-powered. If you want to gain better sound quality from this Tecra computer as well as most other laptops, I would prefer to use extension speakers, an outboard sound system or headphones for applications where you appreciate good sound quality.



[4]

Right hand side with DVD burner, 2 x USB 2.0 sockets, USB 2.0 /eSATA socket, audio output, Gigabit Ethernet and Kensington lock slot

It is so easy to limit the display quality assessment of a business-market laptop to just text-based work but it is worth remembering that these laptops are used beyond the business norm of spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations. Here they end up primarily as “business-home” laptops where the computer is taken home and used for multimedia activity there. In addition, a lot of businesses are dabbling in video and rich graphics as part of their presentation technique; and there is an increasing amount of business-focused multimedia content out there on the Web.

The AMD Radeon-powered display has a quality that suits most video tasks, but the display can be a bit too pale when run on the battery-saving mode. There isn't ready access to the dual-mode graphics that the Sandy Bridge chipset is known for, so you can't easily switch to Intel HD graphics if you want to run the Tecra R850 on integrated graphics to “spin out” the battery runtime further.

What I also like about this unit's screen is that it isn't of the reflective type which is the norm with a lot of laptops. This also makes the screen less of a fingerprint magnet. The unit has a VGA connector which will come in handy for older projectors that have this connector as well as an HDMI audio-video connector for newer displays. This also means that it can be connected to an amplifier or digital-audio converter that has HDMI inputs for better sound. It also has the regular headphone jack for connection to headphones or other equipment that yields better sound.

#### **Battery life**

I had ran the Toshiba Tecra R850 through the DVD run-down test and it was able to play for nearly 5 hours from fully-charged before the battery ran out to a critically-low point. I have also subjected this laptop to long sessions of regular use while on battery and have noticed that there was very little impact on the battery runtime available.

As I have noticed before, the new-generation Intel chipsets have improved the battery runtime for these laptops. This is even though the Toshiba didn't have accessible dual-mode graphics.

#### **Other experience notes**

A feature that I appreciate with the Toshiba Tecra R850 Series business laptops, and one that may be common amongst a lot of its business-focused peers is a shock-protection mechanism for the hard disk. Here, if the hard disk experiences a sudden jolt or extended vibration, the read-write heads are parked in a safe zone away from the data and all read-write activity is delayed until the computer is stable. In some cases, this may lead to the computer taking longer to hibernate when you pack it away in your bag.

This is a function that is important for laptops that are likely to be carried around frequently while in operation. Of course, when these laptops are off, the disk heads would be parked at a safe location; and I would see these functions as being mandatory for

all portable computers.

The Tecra doesn't run excessively hot during use. This is due to internal design to permit proper airflow and a temperature-controlled fan that operates at the required speed for the situation.

#### **Limitations And Points Of Improvement**

One point of improvement that I would like to see for the Toshiba business laptops is for the keyboard to have distinct texturing on the keys so they don't feel as slippery to use, especially if you touch type. This could be achieved through the use of rubberised keycaps or just simply rough-textured keycaps.

As well, Toshiba could work on a variant of this computer series which has the ruggedness and performance capabilities of the series like the hard-disk safeguarding features but doesn't have the “managed computing” features that would be required for corporate deployment. This variant could then be targeted at students and small business users who want something that is long-lasting but less costly.

It could be part of a “bridge” laptop product lineup that stands between the computers normally sold to the “big end of town” and the consumer laptops that are sold through big-box retailers.

#### **Conclusion**

I would specify the Toshiba Tecra R830 Series computers as an all-round “work-home” laptop for most small-business owners who want to move their offices to the “new computing environment”. The test configuration is able to support most business and home tasks very adequately.



[5]I would recommend the higher-end configurations if you do a lot of graphics-intensive work like creating “rough-cut” videos or finely editing pictures. On the other hand, the 3G-enabled variants would be useful if you are able to manage a separate 3G wireless-broadband service with its separate allowance. On the other hand, you could wirelessly-tether your smartphone to your non-3G variant of this laptop for use with your wireless-broadband service.

#### **Links**

[1]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-004-Toshiba-Tecra-R850.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medi](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-004-Toshiba-Tecra-R850.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medi)

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[4]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-013-RHS-detail.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-013-RHS-detail.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[5]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-014-Back-shot.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-014-Back-shot.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

## Product Review–Sony BDP-S380 Internet Blu-Ray Player

26/08/2011 03:19

### Introduction

I have written a previous article [1] about recent Blu-Ray players with Internet-video functionality and how they can bless a TV with many years in its life with this “smart-TV” or “Internet-video” functionality.

Now I am reviewing the Sony BDP-S380 Internet-enabled Blu-Ray player which is an example of these players and is the entry-level model in Sony’s component Blu-Ray player lineup. This unit interests me because it is an example of a Blu-Ray player that can extend the functionality of existing TV sets, including older and cheaper units, by providing access to Internet TV services.

The BDP-S480, which is the next model up in the series and costs AUD\$30 extra, has the functionality of this player but can show 3D-capable Blu-Ray discs on 3D-capable displays, as well as drawing down material held on the DLNA Home Media Network. The BDP-S580 also has integrated Wi-Fi functionality for most home and small-business Wi-Fi networks.



[2]

### Price

Recommended Retail Price: AUD\$199

Sony BDP-S480 Recommended Retail Price: AUD\$229

### Functions

Internet Radio NPR Radio Internet TV YouTube, LiveStrong, Wired, Market-specific catch-up TV services Optical Disk Blu-Ray /DVD /SACD /CD Stored Memory USB Mass-Storage Device

### Connections

**Output** Audio Line output 2 x RCA stereo Digital Audio output SPDIF PCM /Bitstream via RCA coaxial PCM /Bitstream via HDMI Video Line output 1 x RCA composite, Component Video Line Output 3xRCA jacks (YCC or RGB) Video HDMI output 1 x HDMI **Network** Wi-Fi 802.11n WPA2 WPS with optional Sony dongle Ethernet Yes

### The unit itself

The Sony BDP-S380 is a slimline Blu-Ray Disc player that can work well as a DVD player or basic gateway to video-on-demand services.

### Equipment setup

You can connect this Sony Blu-Ray player to a large range of older and newer video equipment. An example of this is the component video output being able to be set to yield RGB component video as well as YCC component video. This will please those of us who have European TVs that are equipped with a SCART connector or video projectors and monitors that have RGB video connectors. In the former case, the user will need to purchase a SCART-component-video cable and in the latter case, they will need to make sure the device accepts basic RGB video input through three RCA or BNC terminals.



[3]

### Rear panel connections

Of course, the BDP-S380 can work with HDMI-enabled video equipment as a Blu-Ray player should and has the ability to connect to home-theatre receivers or digital preamplifiers via an SP/DIF coaxial RCA connector.

It can connect to the home network via Ethernet or Wi-Fi via an extra-cost USB dongle available from Sony. Personally, I would connect this player to the home network via an Ethernet or HomePlug AV connection in order to benefit from reliable performance, and have tested this player’s network ability with this connection setup.

## General operation experience



[4]

### Remote control

The BDP-S389 Blu-Ray player has a user experience similar to what happens with other Sony consumer audio-video equipment made over the last few years that uses the TV as its user interface. Examples of this include the PlayStation 3 and the STR-DA5500ES home theatre receiver which I reviewed previously.

This user interface, known as the “XrossBar” interface, has you moving between the main media types (Music, Pictures, Video) and the Setup and Network options using the “Left” and “Right” buttons on the device’s remote’s D-pad. Then you select the options like media collections and services or setup screens using the “Up” and “Down” buttons on that D-pad. When you are in this interface, you really know where you are because you still see some of the other top-level icons on the screen.

### Local media playback

The Sony BDP-S380 is able to work properly as a fully-functional standard Blu-Ray player. This includes the ability to work with BonusView and BD-Live discs that require reusable local storage or network connectivity.

Of course, like nearly all DVD and Blu-Ray players that are on the market since the last few years, this unit need to be operated by their remote control.

It can play content held on USB Mass-Storage Devices, primarily memory keys and single-unit flash-card readers. The instructions mention that this player could work with USB hard disks but the player may not provide enough power to drive the bus-powered 2.5” hard disks by itself.

Here, the Sony has two USB ports for connection of these media devices. But the front port can be used for the optional Wi-Fi dongle or a USB keyboard. At the moment, this would come in handy when using the built-in YouTube or Qriocity services where you enter in user login details or search for media. The

rear USB port is used for separate local storage if you are using BD-Live or BonusView discs.

There is a small display on the front that can come in handy for playback of audio CDs and SACDs without the need for the TV to be on.

### Network Media

The Sony BDP-S380 can be used to connect to the local “catch-up TV” /video-on-demand services that are offered by most of the channels. For Australian viewers, this includes the ABC iView service, the SBS service and the Plus7 service.

You also have access to other Internet video libraries like the YouTube library, the Qriocity library, LiveStrong.com amongst many others. With some of the libraries, you have to log in to the libraries to gain proper functionality such as access to personalised content selections. There is an option to allow this player to regularly poll for new services that are delivered on the Bravia Internet Video platform, which you can do through the setup menus.

The login experience for services like Qriocity and YouTube is primarily “SMS-based” where you use the numeric keypad on the remote control to enter your login parameters. If you need to change character sets, you have to highlight a “ABC” /“123” option using the D-pad. There is the option to use a USB keyboard for improved login experience.

Like most of these devices, there isn’t any form of catering for the reality of multiple users sharing the one piece of equipment. Here, if you log out of the YouTube client for example, the software doesn’t cache your username - you have to enter these details fully.

Being an entry-level model, the Sony BDP-S380 loses some features. One of these, which I find critical for the networked home, is DLNA media playback. The Sony BDP-S480, which is the model above, has this feature along with Blu-Ray 3D playback as the two main differentiating features.

### Limitations and Points Of Improvement

I would recommend that Sony provides the DLNA media playback feature across the whole component Blu-Ray player range for the next model run and provide extra DLNA features like MediaRenderer functionality for step-up and top-shelf models.

As well, I would like to see support for an improved multi-user “hot-seat” experience for this class of devices, such as retention of username and/or simplified PIN login options. It could also benefit from social communications features like Twitter /Facebook access and a Skype videoconferencing terminal in a similar vein to Sony’s BRAVIA TV sets.

## Conclusion

I would recommend the Sony BDP-S380 Blu-Ray player as a good-quality Blu-Ray /basic Internet video solution for use with a cheaper or older TV set. This is more so for those of us who want to “cut our teeth” on Internet video by replacing a half-dead “Chinese-special” DVD player rather than replacing a TV set with many miles left in it. You also get a good-quality reliable optical disc player as well as an Internet-video terminal in the same package.

If you want more functionality with your home network, especially if you have lots of media on a network-attached storage device, I would prefer that you spend the extra AUD\$30 and go for the Sony BDP-S480 rather than this model.

## Links

- [1]  
[/2011/06/blu-ray-playersthey-could-give-more-life-to-older-and-cheaper-tvs/#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](#)
- [2]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-019-Sony-BDP-S380.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-019-Sony-BDP-S380.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [3]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-025-Rear-panel-connections-detail.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-025-Rear-panel-connections-detail.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [4]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-026-Remote-control.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-25-026-Remote-control.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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# Now it's firm - Steve Jobs to resign from chief executive at Apple

25/08/2011 05:08

## Articles

[Steve Jobs resigns as Apple Chief Executive | SmartCompany.com.au](#)[1]

[Steve Jobs steps down from Apple | CNet](#)[2]

[Steve Jobs quits as Apple CEO | The Age \(Australia\)](#)[3]

## My comments

There has been a lot of press about Steve Jobs intending to resign from Apple's chief-executive position due to ill health. Now it had to happen that he is resigning. He is still able to maintain his position in Apple's board of directors, both as a director and as the chairman of the board.

I see it as something that had to happen for another of personal-computing's “old dogs”. These are the people who had founded companies that had been very instrumental to the development and marketing of commercially-viable personal computers. A few years ago, Bill Gates had resigned from

Microsoft which he had founded.

This is more about a “change of the guard” at the top of these “pillar companies” as the technology behind these computers leads to highly-capable equipment for the home and business. This includes affordable mobile tablet computers that are operated by one's touch and the smartphone which becomes a “jack of all trades”, working as a phone, personal stereo, handheld email terminal, handheld Web browser and more.

It is so easy to cast doubt over a company once a figurehead relinquishes the reins but I have seen many companies keep their same spirit alive and continue demonstrating their prowess at their core competencies.

As well, even though people may criticise him for how he manages the iTunes App Store and the Apple platforms, as in keeping them closed, Steve Jobs and Apple are in essence milestones to the connected lifestyle.

## Links

- [1]  
[http://www.smartcompany.com.au/information-technology/20110825-breaking-news-steve-jobs-resigns-as-apple-chief-executive-replaced-by-coo-tim-cook.html?utm\\_source=SmartCompany&utm\\_campaign=23b30c0ec1-Thursday\\_25\\_August\\_2011\\_19\\_2011&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.smartcompany.com.au/information-technology/20110825-breaking-news-steve-jobs-resigns-as-apple-chief-executive-replaced-by-coo-tim-cook.html?utm_source=SmartCompany&utm_campaign=23b30c0ec1-Thursday_25_August_2011_19_2011&utm_medium=email)
- [2]  
[http://news.cnet.com/8301-27076\\_3-20096895-248/steve-jobs-steps-down-from-apple/?tag=nl.e498](http://news.cnet.com/8301-27076_3-20096895-248/steve-jobs-steps-down-from-apple/?tag=nl.e498)
- [3]  
<http://www.theage.com.au/technology/technology-news/steve-jobs-quits-as-apple-ceo-20110825-1jat8.html>

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# Wi-fi replacing Ethernet? An expert weighs in on the possibilities

24/08/2011 05:38

## Article

[Wi-fi replacing Ethernet? An expert weighs in on the possibilities | SearchNetworking.com](#)[1]

## My Comments

After reading the short article by Lisa Pfifer in SearchNetworking.com, it has enforced my line that I have run concerning Wi-Fi vs Ethernet as a primary network technology. She had looked at the issue from the corporate network angle and had found that Wi-Fi hasn't yet reached the standards of Gigabit Ethernet and that Ethernet suits servers and other applications where there is sessile equipment being expected to provide high-reliability service. She also emphasised that Wi-Fi networking is RADIO and is prone to the same reliability issues that affects radio-based networks.

I have encompassed the HomePlug powerline-based network technology as a no-new-wires wired-network option and support the technology on this site and its use in this way.

For the home network, I would agree, especially in the context of

the home entertainment applications. These applications are typically served by equipment that is normally expected to be sessile, like the large television set or its video peripherals; and the best enjoyment of audio or video content is provided if there is smooth continuous playback through the viewing session. Most, if not all, networked home-entertainment equipment would have an Ethernet socket for wired-network connectivity and I would find it more appropriate to use an Ethernet link or HomePlug powerline link to connect this kind of equipment to the home network.

As far as the small business is concerned, I would use Ethernet for normally-sessile applications like point-of-sale terminals, desktop computers and network printers while using Wi-Fi wireless for applications that are intended to be mobile like laptop computers or tablets. Some of you may find HomePlug technology can also serve temporary setups involving fixed computer hardware such as sale-specific supplementary point-of-sale terminals.

Of course, the building that the network is used in often determines the reliability and quality of a Wi-Fi wireless network. Examples of this include thick brick or stone walls, reinforced concrete and use of reflective-foil insulation and double-glazing.

It is definitely an example of a different reality to what the industry, especially the consumer computing and electronics industry wants us to believe, where Wi-Fi wireless technology is the “way to go” for networking.

Wi-Fi wireless networks are to **complement** wired network technology!

#### Links

[1]  
[http://searchnetworking.techtarget.com/answer/Wi-fi-replacing-Ethernet-An-expert-weighs-in-on-the-possibilities?asrc=EM\\_NLN\\_14664488&track=NL-79&ad=845252&](http://searchnetworking.techtarget.com/answer/Wi-fi-replacing-Ethernet-An-expert-weighs-in-on-the-possibilities?asrc=EM_NLN_14664488&track=NL-79&ad=845252&)

## Devolu dLAN® 200 AVpro DINrail—a fixed HomePlug AV bridge for integration to a circuit-breaker board

24/08/2011 04:24

#### Press Release - German language

devolo präsentiert ersten dLAN®-Hutschienenadapter für Smart Home- und Smart Metering-Anwendungen[1]

#### Product Page - German language

dLAN® 200 AVpro DINrail ... Produktbeschreibung ... devolo AG [2]

#### My Comments

Devolu have just released the dLAN 200 AVpro DINrail HomePlug AV-Ethernet bridge which is intended as a “built-in” HomePlug AV on-ramp.

Here, this unit is Intended to be installed by a professional electrician and is installed in a circuit-breaker board that works to the standard “DIN-rail” mount. When installed, there is an exposed Ethernet socket for connection to Ethernet-ended network equipment.

The main applications that this unit is being pitched at are energy-monitoring /control applications, especially with “smart meters” that have an Ethernet connection. In the same context, it could work with network-enabled HVAC equipment that uses an Ethernet connection but is direct-wired via the AC supply via an isolating switchboard.

It can then also apply to other integrated-wiring installations where you may want an Ethernet connection local to the power switchboard. An example of this could be a broom cupboard under the stairs which has the house’s main switchboard. Here, it could be tempting to hide the network-Internet “edge” equipment in that area and install the HomePlug “on-ramp” there, even if there is Ethernet or Wi-Fi access to the main Internet service available around the house.

Another example that would be relevant to HomePlug AV installations on larger properties is “pushing out” HomePlug AV coverage to remote buildings as I have explained here[3]. This is where you have two different HomePlug AV segments connected via an Ethernet link and two of these Devolo DINrail units could be mounted in the garage’s or barn’s isolating switchboard and linked with a short Ethernet cable. Of course, one would be linked with the main HomePlug segment and the other to a unique segment that serves the barn and any buildings or caravans wired off it.

Other applications also include installations like some previous HomePlug backbone setups based around Devolo dLAN hardware that were used in a few German schools. Here, these installations used HomePlug as the network backbone.

It might also be easy to think of using this unit to build a “network-ready” isolating switchbox that is closed up. Here, a patch cord from the Devolo dLAN 200AVPro DINRail bridge’s Ethernet socket could be run to an Ethernet socket mounted on the side of the box, so as to connect up network-enabled equipment local to that switchbox.

An improvement that I would like to see for this unit would be a SimpleConnect button on the front of the unit so that customers can quickly associate regular HomePlug AV devices to this unit while keeping it as a “reference” unit for the segment that it is part of. This could be defeated through software for “smart-meter” environments and other environments where you don’t like the customer to “detach” the unit from an established network.

At least this unit could appeal to those of us who want the “integrated” HomePlug AV solution for our home networks. In addition, this could become a piece of kit that local “sparkies” could have available for sale and installation, especially if they cater to the connected home or small business.

#### Links

[1]  
<http://www.devolu.de/consumer/prs1048-devolo-praesentiert-erst-en-dlan-hutschienenadapter-fuer-smart-home-und-smart-metering-g-anwendungen.html>

[2]  
[http://www.devalo.de/business/85\\_dlan-200-avpro-dinrail\\_produk\\_tvorstellung\\_1.html?l=de](http://www.devalo.de/business/85_dlan-200-avpro-dinrail_produk_tvorstellung_1.html?l=de)  
[3]  
[/2009/02/feature-article-understanding-and-managing-your-home-plug-network/#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://2009/02/feature-article-understanding-and-managing-your-home-plug-network/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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## A fibre network to cover Lancashire's rural parishes

22/08/2011 03:49

### News Articles

thinkbroadband :: B4RN to deploy 1Gbps fibre network to rural parishes in Lancashire[1]

### Web site

B4RN website[2]

### My comments

Another valiant effort is taking place to connect rural England to real broadband Internet. This time it is happening in Lancashire's rural areas north of Lancaster.

This is being achieved through a community-benefit company called "B4RN" which stands for "Broadband for Rural North". The service is a fibre-to-the-premises service that is being provided to homes, farms and small businesses in these rural parishes. They have a goal to cover all of the 5162 properties but are working it in three phases. This is with the digging of the first phase to commence around Christmas 2011 and the first subscribers on board by January 2012.

What is interesting is that the capital for the effort is being raised through a share issue to the community and that the company is established as a "community-benefit" company where the assets are there for the community rather than being sold off if anything happens to the company.

The effort for the broadband rollout is being driven through shared local labour. It doesn't matter whether it is to dig the necessary trenches or lay down the conduit and fibre-optic cable in order to connect up the properties. There is even support for training and upskilling locals into these areas where necessary and even the business's office labour is local-based. One of the videos on the B4RN site even related this effort to how mains electricity was brought to rural Lancashire in the 1930s, through the use of community effort in preparing the infrastructure for the service.

At the moment, B4RN are selling the 1Gbps broadband services for £30 /month tax inclusive and with a £150 connection fee. A good question that may be raised with this service is whether B4RN would be looking at supplying VoIP telephony and /or IPTV as part of an extra-cost option or primarily offer a "purely-data" service for their customers. This is although most next-generation services typically will be expected to offer a "single-pipe triple-play" service with TV and telephony down the same connection as part of their service pack.

This service is another example of how rural communities can become active about bringing real broadband Internet to their areas rather than bemoaning the lack of the service. It also put forward the case for use of fibre-optic technology to deliver broadband to farms rather than unreliable radio services.

### Links

[1]  
<http://www.thinkbroadband.com/news/4767-b4rn-to-deploy-1gbps-fibre-network-to-rural-parishes-in-lancashire.html>  
[2] <http://www.b4rn.org.uk/>

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## How Will We Benefit From Super-Fast Broadband (BBC 5 Live interview)

20/08/2011 04:04

### Article

BBC News - How will we benefit from super-fast broadband? (Audio - radio interview)[1]

### My Comments

I have listened to a BBC Radio 5 Live radio broadcast that was available on-demand from the BBC Website about how we will benefit from the next-generation broadband Internet technology that is being rolled out now.

The BBC Radio 5 Live interview compared the current situation with what happened 10 years ago when broadband "hot-and-cold running Internet" came on the scene. At that time, the primary method of connection to the Internet was dial-up, typically with a second PSTN phone line for Internet use. The primary personal Internet applications were emailing and Web surfing, with some instant-messaging thrown in. There were questions about whether we needed the higher bandwidth of the always-on broadband services or not.

Nowadays, the norm for Internet connectivity is an "always-on" broadband service of at least 1Mbps, more like 2Mbps and we are doing more with these services. Here we are using the Social Web, with services like Facebook and Twitter; as well as multimedia-driven computing applications like YouTube and IPTV /Web video. It would also include IP-driven telephony applications like VoIP including Skype; where you benefit from low-cost long-distance telephone calls, FM-grade voice telephony and the arrival of the videophone which was only thought of in science fiction.

This is although there is a persistent group of naysayers who continue to doubt the need for next-generation broadband. They would reckon that the current technology would satisfy current usage needs. Personally, I have seen the effects of Moore's Law where the capacity increases and the cost decreases for a technology, thus opening up new applications or enhancing the experience of current applications.

One main application group that the broadcast talked of as being feasible with super-fast broadband was health and well-being applications mainly in the form of telehealth services. This

included the idea of “independent ageing” which I would see as a reality as people live longer and the age-associated degradation takes longer to set in.

Personally, I would find that as the next-generation broadband Internet services light up in many neighbourhoods, it will be more about an enhanced and rich Internet experience.

#### Links

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-14547131>

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## Lost data on USB drives—can even affect individuals and small business

19/08/2011 08:00

### Articles - From the horse's mouth

Press Release | Kingston[1]

#### My Comments

I have had a look at the Kingston press release about the security of data held on USB flash drives and found that it was based on a Ponemon Institute study commissioned by Kingston. The main factor that I had observed was that the survey was based on data that represented the “big end of town” – the larger companies and government departments who typically handle a lot of high-stakes company and customer data.

Here I still find that small businesses and individuals are as at risk from removable-media data theft as are larger organisations. Most of these users would consider secure data storage as storing the confidential data on a USB memory key or external hard disk rather than on the computer's hard disk. Here, they would keep that memory key or external hard disk locked in a desk drawer, filing cabinet or safe when the data is not needed. If the data isn't changed or viewed often, like a valuables inventory, the USB memory key or external hard disk may be kept at a bank's safe-deposit facility.

As well, the typical USB memory key can be attached to one's keyring that has their house, car and business keys on it and a lot of these users may take advantage of the fact. These key rings are often at risk of loss due to absent-mindedness that can be common amongst us or theft as has been known to happen in the UK and Europe where houses have been broken into in order to steal the keys for powerful or expensive cars that are parked at these houses.

Of course, it is not just government and big business who handle or are responsible for “high-stakes” ultra-confidential data. Small businesses and individuals can also handle this kind of data, whether they provide services to these entities or not.

For example, I had provided technology assistance to a “one-person” business who valued fine art, antiques and collectables. This involved the handling of data relating to the collectable items and who owned the collectable items, as I commissioned newly-bought computers or trained her in computing techniques.

As well, individuals may need to keep copies of information pertaining to personal medical and legal issues where there is a strong emotional link. This information may be considered of high value where it concerns individuals who are in the “public eye” and the tabloid media are hungry for any bit of information about these individuals in order to run that exclusive “scoop”.

A common reality that this “enterprise-focused” article misses is that the typical small-business owner or personal user chooses and purchases their own computer hardware from retail. This is compared to larger organisations who maintain a dedicated IT team who is responsible for purchasing and maintaining the computer and communications technology for that organisation.

For this class of user, I would recommend that they use removable storage that is made by respected brands like Kingston, Verbatim, Sony or SanDisk. It may be worth knowing that some of the good retailers may resell these good brands under their own labels, usually in the premium end of those labels.

I would also recommend that you investigate the use of security-enabled encrypted USB memory keys. Here, I would look for those units that have continual software support from the vendor. This is important if you change your computing platform like what Apple hopes use do or move to newer versions of our current operating systems.

As well, you should make sure that you have good desktop security software on your computer. You could even get by with free programs like AVG or Microsoft Security Essentials. Even Macintosh users should make sure they run good anti-malware software on these computers especially as software threats are targeting this platform as well.

It is also worth making use of strong passwords or other data-locking options that the operating system or USB security software may provide for the confidential data. This may work in conjunction with the common practice of keeping the removable media under lock and key such as in a locked filing cabinet or safe.

What I fear is that a lot of press concerning data security tends to be focused at the big end of town and smaller users tend to be forgotten about. As well, a lot of the good-quality data-security options are often designed and priced out of the range of the small business operator or consumer even though there is a need for this level of data security amongst some of this class of user.

#### Links

[1] <http://www.kingston.com/press/2011/flash/08c.asp>

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# QR Codes—a useful tool for promoting your organisation

17/08/2011 04:45

## What are QR Codes

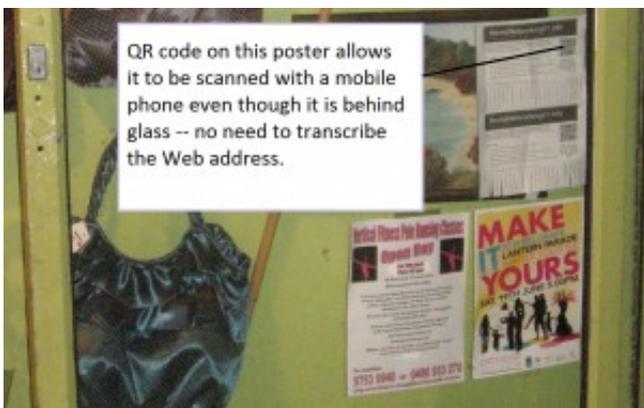


[1]

QR code used in a newspaper to link to its mobile site

A QR Code is a two-dimensional monochrome barcode that is designed to house a long text string. This may represent contact details or Wi-Fi network parameters but is commonly used to provide a link to a Web-hosted resource. These barcodes may be printed on a newspaper, business card or flyer; or even shown on a Website; the latter method being used to show links to software for the Android platform.

Typically, a person who has a mobile phone equipped with a QR-code reader app can then just point the phone's camera to the barcode and "take a picture" of that barcode. This then leads to the contact details being put in their contact list or the user being taken to the Web site or Web-hosted resource. This function has even been extended to supplying GPS coordinates to a device for navigation (think of geocaching) or, in the case of Android phones, supplying Wi-Fi service parameters to these phones as part of provisioning hotspot service.



[2]

A QR code as used on a poster to advertise this site

They are popular in Europe especially with cafes and restaurants but are slowly increasing in popularity in other countries. As well, some commentators have described the QR code as a way of providing a machine-readable hyperlink in the field. It is also worth having a look at various QR-code blogs like this one[3] so you can know what the trend is about.

In fact, when I promote HomeNetworking01.info using posters or business cards, I make sure there is a QR code pointing to the site so that people can use their phones to head to the site.

## Why QR codes for your organisation

One major benefit that QR codes have for your print-based campaigns is that you can insert a direct link to your Webpage or a resource on that Webpage. Your audience then can visit that resource without having to memorise a URL or transcribe the URL in to the phone using a small touchscreen keyboard or SMS-style with the phone keypad.

The QR code is better than using Bluetooth transmitters to provide content. This is because the user isn't likely to be annoyed with "accept this" Bluetooth responses from these transmitters when they come in to range of the transmitters. As well, the user doesn't have to remember how to enable or disable Bluetooth discovery mode on their device. As well you don't need to make sure there is a transmitter at the advertisement and make sure there is power to the transmitter, which can make the QR code acceptable even for posters on that noticeboard or shop door.

It is also better than using any of the proposed "near-field communication" technology for linking to Web resources because you don't need to buy and integrate near-field transmitters in your promotional materials for the technology to work.

## Direct Link to deep Web resources

You may want to provide a sound clip, video or PDF file to your mobile users. As well, you may want to link the user to a particular Web page about a product or promotion. But mobile users may find these resources difficult to gain access to on your site because of being required to enter a long URL into that numeric or small alphabetic keypad.

The QR code can provide the direct link to your campaign page, PDF file or audiovisual resource in a manner that is ready to download "there and then". If the resource is a YouTube video, you can provide the link to the video clip as it appears on YouTube and the site or local YouTube client can open when the QR code is scanned.

## Appropriate for the Social Web

Here, the QR code can augment your Social Web campaign because most active Social-Web users tend to work their Facebook or Twitter presence more from their smartphones. This is especially as I have noticed a lot of small businesses promote their Facebook presence online through posters and flyers that have the "Like us on Facebook" slogan.

What a simplified way of doing this by pointing the latest ultra-cool iPhone to the QR code on the poster attached to the trendy café's espresso machine or refrigerated display cabinet in order to "like" that café on Facebook. It certainly makes it

certain that you are seen with that iPhone.

## Reading QR Codes

Some mobile-phone carriers and manufacturers will supply a QR-code reader with their Internet-enabled camera phones. But iPhone, Android, Blackberry and Windows Phone 7 users can come across many free QR-code readers at their platform's app store. One example that comes to mind is the free i-Nigma[4] which started becoming available for the iOS platform[5] but lately became available for the Android[6] and Blackberry platform[7]. There are others like Barcode Scanner for the Android[8] platform, BeeTag for the Blackberry platform and ScanLife for most of the platforms.

A main difference that may sort the "sheep from the goats" as far as QR-code reader programs go is whether they can read a light-coloured QR code that is printed on a dark surface. Similarly, there may be differences in how well a difficult-to-read code like a double-sided sign that is backlit can be understood.

At the moment, most QR-code readers are pitched at handheld mobile phones for immediate viewing of the resources on these devices. But it could be feasible to provide "capture-store-sync" transfer of Web URLs or downloaded resources to desktop operating systems or tablet computers as a feature of a QR-code reader. This could then allow a person to view the Web site on their laptop computer using their favourite Web browser at a later time. It would also be of importance with QR codes being used for presenting Wi-Fi network parameters to Android phones, where the same parameters can be passed up to a laptop and integrated in to the Wi-Fi networks list for that computer.

## Preparing QR codes

There are many QR-code generator sites and programs, most of which are free to use. Typically these sites may allow you to provide a URL to a resource as the input text or prepare contact details. A good resource to start from is this blog's list[9] of the top 10 free QR-code generating sites. As well, i-Nigma also offer a free QR-code generating page[10] as well as their QR-code reader. Yet another resource is the QReateBUZZ[11] Webpage which I have used for the QR codes for promoting this site.

These codes can be yielded as a small, medium or large size. Here, you could use a small size code for business cards and flyers here you don't have much room or just want a discreet code on the corner of the poster. You could then use the larger sizes if you want people to notice that there is a QR code in the signage's artwork or need to be far from the artwork to scan it.

Most sites will yield high-resolution PNG or JPEG bitmaps but some may yield EPS Postscript files or PDFs that are vector-images of the QR codes. You typically will then copy-and-paste or import the image in to your artwork. As well, a lot of the sites will generate a JPEG image that you copy from the site using **Ctrl-C /Command-C** and paste to your artwork using **Ctrl-V /Command-V**.

Of course, there are some desktop QR-code generator programs which will run on a regular computer but most of these are Windows-only and a lot of them are offered at "large-business" prices.

It is still good practice to work with dark-graphics-against-light

codes because most QR-code readers cannot work effectively with light-graphics-against-dark at the moment. If you are setting a QR code on a dark background, you could use the dark graphic on a light background and have a distinct light-background margin around that barcode.

## Conclusion

Once you explore the creation and use of QR codes as part of your online and offline marketing strategy especially where you have online resources

## Links

- [1] [http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-17-002.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-17-002.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [2] [http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/QR-Code-illustration-on-posters.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/QR-Code-illustration-on-posters.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [3] <http://qrmedia.us/qr-code-blogs/>
- [4] <http://www.i-nigma.com/Downloadi-nigmaReader.html>
- [5] <http://itunes.apple.com/app/i-nigma-4-qr-datamatrix-barcode/id388923203?mt=8>
- [6] <https://market.android.com/details?id=com.threegvision.products.inigma.Android>
- [7] <http://appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/content/27049?lang=en>
- [8] <https://market.android.com/details?id=com.google.zxing.client.android&hl=en>
- [9] <http://freenuts.com/top-10-free-online-qr-code-generators/>
- [10] <http://www.i-nigma.com/CreateBarcodes.html>
- [11] [www.qcreatebuzz.com/#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://www.qcreatebuzz.com/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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# BT Openreach to trial fibre-only exchanges in the UK

16/08/2011 10:55

## Articles

thinkbroadband :: Fibre Only Exchange trial candidate locations released[1]

BT to trial fibre-only rural broadband exchange | uSwitch.com Broadband News[2]

## My comments

This is a very interesting direction that will come about as the next-generation broadband Internet service evolves.

At the moment, a typical next-generation broadband service will be based around central-office exchanges that serve and support

copper and fibre-optic infrastructure for all communications. This allows for integration with copper-technology services such as PSTN voice /ADSL data.

The newer fibre-only exchanges will operate on fibre-optic infrastructure only with Fibre Ethernet backhaul and FTTH /FTTP fibre-optic service to the customers. The primary advantage of this setup would be to achieve higher throughput for the data that the high-bandwidth technology would provide.

The BT Openreach trial is primarily focused on new exchanges rather than converting existing exchanges to fibre-only operation. It is to assess how much it would cost to switch to fibre-only operation for existing exchanges or go "all-out" fibre-only for new or replacement exchanges. Such a trial could also be used for "infill" exchanges in dense urban areas or to satisfy new developments in potential "Silicon-Valley" areas around universities.

A good question about these exchanges is whether a "fibre-only" exchange could work with a part-fibre part-copper setup like a VDSL2-based fibre-to-the-cabinet or fibre-to-the-building setup.

#### Links

[1]

<http://www.thinkbroadband.com/news/4758-fibre-only-exchange-trial-candidate-locations-released.html>

[2]

[http://www.uswitch.com/broadband/news/2011/08/bt\\_to\\_trial\\_fibre\\_only\\_rural\\_broadband\\_exchange/](http://www.uswitch.com/broadband/news/2011/08/bt_to_trial_fibre_only_rural_broadband_exchange/)

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## Another laptop snaps at Apple's design credentials

15/08/2011 07:36

#### Articles

Acer's Aspire 3951 leaks with MacBook Air-like specs, available in October? | Engadget[1]

Shots Leak Of Acer's New Ultrabook, The Aspire 3951 | TechCrunch[2]

#### My Comments

The Apple MacBook Air 13" ultraportable computer range is now facing aggressive competition from Acer. Here, Acer are working on an ultraportable that is styled in a very similar way to the MacBook Air but selling it for under US\$1000 for the fully-equipped package.

It will be a Sandy Bridge processor-powered unit with a hard disk of an undisclosed capacity or a 160Gb solid-state drive for the main system disk. There was reckoning that the computer, which will support Bluetooth 4, will be housed in that aluminium "wedge" case and, like the MacBook Air, it won't have an integrated optical disk.

Acer had projected an approximate availability date for around October this year but this may be hampered by the availability of milled aluminium as well as projected availability of next-generation Intel chipsets.

But what I fear is that manufacturers like Dell and Acer will try to copy the Apple look for their portable computers in order to make themselves look cool in the Wi-Fi-equipped trendy café. Oh yeah, the grey or black finish will end up being consigned to the "corporate" end of the market and the coloured computers like the Dell Inspiron 15r will just appeal to the home user.

It is very similar to the two preferred directions that vehicle builders went for through the 1960s and 1970s, with a black dashboard and chrome-accented dials and controls for the "sports-car" look or the woodgrain dashboard for the "luxury" look.

At least HP, Sony and other brands have worked on their other designs for their consumer laptops rather than trying to ape Apple. This could allow them to work on designs that could upstage Apple.

#### Links

[1]

<http://www.engadget.com/2011/08/09/acers-aspire-3951-leaks-with-macbook-air-like-specs-available/>

[2]

[http://techcrunch.com/2011/08/09/shots-leak-of-acers-new-ultrabook-the-aspire-3951/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Techcrunch+%28TechCrunch%29](http://techcrunch.com/2011/08/09/shots-leak-of-acers-new-ultrabook-the-aspire-3951/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Techcrunch+%28TechCrunch%29)

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## Product Review-Dell 1130n compact monochrome laser printer

12/08/2011 04:16

#### Introduction

I am reviewing the Dell 1130n compact monochrome laser printer which is Dell's own effort at a compact monochrome laser business printer similar to the Brother HL-2230 series of compact monochrome laser printers. This unit is network-enabled for Ethernet but doesn't use auto-duplex printing.

It can be ordered directly from Dell at their site by clicking this link[1].



[2]

**Print Paper Trays Connections** B/W 1 x A4 USB 2.0 Laser xerographic Multi-purpose slot Ethernet IPv6 ready

### Prices

### Printer

Recommended Retail Price: \$229

### Inks and Toners

Standard **High-Capacity** Price Pages Price Pages Black  
AUD\$94.60 (online) 1500 AUD\$110 (online) 2500

### The printer itself

### Computer functions

The software was very quick and trouble-free to install. As well, it didn't slow the computer down during print jobs. There is a print-monitor function for direct-connect and network-connect setups but this only comes in to play when there is an error condition. It can be started independently of a print job or error condition if you want to check on things like toner level for example and is effectively the printer's dashboard.

### Use



[3]

The integrated toner-drum print cartridge that this printer takes

The toner cartridge is different from that used in the Brother compact printers in that it is an integrated toner /drum-unit cartridge similar to what happens with HP LaserJet printers. For this kind of integrated print cartridge, there is the availability of a high-capacity cartridge as well as a standard-capacity cartridge which allows for scalability to suit one's needs and budget.

Like most of these laser printers, the Dell 1130n doesn't have a "fuel-gauge" on the machine so you can know how much toner is left. This "fuel gauge" is part of the print monitor application which is the printer's dashboard.

It only takes a few seconds for the printer to turn out a document, whether it is a photograph or a text document. It will work in an ideal manner with large document runs after 100-150 pages, where there will be less of the paper-curling. As for page turnout, it lives up to the specification for the pages-per-minute with pages coming out very quickly.

### Print quality

The printer does yield very sharp crisp text for document printout, which would be acceptable for business work; and is very typical of most lasers. Even a mixed-mode document with graphics and text does come out very crisply.

I have printed one of my photos using the two print-quality settings and when you use the "Best" print quality, you see a sharper image. The images come out darker than the HP LaserJet M1536dnf multifunction monochrome laser but very similar to what has emerged from the Brother HL2240d compact monochrome laser. At least the best-quality image available from this compact monochrome laser was true to what would be seen in a newspaper or on a black-and-white TV.

### Limitations and Points Of Improvement

There is no distinct "fall-to-sleep" mode where only one small light glows if there are long periods of inactivity. As well, this printer lacks an automatic duplexer which permits and encourages double-sided printing.

As well, a very common problem with all Dell printers is the ability to know where to get consumables beyond ordering them directly through Dell. This may be of importance if you run the printer "to the edge" and need to stock up on supplies during an urgent project. It should be feasible that you could buy toner cartridges at "bricks-and-mortar" shops like stationers or newsagents as well as online through Dell.

### Conclusion and Placement Notes



[4]I would recommend this printer as being suitable for a reception-desk invoice printer at a business like a clinic who has growth aspirations. The scalability offered by the availability of a high-capacity print cartridge as well as a standard print cartridge, as well as network connectivity, can allow the business to "start small" with cheaper cartridges then grow to the higher-capacity cartridges. In the case of a clinic, this can cater for a situation where there are one or two doctors practising but allow for the situation where more of the professionals start to practise at that same location.

If you are wanting to save money by buying the Dell 1130 which is the cheaper direct-connect-only version of this printer, I would

suggest that you go for this model because it would be worth it to keep going. This is because when you run out of toner on the cheaper model, you could effectively buy another of that model whereas you could complete two of the high-capacity toner cartridges to spend the equivalent on keeping it going.

#### Links

- [1]  
<http://accessories.ap.dell.com/sna/productdetail.aspx?c=au&cs=audhs1&l=en&sku=210-31911>
- [2]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-001-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-001-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [3]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-012-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer-print-cartridge.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-012-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer-print-cartridge.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [4]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-011-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-12-011-Dell-1130n-mono-laser-printer.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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## The World Wide Web—now 20 years old

09/08/2011 13:12

#### Articles

World Wide Web turns 20, finally shakes that acne problem | Engadget[1]

The Web Is 20 Years Old Today | TechCrunch[2]

#### My Comments

#### What happened in computing before the Web

Since the home computer came on the scene in the 1970s, there were previous efforts to present information on these computers in a navigable form. This was achieved through the use of dedicated computer programs that were written for this task. These programs became important when the modem, which facilitated computer-to-computer communications over the telephone, came on the scene through 1980.

The main examples of these were the bulletin-board systems and “videotex /viewdata” systems which used the computer as a terminal. They typically provided a forum functionality and an information display which allowed people to bring up pages of information. But they were often difficult to operate unless you were a diehard computer nerd.

Apple was one of many companies who tried to popularise the concept of hyperlinking information where one could click on an item of information and be led to another related item of information. They did this with a program called “HyperCard” which allowed the user to link between various “cards” of information, whether in the same deck or another deck.

There were even attempts to provide indexable information for computer systems, including networked computers by using

indexing software like “Isys”. These programs crawled collections of word-processing documents, spreadsheets and the like and created an index which could be searchable and the results viewed in an elementary form.

#### The establishment of the Web

After 1991, various universities worked towards establishing two standards that were critical to the establishment of the Web. These were “HTTP” (HyperText Transport Protocol), an efficient file-transfer protocol which allowed text to be delivered as a stream suitable for hyperlinking; and “HTML” which was a way of marking up text files to permit formatting or hyperlinking of information.

These worked hand in glove with the Internet and there was a clear advantage that one could link to information using a standard “Uniform Resource Locator” or “URL”. This link could point to file on any computer in the world on the Internet. All it required was the use of a program called a “Web Browser” and the first of these was “Lynx” which worked with text-based terminals. With this one, users had to enter a number pointing to the desired link they wanted to follow.

But, as the Internet became popular, there was the rise of the graphical Web browser which was in the form of Netscape Navigator. This became more intense with Windows 95 having integrated Internet functionality and Microsoft releasing Internet Explorer for this platform.

#### The Web as an integral part of computing

This led the World Wide Web to become the Internet’s killer application in a similar vein to how pre-recorded video movies being available for hire through video stores became the video cassette recorder’s killer application in the 1980s. We now started to talk of home pages and of “surfing the Web” or “surfing the Net” as an activity.

The Web has also provided support for a universal interface for every sort of computer-driven activity, whether browsing and searching for information, managing one’s email or doing one’s banking and shopping online. It had then led to the boom-bust cycle that was known as the “dot-com” era where companies could set up behind a Web page with a “dot-com” name and make money out of the domain names or the goods and services they could sell online.

As the Web matured, the ability to provide snazzier presentation on the Web sites allowed media companies to work on snazzier home pages, which ended up becoming “portals” that featured news and other information. These became the jump points for people to start their Web-browsing sessions from and they ended up also offering task-specific features like Web-based mail and messaging.

It also led on to the growth of the “Social Web” which is driven by the end user. This is in the form of Web logs or “blogs” which are effectively micro-journals; or social networks like Facebook where one can interlink with other like-minded people.

Even the way the Web is viewed has changed from since it first started. Previously, it was viewed on a regular desktop or laptop computer. Now the last five years has seen the Web being viewed on mobile phones, especially smartphones like the Apple iPhone;

tablet computers like the Apple iPad and now the television screen with the new generation of “smart TVs” and video peripherals like Blu-Ray players or games consoles.

#### Conclusion

The World Wide Web has become one of the major cornerstones for the connected lifestyle by popularising access to online information and commerce, and simply popularising the Internet itself.

Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday **World Wide Web**

#### Links

[1]

<http://www.engadget.com/2011/08/06/world-wide-web-turns-20-finally-shakes-that-acne-problem/>

[2]

[http://techcrunch.com/2011/08/06/the-internet-is-20-years-old-to-day/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Techcrunch+%28TechCrunch%29](http://techcrunch.com/2011/08/06/the-internet-is-20-years-old-to-day/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Techcrunch+%28TechCrunch%29)

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## UK riots–Best Internet resources to follow with

09/08/2011 07:59

I have been following the UK riots very lately and have found that the BBC do provide good quality resources which can be of benefit around the world.

This would be important if you have relatives or friends who are based in the UK. Also, some of you may not have adequate coverage of this event in your country, especially on TV.

#### **BBC Radio London (available on all Internet-radio directories - vTuner[1], Reciva[2], RadioTime[3])**

There is continual reporting from the front with news and traffic reports being run on the quarter-hour. The traffic reports do yield information about areas that have been closed off and give a sense of where the troublespots are by reporting on road and rail closures.

#### **BBC microsite[4]**

This site is running as a live dashboard but the live TV feed from BBC News 24 may not come through due to it being oversubscribed. There is a BBC ticker with news and information from different sources, including Twitter and email.

#### **Other resources**

The Guardian also run a microsite[5] which is regularly updated with news as it comes in.

There is also a Google-powered map[6] which has the verified areas where the trouble is occurring and this is based on verified data. This may be useful if you want to check whether your loved ones are at threat from the riots.

#### Links

[1]

<http://vtuner.com/setupapp/guide/asp/func/dynampls.asp?link=1&id=4130>

[2]

[https://www.reciva.com/stations/search?q=BBC+London&categories=&codec=&min\\_bitrate=&max\\_bitrate=&working=true](https://www.reciva.com/stations/search?q=BBC+London&categories=&codec=&min_bitrate=&max_bitrate=&working=true)

[3] <http://tunein.com/radio/BBC-London-949-s24849/>

[4] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14449675>

[5]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/blog/2011/aug/09/london-riots-violence-looting-live>

[6]

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=207192798388318292131.0004aa01af6748773e8f7>

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## You can create a removable recovery disk for MacOS X Lion

09/08/2011 03:11

#### Article

Apple releases Lion Recovery Disk Assistant, asserts its dominance over Snow Leopard | Engadget[1]

#### Resource Links - Apple Support[2]

Apple Lion Recovery Disk Assistant[3]

Further Details[4]

#### My Comments

Now that Apple are distributing the “Lion” version of the MacOS X operating system in an online manner, you may think of how you may be able to do a bare-metal recovery of your Macintosh computer. This is where the computer has a hard disk on board but it doesn’t have the operating system to work from. This is because there is no physical disk that came with the upgrade which you can install from when you need to reinstall the operating system.

Now Apple have provided a recovery disk program that allows you to create the recovery image on to an external disk like a USB memory key or a USB external hard disk. It avoids the need to reuse Snow Leopard (which may be on an install DVD) in order to download Lion again as part of the recovery process.

Normally, an upgrade to MacOS X Lion would create a recovery partition on the Mac’s system disk. This wouldn’t be good enough if that hard disk crashed. When you run this utility, you create a copy of the same recovery partition on an external disk which you can then boot from during a bare-metal install or system rebuild.

Like the internal copy, this would allow you to do a “ground-zero” OS install, reinstall from a Time Machine backup, use MacOS Disk Utility to check and repair the hard disk as well as use Safari to visit Web-based resources.

When you prepare the Recovery Disk, you would have to create a separate partition (logical disk) on the same USB physical disk which should be greater than 1Gb. As well, the Mac should have

a Recovery HD partition created on it during the Lion OS install or upgrade. This is because the Recovery Disk Assistant formats the drive to create the partition. As well, the partition will be hidden from view when you use the file-system utilities like Finder or Disk Utility.

It will come in to play when you have the external disk connected to the Mac and you reboot it while holding down the **Option** key. Here, the new Recovery partition will be listed as an option in the Mac's "Startup Manager" boot menu.

#### Links

- [1] <http://www.engadget.com/2011/08/08/apple-releases-lion-recovery-disk-assistant-asserts-its-dominance/>
- [2] <http://support.apple.com/>
- [3] <http://support.apple.com/kb/DL1433>
- [4] <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4848>

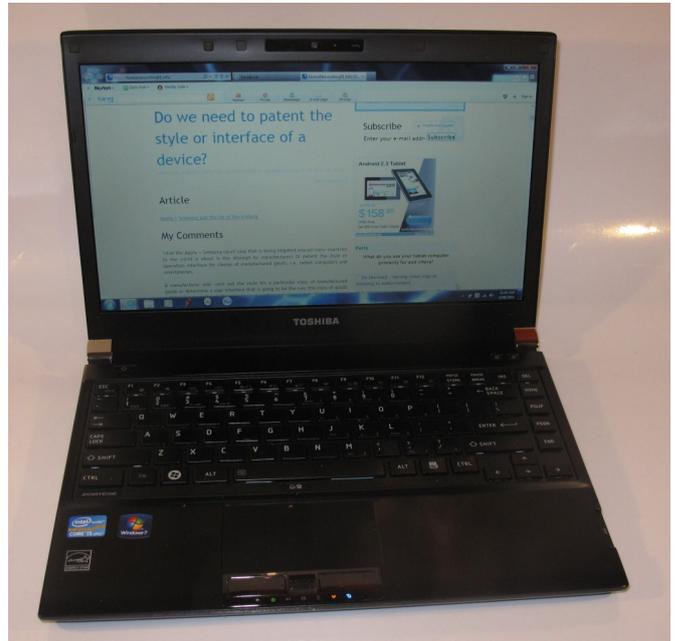
## Product Review-Toshiba Portege R830 ultraportable notebook computer (Part No: PT321A-01L002)

08/08/2011 05:43

#### Introduction

I am reviewing the Toshiba Portege R830 series of ultraportable notebook computers which is targeted at business users, primarily the "big end of town" but there are models in this series that can appeal to most users who are after a notebook that can be stuffed in to that bike bag or shoulder bag.

This is the first ultraportable notebook based on Intel Sandy Bridge technology that I have reviewed for HomeNetworking01.info. This class of notebook is in fact a proving ground for the technology because it has requirements for long battery life, ability to play video content at a moment's notice as well as be light and suitable for use on the road. The Toshiba Portege R830 Series is so well positioned with this respect due to it being equipped with an optical drive which would come in handy with playing DVDs that you buy or rent before that long bus or train trip.



[1]

#### Price

- this configuration AUD\$2447.50 Processor **Intel Sandy Bridge i5-2520M** Other variants - all Sandy Bridge cheaper - i5-2410M more expensive i7-2620M RAM 4Gb RAM shared with graphics Secondary Storage **128Gb solid-state storage** cheaper 500Gb hard disk extra cost 512Gb solid-state storage optical drive, SDHC card reader Display Subsystem Intel HD Graphics up to 2G RAM for graphics Screen 13.3" widescreen (1366x768) LED-backlit LCD Network Wi-Fi 802.11a/g/n Ethernet Gigabit Ethernet Bluetooth 3.0 + HS Connectors USB 3 x USB 2.0 SATA 1 x eSATA in combo USB socket Video VGA, HDMI Audio 3.5mm stereo headphone jack 3.5mm stereo microphone jack Digital audio via HDMI Operating System on supplied unit Microsoft Windows 7 Professional Windows Experience Index - this configuration Overall 4.7 Graphics 4.7 Gaming (Advanced) Graphics 6.1

#### The computer itself

I have noticed negligible extra weight when I have packed in my day bag to take it on an "on-road" test drive. It is large enough for the lid to lean back while in crowded buses or economy-class airline seats, even if the seat ahead is suddenly reclined.



[2]

One of the few ultraportables that is equipped with an optical drive

All the models in this series come with a DVD burner but this review model and the model above are equipped with a solid-state drive rather than a hard disk for the main secondary storage. The two less-expensive models come with a 500Gb hard disk and the most expensive model has a 512Gb solid-state drive while this model has the 128Gb SSD.

### Aesthetics and Build quality

The Portege R830 Series is finished in an all-black finish with chrome highlights on the lid hinges. This avoids the tendency to use a fingermark-attracting gloss finish, which allows for a more durable finish.

As well, for an ultralight computer, it is very well-built and has a good-quality finish about it. It was also able to handle the rough usage that may occur as it is taken out and about when you travel or go "hotspot surfing".

### User interface

The Toshiba ultraportable notebook is equipped with a chiclet keyboard which supports accurate touch-typing for long periods, even while travelling on public transport. It could benefit from rubber-capped keys so you know where you are actually typing.

There is an easily-discoverable trackpad that has a generous area for working with; as well as easily-discoverable buttons. As well, this ultraportable does use a fingerprint scanner between the buttons as part of a secure-login option.

### Audio and Video

The Intel HD video is responsive for most multimedia tasks especially video playback. It may be able to cope with basic editing but there may be problems when you use the video-editing tools to make anything beyond "rushes-quality" video. I even noticed that the Toshiba had performed very well even when it was playing "Munich: from the integrated DVD burner while running on batteries.

Unlike most laptops, the Toshiba Portege R830's screen on this

unit isn't a reflective glossy screen, which makes it suitable for bright operating environments.

The sound-reproduction for these laptops is typical for many of the laptops in that it has the tinny speakers that don't provide depth to the sound. I would recommend that you use this laptop with a pair of good headphones or a good speaker setup when you want the best out of the sound.

### Battery life

I have run this computer on a variety of activities and it has run longer than expected for the typical laptop. For example, I was able to have a DVD playing for four hours after a full charge and then find that there is 25% of power left, with an estimated 4 hours worth of use left.

### Other experience notes



[3]

USB socket for Sleep N Charge feature

The Toshiba Portege R830 has a Sleep And Charge feature for one of the USB ports. Here, it means that the notebook can be set to supply power to 1 USB port while it is off so that smartphones and other gadgets can be charged off that port. This may benefit travellers who want to cut the number of chargers and AC adaptors they carry for their devices while on the road. For overseas travellers, this may avoid the need to carry extra plug converters for mobile phone chargers while they travel. The function has worked as stated on the tin when it came to charging my Samsung Galaxy S Android smartphone as illustrated below.



[4]

Sleep N Charge in action — charging my mobile phone while closed up and off

I had shown this computer to some friends whom I live with when I was talking about laptops and they thought it was similar to a netbook that they considered as a “traveller” computer. This is although they were used to seeing the larger laptop computers and didn’t really pick up on this class of ultraportable notebooks that filled the gulf between the netbook and the regular laptop.

### Conclusion

The Toshiba Portege computers do work well as a current-spec traveller’s computer where you value creating content or need the ability to work with DVDs. It does the Sandy Bridge CPU/GPU platform justice as far as “traveller-friendly” portable computing goes.

I would recommend this configuration for use as a secondary traveller computer where only current data is kept on the system and quick performance is a priority. If you do need to have a larger data collection like digital photos or videos that are being “proofed”, you may have to use an external hard disk or invest in the more-expensive model of the series.



[5]

This ultraportable looks the part on the coffee bar that is part of the smart “second office” cafes

There is a variant of this model that is equipped with the same processor, RAM and other specifications but has a regular 500Gb hard disk for AUD\$1980 which may suit most people who want the same power but more storage.

But whatever, I would place the Toshiba Portege R830 series of ultraportables as contenders for a notebook computer that you intend to use “on the go” especially if you cycle or use public transport. It also would be an appropriate notebook to use if you do a lot of work at Wi-Fi-equipped cafes.

### Links

[1]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-001-Toshiba-Portege-R830-ultraportable.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-001-Toshiba-Portege-R830-ultraportable.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[2]  
[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-004-Optical-drive-in-ultraportable.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-004-Optical-drive-in-ultraportable.jpg#utm_source=feed&)

[utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](#)

[3]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-005-Sleep-N-Charge-USB.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-005-Sleep-N-Charge-USB.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[4]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-008-Sleep-N-Charge-in-action.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-008-Sleep-N-Charge-in-action.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-05-001-Toshiba-Portege-R830-on-bench-at-Caffe-Moravia.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-05-001-Toshiba-Portege-R830-on-bench-at-Caffe-Moravia.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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## Samsung to make the Super AMOLED touchscreen available for 7” tablets

06/08/2011 10:16

### Articles

[Samsung to produce 7” high-res AMOLED display | SammyHub.com\[1\]](#)

[Un écran tactile AMOLED 7” à « forte » résolution chez Samsung | Le Journal du Geek\[2\]](#)

### My comments

Samsung have been involved in developing the active-matrix OLED display over a long time and have refined it in to a single-layer AMOLED touchscreen display that is pitched at smartphones.

As you all will know, the difference between the OLED display and the LCD display is that the way the display is lit up. An OLED display uses power to actually light up the pixels rather than dynamically passing light through a filter that makes up the image, a practice that is done with LCDs.

There are some key benefits that these displays have such as high contrast, improved colour, a wide viewing angle as well as energy saving due to only needing to light up what is needed on the display. Infact I have described the OLED display as a “vacuum fluorescent display” for battery-operated devices because the displays have that same bright and crisp display characteristic as the vacuum-fluorescent displays used on a large range of good-quality consumer electronics like DVD players and home-theatre receivers.

For that matter, I currently own the Samsung Galaxy S Android smartphone which has this display technology and have been pleased with the way it handles regular display activity including pictures and videos. This is even after I have owned the Nokia N85 Symbian S60 smartphone which uses the same AMOLED display technology in a non-touchscreen application.

Now they have taken this technology further by developing the Super AMOLED Plus which is the same AMOLED display with integrated capacitive touchscreen as used in these Galaxy S series smartphones, but as a 7” 1024×768 variety.

At the moment, the obvious application for this display would be the 7" tablet but I would see it appeal to more applications such as dashboard touchscreens for the car or boat. This may also include the double-DIN multifunction head units that will appeal to the young males who want to equip their cars with street-worthy sound systems.

If Samsung wanted to have sufficient manufacture quantities for these displays as they do for the small OLED displays used in the smartphones, they would have to build one of their Galaxy Tab 7" tablets with these displays. This also includes encouraging other manufacturers to implement them in a 7" tablet model.

Who knows when it would be that Samsung would take the integrated touchscreen AMOLED display technology up to the 10" size for the larger tablets and netbooks.

#### Links

[1]  
<http://sammyhub.com/2011/08/01/samsung-to-produce-higher-res-7-inch-amoled-display/>

[2]  
<http://www.journaldugeek.com/2011/08/03/amoled-resolution-samsung/>

## Product Review – Acer Iconia Tab A500 Series 10" Android tablet

06/08/2011 07:18

#### Introduction

I am reviewing the Acer Iconia Tab A500 Series 10" Android tablet computer. It, like most other Android-based 10" tablets, is faced off as a competitor to the Apple iPad tablet which is of the same size.

It is infact the first Android-based consumer/small-business tablet computer that I have reviewed for HomeNetworking01.info



[1]

#### Price

- reviewed configuration AUD\$599 Screen 10" widescreen

LED-backlit LCD User Memory **16Gb**

extra-cost

32Gb SDHC card slot Operating environment Android 3.1

HoneyComb Connectivity Wi-Fi **802.11n WPS** Wireless

Broadband Available in higher-priced A501 models USB 2 x USB

2.0 host ports

1 x microUSB for PC-to-Iconia connectivity Audio 1 x 3.5mm

headphone jack

Digital audio through miniHDMI Video 1 x miniHDMI jack

#### The unit itself

#### Aesthetics and build quality

The Acer Iconia has a metal-feel about it which makes you think of a durable tablet computer. It is light in your hands but some people may find the smooth finish very slippery when they handle it.

#### Display

The Iconia's display is as readable as most tablet computers go especially when you are using it for reading content. When you use the Android-provided touchscreen keyboard, you may not find the text entry procedure comfortable for long periods of content creation. As far as the display's brightness is concerned, the Iconia Tab A500 is still bright enough for most users even if it runs on the energy-saving "dim mode".

Of course, for video, the display had worked smoothly when handling YouTube and similar video playback applications

#### Audio



[2]

Left Hand Side — Power switch, headphone jack, miniHDMI jack

Like most tablet computers, the Acer Iconia's sound doesn't have much in the way of volume output if you use the integrated speakers. Here, they would be good enough for audio prompts and the like. It was still clear for the basic local listening and you have the distinct stereo separation but I would recommend use of headphones or external speakers like Bluetooth A2DB audio setups.

## Connectivity and Expandability



[3]

Right hand side — Power input, microUSB port and USB host port

All the units of the Iconia A500 Series have 2 regular USB device ports as well as a micro USB port for connection to a host computer. They all support Bluetooth connectivity for standard profiles as covered by Android. This includes the ability to do Bluetooth object-push file transfer as well as audio streaming with Bluetooth headsets and audio setups.

You can connect these devices to an HDTV using an miniHDMI-to-HDMI cable if you need the large TV screen.



[4]

Another USB port on this device — at the bottom of the unit, under the screen.

These Acer tablets have a feature that is common with most Android smartphones and tablets in that they have a microSDHC card slot. This means that you can expand on the storage that you initially bought or swap media collections around on different microSD cards as if you were working with cassettes or MiniDiscs.

The power connection is a 12 volt connection, which may make it easier to use the Iconia Tab in a car through the use of a cigar-lighter cord. This comes in handy when you load devices like the Iconia with movies or ebooks to be viewed by passengers on a long journey.

## Performance

The Acer Iconia is very spritely when it comes to performance. For example, it was able to play sound from a DLNA network media server while I did some Web browsing without the sound deteriorating. It could also perform properly with YouTube even if you put the videos on full screen.

The battery can run for a few days of adhoc but regular

mixed-activity use without charging. I haven't yet worked out an activity plan to "stress-test" these devices for battery runtime.

## Other factors

The Acer Iconia Tab A500 Series is equipped with two cameras, one of them being a front-facing one for videoconferencing. This would work well if Skype provided full videophone functionality across entire line of Android HoneyComb tablets.

## Limitations and Points Of Improvement

One point of improvement that could come in handy would be to deliver Skype as part of the standard software mix for all of the models. As well, the Acre iconia, like most tablets could benefit from a detachable kickstand that comes as part fo the package. This could appeal to users who use a USB keyboard for typing up notes or those of us who push these units in to service as an Internet terminal /digital picture frame for the kitchen.

## Conclusion

I would consider this Android tablet as a "floater" tablet computer as a multifunction general-purpose tablet computer where you value the large screen size and snappy performance. This is more so if you want a tablet computer that isn't confined to Apple's dream and you know what you are after for software.

The Wi-Fi-only units can be useful if you want to manage just one mobile broadband package by using your smartphone's Wi-Fi tethering options to connect to broadband service on the go. You may go for the wireless-broadband-equipped units if you don't mind running a separate wireless-broadband account and allowance for these devices.

## Links

[1]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-022-Acer-Iconia-Tab-A500.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-022-Acer-Iconia-Tab-A500.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-025.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-025.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[3]

[http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-026.jpg#utm\\_source=feed&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=feed](http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2011-08-06-026.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

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