

HOME NETWORKING 01.INFO

03/10/2011 |

Product Review-Toshiba Satellite P750 multimedia laptop computer (Part No: PSAY3A-05F001)

30/09/2011 09:33

Introduction

I am reviewing the Toshiba Satellite P750 multimedia laptop which is Toshiba's effort at a work-entertainment multimedia centre that would suit current needs. It is a 15" equivalent of the Satellite P770 which is on a par with the Dell XPS L702x [1]multimedia laptop. It is also infact the first Sandy-Bridge-driven laptop of this mainstream size to have the full "multimedia" works to become available for review on this site.



[2]

Price

- this configuration AUD\$1799 Processor **Intel Sandy Bridge i7-2630M** Cheaper options - all Intel Sandy Bridge

i5-2410M RAM **8Gb**

cheaper options:

4Gb or 6Gb shared with graphics Secondary Storage 750Gb hard disk **Blu-Ray burner**, SD card reader.

cheaper option - DVD burner Display Subsystem **NVIDIA GeForce GT540M with 3D Vision (1Gb display RAM)**

Alternate option:

NVIDIA GeForce GT540M with Optimus dual-chipset (2Gb display memory) Screen **17" 3D widescreen (1366x768)** cheaper option

17" widescreen (1366x768) LED-backlit LCD Network Wi-Fi Ethernet Gigabit Ethernet Connectors USB 3 x USB 2.0 Video External display Audio External audio Operating System on supplied unit Microsoft Windows 7 Home Edition Windows

Experience Index

- this configuration Overall: 5.9 Graphics: 6.6
Advanced Graphics: 6.6

The computer itself

Aesthetics and Build quality

The Toshiba Satellite P750 is finished in what Toshiba describes as a "metallic urban" finish. This is a dark charcoal black finish with a finished-metal texture on a plastic case. It is the same across the lid and the palmrest.

The build quality is very good for its class I would expect a lot of time of use out of this series of machines.

User interface



[3]

Keyboard and trackpad detail

The Toshiba is equipped with an illuminated chiclet keyboard with numeric keypad. Unlike a lot of illuminated keyboards, this only lights up when you actually use the keyboard, the same practice as observed with a lot of mobile phones. Like for most recent-issue 15" and 17" laptops, there is a proper numeric keypad. The keyboard is still roomy to use and allows you to touch-type accurately for longer periods, although it feels very slippery.

It uses a trackpad is just slightly recessed and is highlighted by an illuminated bar at the top of the trackpad area. This can still be very sensitive and cause the cursor to jump around.

The Satellite P750's keyboard and trackpad is augmented by a Supplementary touch buttons row above the keyboard. This provides control over wireless, 3D, media play-pause, sound volume and display brightness.

Connectivity and Expandability



[4]

Right-hand side with Blu-Ray burner, 2 x USB 2.0 sockets, audio input and output and power socket

The Satellite P750 laptop has three USB sockets, with one being a USB 3.0 connector for hard disks and similar applications. Unlike most other laptops I have reviewed, it doesn't have an eSATA connection but this won't matter if the external hard disk has a USB 3.0 connector.

The Toshiba has the same "Sleep and Charge" as the previously-reviewed Portege R830 [5] from the same stable. This is where it can use the USB 3.0 port to supply power to external devices while it is off; and can allow you to leave the mobile phone charger behind yet charge your mobile phone.

There are two 3.5mm jacks for connecting a microphone or line-level audio device; and a pair of headphones or external speakers. This Toshiba laptop can be set to become amplified speakers for a connected external audio player even if it is off through the "Sleep And Music" mode.

External displays can be connected to the Satellite P750 using the HDMI or VGA connectors, with the HDMI connector also supporting control of HDMI-CEC compliant displays and audio setups. For example, this would cause a connected Panasonic Viera plasma TV to light up with the computer's display image when you turn this laptop on or a home-theatre receiver like the previously-reviewed Sony STR-DA5500ES [6] to select the right input when the laptop comes on.



[7]

Left hand side connections — Gigabit Ethernet, HDMI, VGA, USB 3.0 with Sleep and Charge, USB 2.0 and TV antenna

The TV antenna connection is the standard Belling-Lee (PAL) connector that is part of the machine's connection set. This avoids the need to mess with cord adaptors in order to connect regular TV-aerial setups for the TV tuner. Of course, ATSC (USA) variants would use the screw-on F connector.

Audio and Video

The Toshiba Satellite P750 uses a 2.1 speaker system that has been "worked" by Harman-Kardon. The main benefits that I have heard include a very "punchy" sound for all kinds of media playback.

I have tested this Toshiba's 3D Vision capabilities on the demonstration material that is made available by NVIDIA and it is effective. The NVIDIA 3D glasses worked properly on their own battery and did provide the proper effect. They were able to be used by people who wear prescription or other glasses by just simply wearing them over those glasses. You should really have the laptop connected to AC power if you want to use 3D capabilities because this can drain the battery very fast.

There are variants in the Toshiba Satellite P750 Series which have the Optimus version of the NVIDIA GeForce GT540M. These only support 3D when connected to a 3D-capable display like the newer 3D flat-panel "main-lounge-area" TVs. But they have the Optimus automatic dual-graphics modes that allow you to conserve battery runtime.

The screen front is very glossy which can be of nuisance value in brightly-lit rooms and can attract fingermarks.

The Satellite P750 is equipped with an integrated digital-TV tuner which would be configured for the market that this laptop is supplied in. Personally, I would prefer that the tuner is software-based so that it can be set by the user to work in any country that the laptop is taken to.

Battery life

The main disadvantage of using only a discrete graphics chipset is that you lose on the battery runtime. I was able to engage in mixed tasks (typing, multimedia) for around three hours before it ran down. Even running a DVD would make through two and a half hours. Use of the 3D functionality also places more demand on the battery.

It may be not of concern if you often run the machine from AC power rather than the batteries.

Limitations and Points Of Improvement

The Toshiba Satellite P750's trackpad could be recessed further so it isn't easily activated during a bout of touch-typing.

The lock slot could also be repositioned so you can use larger locking devices while the laptop is connected to external power. This may be of concern with some of the combination locks that may have their release button close to the power cable.

I would also like to see the Blu-Ray drive be a direct-insert (slot-load) type rather than the typical drawer-load which becomes a bit too ordinary, especially on a premium-tier multimedia machine.

As I have said before, the TV tuner could be software-based for round-the-world TV reception; and the software-based operation could also support newer standards like DVB-T2 which is being rolled out across Europe.

Conclusion

I would position the Toshiba Sattelite P750 Series laptops as multimedia work-entertainment systems for nomadic users such as those of us who sail or fly for work. The combination of the Blu-Ray player, TV tuner and self-protecting hard disk would be of benefit to university students, nurses and the like who primarily live in on-campus accommodation that has small rooms like the typical college dorm. It also has the graphics ability that would expose it to image or video creation tasks.

Of course, if you were to take the screen size and the self-protecting hard disk out of the equation, this computer would be on a par with the Dell XPS L702x that I previously reviewed.

Links

- [1] [/2011/05/product-reviewdell-xps-l702x-multimedia-laptop-computer/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/05/product-reviewdell-xps-l702x-multimedia-laptop-computer/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [2] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-30-001.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [3] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-30-015-Toshiba-Satellite-P750-keyboard-detail1.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [4] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-30-010.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [5] [/2011/08/product-reviewtoshiba-portege-r830-ultraportable-notebook-computer-part-no-pt321a-01l002/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/08/product-reviewtoshiba-portege-r830-ultraportable-notebook-computer-part-no-pt321a-01l002/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [6] [/2010/05/product-review-sony-str-da5500es-network-enabled-home-theatre-receiver/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2010/05/product-review-sony-str-da5500es-network-enabled-home-theatre-receiver/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)
- [7] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-30-012-Toshiba-Satellite-P750-LHS.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Postage stamps from your HP ePrint printer now available in Germany and France

30/09/2011 01:47

Articles

HP: Briefmarken direkt am Drucker ausdrucken - NETZWELT
(Germany - German language)[1]

My translation and comments

In the USA, a service called Stamps.com[2] is using an

account-driven setup to turn your printer in to a franking machine (postage meter). This is by you purchasing postage through their Website in a prepaid manner and printing this on to envelopes after you weigh them on postage scales that you buy from Stamps.com. This solution initially needed an application but is now available through a Web-driven setup and is intended to be available through HP ePrint as a printer app.



[3]

HP Envy 100 all-in-one printer

Here, the ePrint solution will allow for a "walk-up and buy" arrangement where you can purchase the postage and print it on to your envelope or sheet of paper using your printer without the need for your computer to be on.

Now the post offices in Germany and France have set up "print-and-post" prepaid-postage setups for customers in those countries and have established HP ePrint apps for distribution there. These will be interlinked through portals set up by the relative post offices and has been launched on the 28 September in the Post-Expo trade fair in Stuttgart, Germany.

It will of course be interesting to see whether Royal Mail, Australia Post or other post offices will head to this concept of "print-and-post" postage sales in their territories.

Links

- [1] <http://www.netzwelt.de/news/88689-hp-briefmarken-direkt-drucker-ausdrucken.html>
- [2] <http://stamps.com>
- [3] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2011-03-19-007.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Telstra split 'won't fix monopoly' according to rivals

28/09/2011 06:18

Article

Telstra split 'won't fix monopoly' as rivals fear reform will fail | The Australian[1]

My comments

A lively competitive market

When I think of a competitive broadband infrastructure, it needs to be lively and competitive with many different wholesale and retail Internet service providers. Here, I would rather see the competition occur more on value than on who offers the cheapest service.

What can happen if the competitive market focuses on who offers the cheapest service is that companies can cut corners to achieve this goal. This can lead to situations that are consumer-hostile like poor customer service, rigidly-enforced terms of service that don't allow scope for human variation and budget-tier services that don't offer what customers need.

The proposed Telstra split

This proposed wholesale-retail breakup of Telstra could sound very much like what is happening with British Telecom in the UK. At the moment, BT are running a retail arm as well as a wholesale-infrastructure arm called Openreach.

In the case of the Telstra split, the infrastructure would be managed by a monopoly which is the National Broadband Network while there is a "wholesale" group and a "retail" group. There will be issues like preferential tariff sheets for the Telstra service as well as something yet undiscussed.

Telstra as the baseline telecommunications provider

This is the provision of the baseline telephone and Internet service. It encompasses the maintenance of public payphones; the definition and provision of the standard telephone line; the provision of the national emergency telephone services, as well as communications needs for the social sector. It can also include covering for communications through natural and other disasters. At the moment, Telstra's discretionary mobile and Internet services prop up their role as this baseline telephony provider.

What I would also like to see is an improvement in how the baseline telecommunications service is provided and funded for. This could involve the use of tenders to determine the provision of parts of the baseline telecommunication service as well as the creation and management of universal-service funds that subsidise the provision of these services. This avoids the need for a service provider to jack up the price of discretionary services to cover the costs associated with the baseline services.

Wireline infrastructure competition

One driver for real competition is the ability to supply competing wireline infrastructure. This typically comes in the form of sub-loop unbundling where an ADSL service can be provided through the use of equipment installed between the customer's door and the exchange and the customer's line connected to that equipment. In an FTTH fibre-optic setup, this would be in the form of extra fibre-optic lines controlled by competing interests run to the customer's door; a practice that is taking place in France.

For that matter, it may be worth examining what is going on in the UK and France where there was incumbent "PTT" telephone carriers but have now become lively competitive Internet-service

markets. This includes how the tariff charts yielded "best-value" plans for retail telecommunications service as well as enabling factors for this level of competition, such as telecommunications legislation and regulations. It would also cover access to established physical telecommunications infrastructure in public areas like poles and pits; as well as creation and use of new infrastructure.

Conclusion

What I would like to see is that our telecommunications ministers and departments talk with their peers in both those countries ie OFCOM in the UK and ARCEP in France so they can know what was achieved for competitive telecommunications.

Links

[1]

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/telstra-split-wont-fix-monopoly-as-rivals-fear-reform-will-fail/story-e6frg8zx-1226148561515>

DLNA-to become a more credible media-management standard than Apple AirPlay

28/09/2011 05:09

Article

Apple May Lose To Android In Device-Based Media Management | Online Media Daily (MediaPost.com)[1]

My comments

As you may already know, Apple has been promoting their AirPlay media-management ecosystem. This was initially known as AirTunes and worked with their AirPort Express plugin broadband router which can connect to speakers or a stereo amplifier for network music playback. Here, you had to use iTunes on your Macintosh (or PC) to play the audio files through this device. This function was gradually extended to iOS devices so you can then play this same media held on these devices in the same manner.

Apple have extended the concept to images and video through the use of Apple TV and licensed the AirPlay concept to other manufacturers that are approved by themselves. It has been recently demonstrated in the latest crop of iPhone TV commercials as a way of saying that "we know best".

But there is another standard that is more "open-frame" than the Apple AirPlay system. This standard, called DLNA, has been adopted by a larger number of software and hardware manufacturers than AirPlay.

It is a standard that I have stood for because more of the industry is behind it with it working across equipment and software of different manufacture and has become a breeding ground for innovation. Here, I have seen the arrival of network-media playback equipment that works as part of the DLNA ecosystem appear at every market tier, including the premium-audio segment, with B&O offering a trendy stylish

DLNA-capable network music system[2]that puts the Sonos on notice for example. But my stance on this issue may be considered as being of concern to Apple or some of their fanbois who value the Apple-centric information-technology setup.

Equipment like the Sony CMT-MX750Ni [3]music system or the Western Digital WDTV Live[4]that I have previously reviewed can play media content that is “thrown to” it by software like TwonkyMobile on your tablet or smartphone. This is in a similar way that you would do with the AirPlay setup on an all-Apple system and is capable of being performed on an Android platform as well as the iOS platform.

An issue that is forgotten about in the Apple hype is that some third-party companies have written DLNA-compliant media-management software for the iOS devices and the Macintosh platform. Examples of this include PlugPlayer and recent iOS ports of TwonkyManager. As well, I know of a friend who is running NullRiver MediaLink on his iMac in order to use it as a media server for his Sony PS3 games console and he has had success with this setup.

Links

[1]

http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=159171

[2]

/2011/07/now-the-danish-king-of-design-approaches-the-dlna-home-media-network/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[3]

/2011/09/product-reviewsony-cmt-mx750ni-internet-enabled-micro-music-system/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[4]

/2011/06/product-reviewwestern-digital-wdtv-live-network-media-adaptor/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Tables-another screen for the TV viewing area

27/09/2011 03:06

Article

The tablet will be the center of the connected lifestyle — Online Video News[1]

My comments



[2]This article is affirming the idea of using a tablet computer like the Apple iPad or the Acer Iconia Tab [3]in the lounge room as you watch TV. Some people may object to this because of the “too many screens” argument. But of course, you will still look at the big screen for the video content.

Small personal TV

One of the most common TV-related apps for the iPad and tablets of its ilk is as a personal screen for viewing content. This could be in the form of downloading or streaming the content to the tablet device and has been subjected to various legal strangleholds with Hollywood.

But it also has been taken further with broadcast-LAN tuner adaptors which tune in and stream TV content to these tablets once controlled via a special app. As well, the use of DLNA media player software can allow you to view video content held on your home network through these devices.

Remote control for large screen

Another application of interest is for the tablet to work as a remote control for the large-screen TV. Here, this would work with apps delivered by TV and set-top-box manufacturers to the various app stores for the tablet platforms.

It would work hand in glove with programming your PVR, use of interactive-TV applications or even using the interactive functions of a Blu-Ray disc; as well as navigating an increasing array of TV channels.

Of course, I have a doubt about this when it comes to activities where you need instant response. I would like to be sure that you tap MUTE on the tablet and you are sure that the racecaller voice that is part of that commercial isn't heard the moment you press it for example.

As well some manufacturers may limit this function to their tablets, especially if the tablet is the same brand as the TV in question; usually as a way to reinforce brand loyalty.

Show downloaded content on large screen

In a similar way to the previous “small personal TV” application, a tablet computer can be used to show content on the large television or video projector. This can be through a direct connection from the tablet’s miniHDMI socket or AV-out jack to the TV or by pushing the content to an Apple TV or DLNA network media player.

But wait there's more:

Internet browsing concurrent with TV viewing

A very common application that I have noticed with smartphones and tablets is to engage in Internet use while watching TV. Examples of this include researching a TV programme on IMDB or a concept that was used in the TV program; using the tablet as a persistent scoreboard during a sports game or updating the Social Web during a TV show.

The persistent scoreboard could be an app in itself or simply an always-refreshed Web page; and could remind you of where the players stand in that match you are watching. In some cases, the apps provide access to player /team information as well as on-demand video replays or interactive progress maps. Of course, you could head over to other commentary sources for comments other than what the TV commentators are barking about.

As I have seen, a lot of TV shows are integrating the Social Web very tightly in to their programming fabric. This can be typified with selected Twitter and Facebook comments being read out by the compere or a ticker with Twitter comments crawling across the bottom of the screen. Even news and public-affairs events will have official or unofficial tickers running on Twitter or Facebook as people post up comments on these events using the Social Web.

The tablet computer may work better than the “smart TV” Social-Web apps because the TV usually works with one account at a time and you won’t see the show’s video occupying the screen as you post your comment. One or more tablets (or small computers) can perform this function in an individual manner for individual viewers,

Setup requirements

In most cases, a Wi-Fi connection to the home network and broadband connection is all that is needed if the tablet is just being used at home; and would be necessary for network-media-adaptor use. This could allow you to buy a Wi-Fi-only model if it is to stay primarily at home or not be used with an external wireless-broadband router on the road.

Conclusion

As I have said, the tablet is now working as a supplementary screen in the TV lounge area rather than just as an ebook reader and email terminal.

Links

[1]

<http://gigaom.com/video/the-tablet-will-be-the-center-of-the-connected-lifestyle/>

[2]

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
[3]
[/2011/08/product-review-acer-iconia-tab-a500-10-tablet/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/08/product-review-acer-iconia-tab-a500-10-tablet/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

Intel's Ivy Bridge next-generation chipset intending to offer

27/09/2011 03:02

Article

Intel's Ivy Bridge chip packs understated goodies | Business Tech - CNET News[1]

My Comments

Intel are working on the next-generation “Ivy Bridge” computing chipset which will be considered the technical successor to the successful Sandy Bridge chipset.

High-performance integrated graphics

One major benefit that this chipset will offer is graphics performance. Here, these chipsets will be tuned for better performance than Sandy Bridge’s “Intel HD” graphics. This will lead to more powerful Integrated graphics which can also improve on the power economy. Here, this may improve the laptop’s credentials as a gaming machine. This is also augmented by integrated DirectX 11 support for games and advanced graphics applications.

The obvious question is whether it will put AMD and NVIDIA “on notice” as far as their role in supplying discrete graphics chipsets is concerned? I would see this as allowing both these companies to focus their efforts on developing their graphics chipsets as the “performance chipsets”. This is in a similar vein to the likes of Creative Labs who provide highly-tuned sound subsystems for computers;.

Here, it could allow companies intending to offer high-performance computers for CAD and hardcore gaming to implement improved dual-chipset setups while giving mainstreams users including average game players access to improved performance graphics. AMD and NVIDIA could focus on making highly-tuned graphics subsystems that show their prowess in the LAN party or the design office.

USB 3.0

Another bonus that will come about of this would be an improved USB chipset. This will provide low-latency USB data transfer and streaming; as well as inherent support for USB 3.0 . This is compared to the current USB 3.0 implementation which has another chipset serving one or two USB 3.0 ports while another serves a few USB 2.0 ports.

Windows 8

This chipset is intended to be targeted with the impending arrival of Windows 8 and these functions will provide a direct tie-in with the new operating system. This is more so with the USB 3.0 and improved USB functionality which is supported by a new USB service stack in Windows 8.

Conclusion

I would see this new chipset improve all of the computing sectors and could put performance graphics into the reach of the average computer users who will be exposed to more intense graphics and multimedia. The improved data throughput will benefit laptop users who use external storage or USB audio /video peripherals frequently.

At least it is a step towards power-effective, cost-effective high-performance computing for the mainstream.

Links

[1]

http://news.cnet.com/8301-1001_3-20106806-92/intels-ivy-bridge-chip-packs-understated-goodies/?tag=nl.e724

HP ePrint Improvement-Determine your ePrint address

27/09/2011 03:00

Article

HP ePrintCenter | It's here: Pick your printer's (simpler) email address[1]

My Comments

When you currently set up an HP (Hewlett-Packard) ePrint-enabled printer's ePrint features, you would receive a random email address for that printer. This would be difficult if you want to keep an easy-to-remember email-to-print address for your household's or small business's printer.

Now HP have improved this setup by allowing you to determine a custom email address for that printer. Of course, they have suggested as well that you implement the security functionalities that are part of ePrint such as the approved senders list so that people who remember your printer's email address don't spam it.

There are some questions that I would have with this feature.

One would be whether one can transfer this address to different ePrint machines. This would happen when you relinquish your current ePrint printer and replace it with a newer machine.

Another issue would be whether you could allocate the one address to multiple ePrint printers. The obvious situation that would call for this would be where you have two or more ePrint printers on the one premises; such as a home setup with a B110a or Envy 100 in the living area and a C410a fax-equipped home-office machine in the home office. Or you may have an office setup that has one of the ePrint OfficeJets and an

ePrint-enabled LaserJet.

The issues that may arise from this setup would include which printer gets all the ePrint jobs from that address and whether there are any flexible queue options available for these setups. An example of this could be one printer turning out the ePrint jobs but if it is "tied up" either by performing a large print run, needing its supplies replenished or being out-of-commission, the other printer could turn out the jobs.

Conclusion

At least this is one of the many steps to make the HP ePrint function more mature as far as customers are concerned.

Links

[1]

<http://h30495.www3.hp.com/news/109/its-here-pick-your-printers-simpler-email-address>

Telephone Interview-Gigaclear UK (Matthew Hare)

24/09/2011 01:35

In response to the latest news that has happened with Gigaclear [1] and Rutland Telecom in relation to the Hambleton fibre-to-the-premises rollout, I offered to organise an email exchange with a representative from this company about this broadband access network.

Matthew Hare replied to my email offering to do a short Skype-based telephone interview rather than an email interview. This allowed him and I to talk more freely about the Hambleton and Lyddington rollouts which I have been covering in HomeNetworking01.info .

Real interest in rural-broadband improvements

There are the usual naysayers who would doubt that country-village residents would not need real broadband, and I have heard these arguments through the planning and execution of Australia's National Broadband Network.

But what Matthew had told me through this interview would prove them wrong. In the Lyddington VDSL-based fibre-to-the-cabinet rollout, a third of the village had become paying subscribers to this service at the time of publication. In the Hambleton fibre-to-the-premises rollout, two-thirds of that village had "pre-contracted" to that service. This means that they had signed agreements to have the service installed and commissioned on their premises and have paid deposits towards its provision.

Satisfying the business reality

Both towns have hospitality businesses, in the form of hotels, pubs and restaurants that need real broadband. For example, Matthew cited a large “country-house” hotel in Hambleton that appeals to business traffic and this hotel would be on a better footing with this market if they can provide Wi-Fi Internet service to their guests. Similarly, these businesses would benefit from improved innovative cloud-based software that would require a proper Internet connection.

As well, most of the households in these villages do some sort of income-generating work from their homes. This can be in the form of telecommuting to one’s employer or simply running a business from home.

The reality of a proper Internet service for business was demonstrated through the Skype call session with Matthew. Here, the Skype session died during the interview and when he came back on, he told me that the fault occurred at his end. He mentioned that he was working from home at another village that had the second-rate Internet service and affirmed the need for a proper broadband service that can handle the traffic and allow you to be competitive in business.

A commercial effort in a competitive market

Matthew also underlined the fact that this activity is a proper commercial venture rather than the philanthropic effort that besets most other rural-broadband efforts. He also highlighted that there were other rural-broadband improvements occurring around the UK, including the BT Openreach deployments, and this wasn’t the only one to think of.

But what I would see is that an Internet market that is operating under a government-assured pro-consumer pro-competition business mandate is a breeding ground for service improvement, especially when it comes to rural Internet service.

Conclusion

From what Matthew Hare had said to me through the Skype telephone interview, there is a real and probable reason why the countryside shouldn’t miss out on the broadband Internet that city dwellers take for granted.

Links

[1] <http://www.gigaclear.com/>

Hambleton gets close to next-generation broadband

23/09/2011 12:14

Articles

thinkbroadband :: Gigaclear begin fibre-to-the-home deployment in Hambleton[1]

From the horse’s mouth

Fibre-Optic Gigaclear Network for Rutland Village - Gigaclear Press Release[2]

Rutland Telecom (Hambleton page[3]) (Home[4])

My Comments

There has been previous coverage about Rutland Telecom establishing fibre-optic next-generation broadband in Hambleton [5], Leicestershire in the UK. Now Gigaclear are in the throes of laying down the fibre-optic infrastructure for the next-generation broadband.

The Hambleton network has been financed through private investors in the Hambleton village. Here, they would want to see a triple return in the form of financial growth, community togetherness and a real next-generation Internet service.

Of course, Rutland Telecom will be the main service provider for this town’s next-generation broadband service even though it is part of Gigaclear. The service is intended to be online in October 2011.

Significant features will include VoIP telephony and 50Mbps headline speed for the service. As well, the router, which will be an optical-network terminal will have 300Mbps dual-stream 802.11n Wi-Fi and a 4-port Gigabit Ethernet switch. This also includes a future proof software design that supports IPv6 networks, which I think are the way to go for next-generation broadband. Rutland Telecom could offer as an alternative an optical-network terminal that connects up to user-supplied broadband routers, which would be required for Wi-Fi hotspots that have advanced user control.

GigaClear and Rutland Telecom have higher expectations with a “fat pipe” data link between Hambleton and London as well as streaming of high-definition television in to this neighbourhood during the 2012 Olympics.

What I have liked about this development and the Lyddington development is that they have become a catalyst for villages and towns across the UK wanting to achieve real broadband Internet on a par with the cities.

Links

[1]

<http://www.thinkbroadband.com/news/4794-gigaclear-begin-fibre-to-the-home-deployment-in-hambleton.html>

[2]

<http://www.gigaclear.com/fibre-optic-gigaclear-network-for-rutland-village/>

[3] <http://www.rutlandtelecom.co.uk/hambleton/>

[4] <http://www.rutlandtelecom.co.uk/>

[5]

[/2010/12/another-uk-village-to-have-fibre-to-the-premises-broadband/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2010/12/another-uk-village-to-have-fibre-to-the-premises-broadband/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

What is happening with rural broadband access

21/09/2011 07:40



[1]Any of you who are regular readers of this site or who subscribe to it will have seen regular articles on activity concerning improvement of broadband Internet service in rural areas. Previously, I have written a post about why I stand for proper Internet service[2]in the countryside and cover it in this site.

But I have observed activities that have raised the standard of rural Internet service in certain areas where there has been lively and competitive trading environment for Internet service. These range from local startups [3]who offer to raise the bar for Internet in a country town to governments putting their hand to the plough[4]for real broadband in the country.

Why rural broadband service

Farmers and small business in rural areas

Primarily farmers and small-business owners would benefit from proper broadband in the country. This is due to more of the business being transacted online such as the use of e-government services as part of managing livestock on the farm.

There is also the desire to be competitive with urban businesses or, in the case of farming, be responsive to customer and partner needs very quickly.



[5]

Motels like this one can offer Wi-Fi hotspots as a competitive edge

It also extends to hospitality businesses like hotels, motels, cafes and restaurants in these areas who want to offer public-access Internet service as a way of offering "that bit extra". This would encompass resorts created around mountains or water features like ski resorts or lakeside resorts.

Similarly, education institutions who have rural campuses can benefit from real broadband Internet as a study and research tool. This could lead to universities and the like enriching the town with research-driven business.

Country living

The countryside is infact considered an ideal place to live due to a slower pace of life. As well, some parts of the country are particular areas of attraction for this class of living due to features of natural beauty like water features, forests or mountains.

An increasing number of urban-based people visit the country as a holiday destination or even move there. Here they would benefit from the same standard of broadband as they have in the city so they can communicate with relatives or friends there.

Similarly, the appeal of telecommuting wound go in hand with the country life as people can head in to the city only when they need to conduct business meetings. This would appeal to semi-retired people who are reducing their time in the main office.

Peri-urban areas

I am also encompassing peri-urban rural areas as well as the typical rural areas that are a distance away from major towns in the scope of this article. These are typically farming districts, areas of outstanding natural beauty or areas surrounding classic monuments that abut a major city; but are sparsely populated compared to the major city.

The people who live in the major city see these places as being a destination for a day trip and a lot of business in these areas is boosted by the tourists from the major city. Some of these areas, especially those focused around areas of outstanding beauty also attract retirees or other people who are "done with the city" as

a place of residence, although it doesn't take them long to travel to town when they need to visit it.

Examples of these in Australia are the Yarra Valley Wine District and the Dandenongs in Melbourne; the Blue Mountains in Sydney and Barwon Heads in Geelong. In France, there would be the wine regions surrounding some of the major cities like Bordeaux.

Action that has been undertaken on this front

Local initiatives

A major form of action that I have noticed is initiatives that are driven by local government and business. This has commonly occurred in broadband-improvement rollouts that are funded by local councils and /or facilitated by small local telecommunications firms or ISPs.

The best examples are the UK developments where local broadband service providers are formed or regional broadband service providers plough effort into "switching on" particular parishes. There are intense local awareness campaigns run by these small broadband service providers to solicit interest from the residents and business owners; and they will manifest in the form of offline and online promotions; including town-hall meetings.

In some of the UK deployments, there has been the use of local "sweat equity" for assisting in the establishment of fibre trunks as well as local landowners setting up easements for these fibre trunks.

Similarly local governments in the UK and France have provided seed money to the broadband initiatives. These are usually to make the towns attract more investment as well as to ignite local "e-government" initiatives.

National assistance

Defining universal-service obligations

Some countries are taking action to define a minimum broadband Internet service standard to be available across their territories. This is akin to the universal service standards that have been applied to electricity and telephone services.

Here, this may be achieved through extending the remit of the universal telephone service, including collecting monies associated with its provision, to the broadband Internet service.

National and international funding

This also leads to national governments funding broadband-service improvement; usually as part of an Internet-service improvement for the nation. As in Europe, for example, the nations also receive handouts from the European Union in Brussels towards facilitating these improvements.

In some countries like Australia and the UK, the upgrading of the telecommunications backbone to fibre-optic technology and the provision of fibre-based infrastructure close to or reaching the customer is considered a major driver for rural-broadband improvement. The use of public resources for this kind of upgrade has often been met with derision by various

conservative groups because they would rather see it all left in the hands of private enterprise.

Technology

Some of the technology is based on what is being used to establish the "next-generation broadband" Internet services and is being used as a way of catering to the growth of these rural areas and the changing data transfer needs.

Fibre-to-the-cabinet technology

This typically creates a high-speed fibre-optic backbone to one or more street cabinets located close to customer clusters. The customers have the phone connections linked to this cabinet and the Internet service is delivered via ADSL2 or VDSL2 technology over these phone services. They may have the regular telephone provided via the town's exchange, a sub-exchange in the street cabinet or VoIP technology.

In some situations, this technique has been used as an "ADSL2 booster" effort by bringing a higher-throughput ADSL2 service to customers who, by virtue of distance to the exchange, would receive lower throughput service or no service at all.

This also opens up a path for offering fibre-to-the-premises next-generation broadband Internet to customers in these towns, either as a service differentiator or as an upgrade path. It also provides for service growth especially if a town acquires a major employer and sees its capacity grow.

Fibre-optic trunks

A fibre-optic trunk line that passes country areas may be treated like a natural-gas pipeline passing these areas. Here, branch lines or "spurs" are connected to the trunk line and used to serve local communities; while the trunk serves cities that are at each end of the line.

This is seen as a way to establish a next-generation broadband Internet service into the neighbouring towns in a cost-effective manner.

Terrestrial wireless and "white space" spectrum

Another technology that is exciting the prospects of real broadband to the country is the concept of terrestrial wireless. These setups are typically fixed-wireless links that serve individual households or, in some cases, communities or household clusters, with a wired technology like ADSL2 or Ethernet linking to each customer.

Initially this technology was based on 2.4GHz or similar radio links but there is a new break being facilitated at the moment and it is known as "white space[6]". This is where UHF or, in some cases, Band III VHF, TV spectrum that has been vacated by TV broadcasters as they change to spectrum-efficient digital TV technology.

Governments are looking at using this bandwidth as a cost effective way to provide terrestrial-wireless Internet service to country areas where it would be difficult or cost-prohibitive to provide copper or fibre-optic wireline Internet service. Examples of this kind of setup would be mountains or islands.

This will typically end up as a fixed-wireless deployment with

a modem connected to the aerial (antenna) which would most likely be a high-gain TV aerial. This modem would be connected to a broadband router to serve the home network installed at homes in these locations.

Issues to be looked at

A key issue to be looked at in relation to providing a proper broadband Internet service to the country is the decrepit telephony infrastructure that exists in these areas. This is something that I have seen for myself with people who have lived in the country or peri-urban areas as they experienced ADSL service that performed poorly or became less reliable.

Here, telephone companies have historically allowed the telephony infrastructure to perform just enough for voice traffic. As well, due to long cable runs, it has become cost-prohibitive to always renew this telephone wiring to the customer's door. In some cases, monopoly telephony carriers have allowed the telephony infrastructure to become severely derelict, with callers experiencing poor-quality telephone conversations where they hear crackling or crosstalk.

Dial-up modems and fax machines have worked to what was expected of these phone lines, usually using error-correction methods as part of the data transmission protocols.

ADSL broadband has put a newer requirement on the phone lines due to the bandwidth decreasing as the distance increases. In some cases, newer wiring has effectively increased the performance of the telephone system as far as ADSL service is concerned. On the other hand older and decaying connections would impair the telephone circuit's ADSL performance, even causing the ADSL signal to drop out. This is even though you could successfully make or take a telephone call on that same line.

What needs to happen if ADSL broadband is being rolled out in to a rural area, the telephone lines need to be checked for quality and reliability. This includes checking connections for quality and reliability; and that ADSL line-distance metrics need to be true to the phone service's distance from the exchange.

It also includes re-assessing telephone systems whenever newer building developments take place; which can happen over a town's lifespan. It also includes situations where a neighbouring town becomes larger and the current area becomes a suburb of the neighbouring town.

Conclusion

There have been some positive steps taken by different parties to make the idea of real broadband Internet service in the country a reality. This includes encompassing it as part of defining the minimum requirements for an Internet service.

Links

[1]

<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/New-Year-Holiday-050.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[2]

</2010/03/why-i-cover-rural-broadband-access-in-this-blog/>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[3]

/2010/04/more-rural-broadband-activity-in-the-uk-lyddington-leicestershire/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[4]

/2011/09/a-fibre-optic-backbone-in-place-to-improve-internet-access-in-gironde-france/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[5]

<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Front-view-lit-by-evening-sun.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[6]

[#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](/tags/white-space-data-networking)

Product Review-Sony CMT-MX750Ni Internet-enabled micro music system

15/09/2011 03:50

Introduction

I am reviewing the Sony CMT-MX750Ni Internet-enabled micro music system which is a small-form-factor CD/iPod stereo that can connect to the home network for Internet radio or DLNA-based music playback. It is equipped with a DAB+ digital-radio tuner but there is a version of this system known as the CMT-MX700Ni which doesn't have this tuner and is available in areas that don't have Eureka 147 DAB /DAB+ digital-radio services.

From henceforth, I am directing the comments in this review also at the Sony CMT-MX700Ni music system as well as this CMT-MX750Ni, except for any DAB digital-radio comments.



[1]



[2]

Price

Recommended Retail Price: AUD\$449.00

Functions

Analogue Radio FM radio with RDS Digital Radio DAB+ Internet Radio vTuner Internet radio Network Media UPnP AV /DLNA playback UPnP AV /DLNA controlled device (network media) CD CD player Stored Memory USB Mass-Storage x 1 iPod /iPhone iPhone dock

Connections

Input Count as for a device Audio Line input 1 x 3.5mm stereo jack **Network** Wi-Fi 802.11a/g/n WPA2 WPS Ethernet Yes

Speakers

Output Power 50 Watts (RMS) /channel 2 channels stereo Speaker Layout 2 separate speakers Each speaker:
1 x 120mm Woofer
1 x 2.5cm dome Tweeter Speaker Connections Proprietary plug connection on main unit Push-in connection terminals on speakers

The system itself

Setup and Connection

The CMT-MX750Ni can connect to a network either via Wi-Fi wireless or Ethernet. This allows for flexibility with wired and wireless network setups, such as working with highly-reliable Ethernet and HomePlug networks. You need to use the remote for setting up the music system on a Wi-Fi network that doesn't use WPS push-button setup. Here, you use the numeric keypad on the remote to enter the WEP or WPA passphrase for your wireless-network segment in an SMS-style manner.

Sony has "reinvented the wheel" when determining how the speakers should be connected to the main unit. Here, they have used a proprietary Molex-style plug at the system end of the speaker cords like they have done with their DVD home theatre systems. Personally, I would prefer that they use a two-conductor 3.5mm phone plug, or the older 2-pin speaker-DIN plug, both of these connections can allow for easier-to-replace, easier-to-modify speaker connection. Infact a lot of the music systems that were sold through the 1970s and 1980s with

supplied "separate-piece" speakers, such as the "detachable-speaker" boom-boxes have used either the 3.5mm phone plug, 2-pin speaker-DIN plug or RCA plug to provide "plug-in" speaker connections and these have just worked as well for plug-and-play operation.

The speakers are a typical bass-reflex two-way setup but aren't aggressively styled. One thing I am pleased about these speakers is that they are well-built and the enclosures use an all-wood construction rather than a plastic front baffle which shows the quality behind the system.

In use

You have the ability to perform basic content-navigation tasks using the controls on the Sony CMT-MX750Ni's front panel but you need the remote control to use this music system to the fullest. The system uses an "Inverse" LCD display as its display. This yields readable text but Sony could implement a monochrome OLED or fluorescent display rather than the LCD which makes it look "cheap".



[3] Other than that, when you operate the Sony CMT-MX700Ni or CMT-MX750Ni music systems, you find that you are operating a well-built music system. The switches and mechanisms don't exhibit any sort of tackiness that can be noticed in a lot of bookshelf music systems. The remote control is relatively large and with it you have one-touch access to the sources and main functions as well as being able to do advanced functionality.

The FM tuner didn't perform properly on the "pigtail" aerial that was supplied with the unit, especially as it was on the lower level of a split-level house. Here, I would recommend connecting it to a better FM aerial like an outside one if you want the radio to work properly in a difficult scenario.

This setup didn't challenge the DAB tuner with it able to survey the DAB+ multiplexes in Melbourne and provide clear and reliable reception from any program on these multiplexes.

The CMT-750Ni and CMT-700Ni use an iPod dock that drops down from the front panel. This makes it easier to hide the dock if you are not using an iPod or iPhone with it. As well, the iPod or iPhone can lean against the front panel while plugged in without the need to use any dock adaptors. The only limitation with this is that you need to pull back a hard-to-discover latch before you can close the iPod dock.

The front-panel USB socket allows you to play music of a USB memory key, SD card adaptor or smart phone. But it is "live for power" only when system is in operation and supplies the power when you select other sources so you can charge up your Android smartphone or other USB-connected device. This situation is similarly true for the system's iPhone dock and it could be tempting for users to dock their iPhone in this CMT-MX750Ni's dock in order to charge even if the system is not playing. It could have the option to supply power to charge devices connected to the USB socket or iPhone dock even when the Sony music system is in standby.

When the Sony CMT-MX750Ni or CMT-MX700Ni plays Internet radio and loses the connection to the station, it doesn't try to reconnect to the station unlike the other Internet radio products I have used. Here, it just goes back to the main menu and you have to retune to that station, and this can be annoying with over-subscribed Internet streams. Other than, the Internet radio experience works properly as best as the link can allow.

This system works as an audio device in the DLNA Home Media Network. This includes the ability to play audio content that is "pushed" to it from a DLNA-compliant control point like Windows Media Player or TwonkyMedia Controller. It serves this function properly whether you pull the content up using the unit's control surface or push the content out using a DLNA control point.

These music systems can work in the "Party Streaming" mode where multiple Sony receivers or music systems connected to the same home network can stream the same content at the same time. The CMT-MX700Ni or CMT-MX750Ni systems can work as either a host or a client system in this aspect.

Sound Quality

There is the ability with these Sony music systems to adjust the tone of the sound system. This can only be done using the remote control and you have to press the EQ button on that controller. Here you have access to bass and treble adjustments but you can also enable a "Dynamic Sound Generator" mode using a separate button. This may add "extra bite" to some recordings but may not yield difference with other recordings and may be about providing "big speaker" sound out of small speakers.

The sound quality is typical for a high-end "micro" form-factor music system but can clip or sound "muddled" around just near the maximum volume point. I have observed this with recent popular RnB music which is tuned for a loud sound with excessive bass but It can "go loud" on recordings that weren't tuned "loud", although I have had the CMT-MX750Ni run at "flat" tone settings.

I even ran this system on a DAB+ broadcast of an ABC Radio National program and had noticed that the speech from the show's presenters came through very clear, crisp and intelligible. This didn't matter whether it was a man or woman speaking in the show.

Limitation and Points Of Improvement

The "pigtail" aerials (antennas) supplied for DAB and FM use are inadequate for reliable FM or original-specification DAB digital radio (UK, Denmark, etc). As well, these supplied antennas remind you of using the typical clock radio which has this kind of FM aerial and are out of character with this system's class. It could do better with a "whip-style" aerial similar to what is used for the Wi-Fi network connectivity and could support "single-input" aerial setups through an option.

Other connectivity improvement that It could also benefit from include having a pair of RCA line-input connectors or a "tape-loop" set of input and output RCA connectors on the back of the system for whenever you connect a computer, tape deck or other piece of audio-equipment in a semi-permanent manner. It can also benefit from a headphone jack for private listening purposes. Similarly, it could also benefit from integrated Bluetooth A2DP functionality so it can work with phones and media players that use this medium as a way of transmitting music data.



[4]

iPod dock with fiddly latch that needs to be released to close it
I would also improve the iPod dock so that you don't have to operate any latches to open or close the dock. As well, I would provide the ability to charge smartphones connected to the USB socket or docked in the iPhone dock while on standby as a user-selected option. This can allow the user to keep an iPhone or other smartphone "topped off" when docked or connected to the system.

Another point of improvement would be to allow the CMT-MX750Ni music system to retry Internet-radio streams if the stream it is tuned to "gives up the ghost".

I would also like to see the Internet-media and home-network-media functionality implemented into most of Sony's bookshelf-stereo range and /or for Sony to develop a network-connected CD receiver along the same lines as the Rotel RCX-1500 CD receiver I previously reviewed.

Conclusion

I would recommend purchasing the Sony CMT-MX750Ni or CMT-MX-700Ni network-enabled music systems for use in a small room like a bedroom, den or office. It may work well for use in an apartment's small living area.

On the other hand, I wouldn't use this music system in situations where it is expected to fill a large room with music or play in a noisy area like a party or café.

Links

[1]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-007-Sony-CMT-MX750Ni.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[2]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-001-Sony-CMT-MX750Ni-main-unit.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[3]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-015-Remote-Control-R.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[4]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-004-Latch-for-closing-iPod-door.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Product Review-Sony VAIO EJ Series laptop computer (VPC-EJ15FGB)

14/09/2011 12:16

Introduction

I am reviewing the Sony VAIO EJ Series laptop computer which is Sony's latest effort in providing a consumer desktop-replacement laptop computer. Typically most of the VAIO range of laptops have been "multimedia" laptops that are pitched for creation or enjoyment of audiovisual content; but the EJ Series are pitched more as "consumer" laptops with the appropriate software.



[1]

Price

- this configuration AUD\$1199 Processor Intel i5-2520M RAM 4Gb shared with graphics Secondary Storage 500Gb hard disk DVD burner, MemoryStick Pro card reader, SDXC card reader Display Subsystem NVIDIA GeForce 410M (1Gb display memory) Screen 17" widescreen (1600x900) LED-backlit LCD Network Wi-Fi 802.11g/n Ethernet Gigabit Ethernet Bluetooth 3.0 Connectors USB 4 x USB 2.0 Video VGA, HDMI Audio 3.5mm stereo output jack, 3.5mm stereo input jack, Digital output via HDMI Operating System on supplied unit Microsoft Windows 7 Home Premium Windows Experience Index Overall 5.1

Graphics 5.1

Advanced Graphics 6.3

The computer itself

Aesthetics and Build quality

The Sony VAIO EJ Series laptop is finished in the same charcoal-black colour across the unit. It has a hexagon-ripple detail across the lid and palmrest with a perforated area at the top of the keyboard area.

Like the other VAIO laptops, it is very well built and has the typical size and weight for a desktop-replacement laptop.

User interface

The keyboard is the typical chiclet style and has the numeric keypad. This is very similar to other Sony VAIO computers like the earlier one that I have reviewed and works well for accurate touch typing. This is due to the keyboard having a rough surface on the keys rather than the slippery surface I have seen with other laptops.

The trackpad is smaller than most laptop trackpads but is easily discernable by feel. This include having access to the primary and secondary buttons.

Sony hasn't fallen for that trend of requiring you to press Fn to use a standard function like F5. Here, this avoids the need to relearn function key routines that you would have become used to for Windows.

Connectivity and Expandability



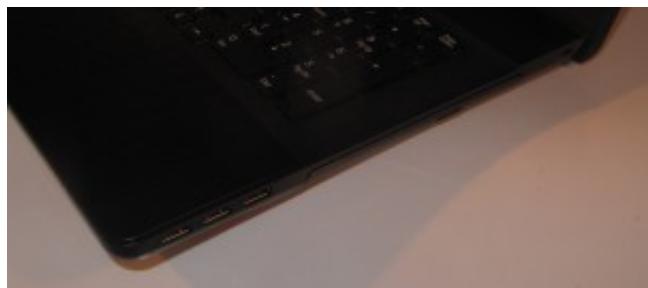
[2]

Left hand side connections

The Sony VAIO EJ15FJ has the typical connectivity and expandability options for a mid-range consumer laptop. These are 4 USB 2.0 ports, separate SDXC and Memory Stick card readers, LAN interface via 802.11g/n Wi-Fi or Gigabit Ethernet as well as VGA or HDMI for video displays. There is at least a 3.5mm stereo phone jack for use as an audio input jack as well as the 3.5mm stereo audio output jack for connections to headphones or external sound systems.

What I find that is noticeably absent for this laptop is a USB 3.0 socket or eSATA socket which would facilitate high-speed connection to external storage devices.

Audio and Video



[3]

Right-hand-side USB connections

The audio experience is typical for most laptops where there is use of small speakers. Here, I would rather use headphones or external speakers if you want to get the most out of the laptop

for music or movie applications.

The display subsystem is powered by a NVIDIA GeForce 410 discrete graphics chipset with 1Gb of display RAM available. It doesn't support the dual-graphics setup which allows the computer to work on integrated graphics if you are using it on batteries. This may be OK for a computer that isn't likely to be used in a portable manner such as a home computer.

The VAIO's display subsystem works with a large 17" screen that works at a 1600×900 resolution but could be equipped with a similar-sized screen that offers a 1920×1080 Full HD resolution. This screen is a very glossy screen which wouldn't work well where there is plenty of lighting.

Battery life

One major let-down I had observed with this laptop is the battery runtime with the system's standard battery. I had observed that it went through the battery very quickly with 38% left after about 2 hours of word-processing use and it ran a DVD for 1 hour, 58 minutes.

Sony could implement the dual-graphics functionality in this VAIO EJ series laptop if they want to see longer battery runtimes out of these laptops but this computer is being pitched as an "average consumer" laptop.

Other experience notes

There is the ability for one to purchase an optional long-run battery for this laptop but it would be needed if you intended to use it away from power a lot.

The Sony VAIO EJ laptop runs very cool on most tasks. But after a bit of use with video playback, it may start to run hot but this may be due to the graphics chipset. The system's ventilation works properly to avoid intense heat build-up that has been known to occur with some laptops that I have used.

Sony also supplies software that allows this and other VAIO laptops to work hand-in-glove with their PlayStation 3 games console or their Bravia TVs and Blu-Ray players. Here, the computers can work as a display screen for the PS3 or as an input device for the PS3 or Sony's TVs and Blu-Ray players.

Limitations and Points of Improvement



[4]

VAIO back shot

One main limitation that I would find for positioning the 17" VAIO EJ series laptops as "desktop replacements" would be the hard disk capacity. Here, I would prefer these units to have a capacity of at least 640Gb like what I have seen with the Dell

XPS L702X or the HP Pavillion DV7-6013TX desktop replacements with their 1Tb hard disks if I wanted to sell or specify them as a sole "desktop replacement" computer. I would also look towards implementing either a USB 3.0 port or eSATA /USB 2.0 combo port on the VAIO EJ series laptops so that you can use an external hard disk using high-throughput connections.

As well, I would look towards implementing the full switchable-graphics functionality that is part of the Intel Sandy-Bridge chipsets in order to improve on the battery runtime. I have observed that the integrated graphics on the Sandy Bridge platform can do an adequate desktop-applications, Web-browsing or DVD playback job on batteries. The NVIDIA chipset can work as an "overdrive" for content creation which Sony knows best; or intense gaming sessions and this could be facilitated using the NVIDIA Optimus "automatic overdrive" functionality.

The supplied Media Gallery software could properly play and decode audio files in formats other than MP3, especially if the content is sourced from DLNA-compliant servers. It could really achieve this through the use of Microsoft-supplied logic for media decoding.

Conclusion



[5]I would recommend this as a "graphics-performance" laptop for home users who want to move towards the new computing environment but place importance on the large 17" screen. Here, the only limitation would be the hard-disk capacity, where I would recommend a Dell XPS L702X or HP Pavillion DV7-6013TX; or use an external hard disk or network-attached storage. It would also have to be used primarily at home or as a transportable rather than "on the road" due to the battttery life issues I have reased in this review.

It wouldn't suit work-home users who value high-performance links with external hard drives, nor would it suit travellers who need it as an "on the road" computer.

Links

[1]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-027-Sony-VAIO-EJ-Series-VPC-EJ15FGB.jpg#utm_source=eed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[2]
<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-022-LHS-connections.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[3]
<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-021-RHS-connections.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[4]
<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-025-VAIO-Back-shot.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[5]
<http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-15-020.jpg>#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

What are the issues involved with updating device firmware

13/09/2011 10:26

Article

Firmware modders keep legal storm brewing[1]

My comments

There is an increasing trend to design devices as though they are a computer similar to a regular desktop computer. Here, the operating software for these devices, commonly known as "firmware", is designed so it can be updated in the location where the device is used.

Typically newer versions of this software are delivered over the Internet, most likely via the manufacturer's Web site or, in some cases, through device-support forums.

Methods

One common way of delivering this software is to deliver the update as a binary package that you download using your regular computer, then upload to the device in one or more different ways.

This may involve physically transferring the package to the device using removable media which you install in the device. Then you may either restart the device or select a "Firmware Update" menu option to load this software in the device. An example of this may be a digital camera or an MP3 player.

It may also include uploading the software to the device's Web management interface as is commonly done with wireless routers. On the other hand you may have to run a firmware-update program on your regular computer which delivers the software to your directly-connected device such as a printer or, in some cases, your network-connected device.

An increasingly-common method that is used for devices that are connected to the Internet is to invoke a firmware-update routine through the setup menu. Here, the device visits a special server

run by its manufacturer, checks the version of the firmware on that server and downloads the latest version if it exists on that server. This may be performed as part of the setup routine for a new device or the device may poll the server for new firmware updates at specified times.

Benefits

The main benefit from device firmware that is updated through the device's lifespan is that there is a chance for the device's manufacturer to "iron out" bugs that may have been overlooked in the haste to get the device to market as soon as possible. This also includes "tuning" the device's performance at handling particular tasks as newer algorithms come along.

In some cases, a firmware update may be about improving security, which is part of the increasingly-common "cat and mouse" game between the device manufacturer and the device-modding community. It also is about adding extra functions to the device that it didn't come with when it was launched. An example of this include Draytek adding 3G wireless-broadband WAN functionality to their VPN routers or supporting newer wireless-broadband modems on these routers.

The field-updatable firmware packages can allow a device to enjoy a longer service life as newer requirements can be "baked" in to the software and rapidly pushed out to customers. Examples of this can include support for newer peripheral hardware or newer operating standards.

Drawbacks

There may be cases where some functions offered by the device may be broken due to a firmware update; or the device's user has to learn new operating procedures to perform some of the functions.

As well, firmware updates that are drawn down by the device may chew up bandwidth especially if there are more of the same device to be update. This can also extend to frequently-delivered large firmware updates for the same device.

Experiences

One situation that I had observed was the use of a Creative Labs Nomad Jukebox as a music-playout device at the church I go to. Initially, there were problems with using this music play because the previous music-playout device, which was a MiniDisc deck had a time-remaining indicator for the currently-playing track.

Subsequent to the purchase of this music player, Creative Labs delivered a major firmware update across the Nomad Jukebox range and this firmware had a "fuel-gauge" indicator to show how far in to the currently-playing track the unit was as well as a time-remaining indicator. Once the latest firmware was applied to this Nomad Jukebox, it became easier to use the device for the purpose that the church bought it for.

Another example was the Western Digital WDTV Live network media adaptor. Through the time I had the unit, there had been many firmware updates with UPnP AV /DLNA media playback being delivered through one of the updates and full MediaRenderer functionality being delivered at a subsequent update. Similarly, this device acquired Facebook, TuneIn Internet radio and other network-service functionality.

Yet another example was where I reviewed two HP business laser printers for this site. I had noticed that once these printers received firmware updates, they were able to work with HP's ePrint ecosystem.

Issues

A large software image for a small problem

One main issue with firmware updating is that the company typically needs to deliver a complete firmware image to fix a small problem in the device. This can be annoying as devices have a firmware size equivalent to earlier incarnations of the Windows operating environment and this figure is increasing rapidly.

A direction that may have to be looked at for firmware-update delivery is to implement practices associated with updating regular-computer operating systems. This is where smaller incremental updates are delivered to the device and installed by that device. Apple has headed in to that direction with the iOS and this has become easier for them due to the regular desktop computing system being their founding stone. This direction may not work if the firmware is to be subject to a major rewrite with a changed user-interface.

Making and breaking preferred content distribution mechanisms

The article looked at the issue of field-updatable device software as making or breaking a preferred content-distribution model. There are examples of this with games consoles having their software modified so they can play pirated, homebrew or grey-import games titles; the "jailbreaking" of iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch) so they run software not provided by the iTunes App Store; or DVD and Blu-Ray players modified to play pirated and grey-import movies.

The manufacturers are in a game of "cat and mouse" with these devices with the software-modification community to keep these preferred distribution mechanisms alive. This is especially with devices like printers or games consoles that may be sold at loss-leading prices so that customers buy software or accessories at higher prices through preferred distribution chains.

Limiting "out-of-the-box" functionality unless updates are performed

This can lead to devices and partner software being unable to function fully unless the device is updated.

Some examples of this may include the PlayStation 3 games console package cited in the original article where you needed to download a significant update to play a game that was packaged with the console. Then you had to download extra software on to the console from the game supplier before you could play online.

Another example would be the previously-mentioned HP LaserJet printers which needed to be updated before they could run with the ePrint ecosystem. This situation may happen if the new software requirement was ran out just after the hardware was released.

Update loops

A situation that can occur with devices that implement Internet-based updating is what I call an "update loop" or "update chain". This is where the device completes many firmware-update cycles before it becomes useable. It has happened with the WDTV Live network media adaptor but can happen with other devices.

What manufacturers could do is to allow a "once and for all" update cycle that obtains and installs the latest firmware. The server software could prepare a software build that is particular to the device's current firmware and supply that build rather than supplying earlier software builds.

PC-style functionality addition

The trend now is to have our devices work in a similar vein to a regular personal computer, where users can add accessory hardware and software at a later date through the product's lifecycle.

This is intensified with the "app" ecosystem that has been driven by smartphones and tablets, where users visit an "app store" to download programs to their devices. Similarly, TV manufacturers are integrating programs like Skype in their network-enabled TVs and allowing customers to add on Webcams to these sets for video conferencing.

Here, we could the thinking of adding software functionality to devices either through apps and "drivers" that are downloaded as hardware is installed or subsequent full firmware updates. The former method could work well with devices that can have their functionality evolved by the customer or installer whereas the latter method would work with devices that perform the same function all the time.

What could be looked at with device software management

UPnP Device Management

The UPnP Forum have recently released a DeviceManagement Device Control Protocol which allows for network-based configuration and management of devices. This includes a SoftwareManagement Service which looks after the issue of software delivery for these devices.

This may be of relevance where another device works as a management point for another networked device with no user interface or a limited user interface. An example of this setup may be a regular computer or a tablet running an application that co-ordinates and manages firmware updates for a variety of devices; or an IPTV set-top box that is part of a "triple-play" setup managing the software on the router that is at the network-Internet "edge".

Use of a network-attached storage to keep device software images

An increasing number of home networks are or will be equipped with a network-attached storage device which shares data held on a hard disk across the local network. One main application for this would be to keep music, picture and video files so that they can be shared across the network.

The industry could look at ways of using these NAS (network attached storage) to track down and keep a local cache of new firmware for devices on the home network. Then the devices can check this resource for newer software images when they need to update their firmware. This may suit home networks where there are multiple devices running the same software, such as multiple units of the same games console or multiple TVs made by the same manufacturer within a close time frame.

It may sound like a practice associated with computing in the "big end of town" where the desire by business IT teams is to maintain standard operating environments; but this technique could be used to keep multiple devices from the same manufacturer up to date without using up bandwidth for firmware updates. As well, with the appropriate protocols, it could allow for a "hands-off" approach when adding new devices to the network or maintaining existing devices.

Conclusion

As more and more dedicated-purpose devices move towards the computing model used by regular computers, we will need to think of issues concerning keeping the software up to date and using the updates to improve the devices.

Links

[1]

<http://www.theage.com.au/digital-life/digital-life-news/firmware-modders-keep-legal-storm-brewing-20110908-1jyrg.html>

A fibre-optic backbone in place to improve Internet access in Gironde, France

13/09/2011 10:16

Articles - in French language

La Gironde investit dans le numérique - DegroupNews.com[1]

GirondeNumerique.fr[2] - main web site

My comments

Gironde, a département in the south West of France, known as one of France's key wine districts is doing major works to improve broadband coverage across its area.

Here, they have laid 1,060 kilometres of fibre-optic cable to produce a backbone for this service and are at the moment running it through the necessary tests. This network will provide 83 districts and 168 public buildings in this département with fibre-to-the-premises next-generation broadband.

This network will also be about making sure that an ADSL2 service capable of at least 2Mbps "at the door" will pass 99% of all households in Gironde. The remainder that cannot achieve this speed will have access to a two-way satellite connection. It will also support the competitive service provisioning that has kept the French Internet scene very lively and put a high-value Internet service in to the hands of most, if not all, French people.

This has been funded by Gironde's local government with private

input from France-Télécom (Orange). This local government is also using it as part of rolling out an improved online presence including the gradual provisioning of e-government facilities for its citizens.

I would encourage other countries to look at what the UK and France are doing for their next-generation broadband services because these countries have implemented strong mechanisms to assure a lively Internet-service marketplace. This includes technological and regulatory measures that have been put in place and the encouragement of local government rather than central government in the service-establishment phase.

Links

[1]

http://www.degroupnews.com/actualite/n6750-gironde-haut_debit-tres_haut_debit-numerique-deploiement.html

[2] <http://www.girondenumerique.fr/>

Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011-Part 2

12/09/2011 02:14



[1]Welcome back to the second part of my report on the Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011. In the first part, I had touched on home appliances briefly but had focused on computing technologies like smartphones, tablets, laptops and the home network.

Now I am focusing on consumer electronics which mainly is focused around digital cameras, TV and home-theatre /hi-fi technology.

Consumer Electronics

Cameras

3D is still being considered a dominant technology with some of the cameras being equipped with two lenses and sensors. As well, Samsung have also fielded a camera with two screens - one on the back and one on the front.

The camera manufacturers are releasing more of the small interchangeable-lens cameras. These are typically in the "non-SLR" style with the screw-on lens mounts. It is leading towards the appearance of more compact cameras with high-factor zoom lenses. Here, these cameras are being pitched mainly as mainly "bridge-cameras" which exist between the "point-and-shoot" camera and the SLR camera and have many adjustable photography factors including semi-automatic and manual exposure modes.

An issue that may affect the launch of digital photography

equipment at this or subsequent IFA shows is the up-and-coming Photokina photo/film/video trade shows. These shows appear in Cologne at the end of September and they are often seen as a major launchpad for anything to do with photography or videography. A valid point may be raised about whether companies with digital photo /video equipment show their equipment at both shows, launching consumer equipment in Berlin and "enthusiast" equipment (DSLRs, high-end camcorders) in Cologne.

Of course, there hasn't been much interest in using network technology for photo and video equipment when interlinking with computer equipment.

TV and Display Technologies

There are a few key trends that are occurring concerning the television receivers being promoted at the IFA.

One is the DVB-T2 digital-TV standard which is to launch in Germany. This revision of the DVB-T terrestrial digital-TV standard will provide for more HDTV with H264 video. It will also allow for advanced interactive TV (HbbTV, VoD) platforms, robust terrestrial reception as well as more services per TV channel.

3D is still a dominant technology with Toshiba and other names promoting glasses-free 3D viewing where their sets use a polarizing screen and support an ersatz 3D effect for regular content. Haier are also using a similar technology for their 3D Internet-enabled set. LG are running 3D TVs that work with cinema-style passive polarizing glasses. ,

For content, Deutsche Telekom is providing "Entertain 3D" channels as part of their Entertain IPTV service. This requires the Deutsche Telekom "Entertain" set-top box and access to a VDSL2 next-gen service. There will be the magazine channels as well as highlight footage from Bundesliga football (soccer) matches as well as the "usual suspects" - those popular 3D action and animation films from Hollywood.

Another key trend is Internet-driven smart TV. This is with access to the Social Web, video-on-demand /catch-up TV amongst other interactive-TV services using the home network.

Hama are releasing at this year's IFA an Android STB with access to full Android Honeycomb service on the TV screen. This time, the set-top is able to connect to the network via WiFi, or Ethernet.

Samsung are pushing the Social TV agenda. This allows you to view TV and chat on the Social Web at the same time with a button to press to focus on Facebook/Twitter/Google Talk chat streams or TV content. There is also the ability to use a Samsung smartphone or Galaxy Tab as the TV keyboard once you install the appropriate app. Of course, there is a Samsung TV remote that has a QWERTY keyboard and LCD display to facilitate the chat function.

Samsung have also released an app for their Android smartphones and tablets which allows the image on their Smart TVs to be shown on these devices.

Sharp have contributed to the smart-TV race with the AQUOS Net+ app subsystem for their TVs. As well Metz are showing a network-enabled 3D TV with HbbTV broadcast-broadband

support and a 750Gb PVR.

There was an increased number of TVs that had the 21:9 aspect ratio being launched at this show. This aspect ration was more about a "cinema-screen" aspect ration that was often used with a lot of movies since the 1950s.

Even the projector scene is going strong at this year's IFA.

Acer are showing the H9500BD 3D Full-HD home-theatre projector which is to be released October. This unit can work at 2000 ANSI Lumen with a 50000:1 contrast ratio. It fixes the keystone problem that often happens with projectors by using a lens-shift setup rather than digitally skewing the image; as well as a high zoom lens that permits a big image with a short throw and also has wall-colour-correction for projection to non-white-walls It is expected to sell in Europe for €2499 recommended retail price

Sony are also launching a 3D-capable projector with a 150,000:1 contrast ratio and use of lens-shift as the keystone correction method. The big question that I have about this projector is how bright this projector is in ANSI lumens.

Canon also launched the LV8235 which is an ultra-short-throw DLP projector. Here, this projector can throw a 2-metre (80") usable image projected with it being positioned at 32cm (1 foot) from the wall or screen.

As well, Sony had used this show to première a set of 3D personal video goggles. Here, these glasses show 3D video images on separate OLED screens, mainly for use with personal video players or games systems.

Home Theatre and Hi-Fi

There has been some activity concerning networked home-theatre and hi-fi equipment.

Harman-Kardon are launching a 3.1 HTIB with has an integrated 3D Blu-Ray player and uses a soundbar as its main speaker.

Loewe have used this event to launch the Solist single piece audio system. This has a CD player and access to FM and Internet radio broadcasts as far as I know. It can connect to home networks via WiFi, Ethernet or HomePlug and uses a 7.5" touch screen or Loewe Assist remote control as its control surface.

Sony have launched the SNP-M200 network media player which is the follow on from the SNP-M100, It offers 3D video support and an improved Facebook and Twitter experience. Of course, like the SNP-M100, it has the full DLNA Home Media Network credentials including being a controlled device. They also launched another Blu-Ray player in the form of the BDP-S185 which supports 3D Blu-Ray playback and access to online content.

As well, Pioneer have launched some network-enabled hi-fi equipment including a component network-audio player for use with existing hi-fi setups. Philips are using this show also to launch a Streamium MCi8080 music system with DAB+ and Internet radio, a CD player as well as network audio. Intenso have launched their Movie Champ HD media player which is one of those media players that play off USB (or the home network). But this one can properly play 3D video in to 3D-enabled TVs.

It is also worth noting that Jarre Technologies is a newcomer to the scene of "worked" audio reproduction technologies. This firm has been set up by Jean Michel Jarre, known for setting the tone of European ambient-music with Equinoxe and Oxygene, and is now following the same path as Dr. Dre's "Beats Audio" name. Here, they are launching their highly-powerful iPad speaker tower which can work comfortably at 10,000 watts and uses "speaker tubes" but would need a large area to perform at its best. Here, this product is all about proving Jarre Technologies metal and I wonder when there will be premium and multimedia laptop computers that have their audio subsystems tuned by Jarre Technologies on the market and who will sell these laptops.

Germany is now heading towards DAB+ digital radio broadcasting which yields an improvement over the original DAB digital-radio technology that it worked with before. Here, this technology uses AAC audio coding, allows for an increased number of broadcast services per multiplex and, from my experience with the Australian setup as I used many DAB+ enabled Internet radios on review, provides for highly-robust digital radio reception. It may be easier for set manufacturers to launch DAB+ digital radios in to this market due to them having DAB+ radios already on Australian and other DAB+ markets; and UK readers may find that their newer digital radios may be already set up for DAB+ technology even though the UK is working on "original specification" DAB radio.

Conclusion

The Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011 has reinforced the role of the networked home especially as Europe takes to the newer Internet technologies like 4G wireless broadband, IPTV and next-generation broadband service.

Links

[1]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/IFA-Logo.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011 - Part 1

10/09/2011 12:22



[1]I am writing a trade-show recap about the Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011 trade show which is held in Berlin, Germany.

As I have previously mentioned on this site, the Internationaler Funkaustellung is the European launch platform for most

consumer-electronics technology. Since home appliances were incorporated in this trade fair, it has outgrown itself with all of the exhibition space increasingly being booked out. They have even had to create extra floor space by incorporating extra venues or having marquees set up outside the various venues.

Appliances

Again, the IFA is a showcase for home appliances. There is still the emphasis on energy-efficient "whitegoods", including ovens being equipped with an "eco hot-air" cooking mode for energy-efficient baking. As well, LG have introduced a washing machine with a load capacity of 12 kilograms.

As far as small appliances are concerned, there has been a lot of coffee-machine activity from most of the manufacturers and an increasing number of floor-care-appliance manufacturers are running with vacuum-cleaner "robots". We have also seen Groupe SEB bring the Moulinex "smallgoods" brand back to the German market.

Network connectivity for appliances

But there is increased activity with connecting "whitegoods" and small appliances to the home network. This has been proven by a survey that was done in Germany by VDE(Verband der Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik) who represent the appliance industry in that country. Here, most Germans would like to

- live in a networked home,
- control appliances from different locations,
- utilise opportunities provided by smart-home technologies

They were defining "Home 2.0" as being for the "apps generation" - "there is an app for that". One major driver for this is the smart grid which allows communication amongst devices and electricity providers to save energy costs.

Examples of this include E.ON, EnBW, eQ-3 and Miele entering into a joint venture with Deutsche Telekom to interlinking home appliances (major goods) and backbone systems (HVAC, security, etc) to Internet to achieve energy efficiency. Beurer have also fielded a network appliance system which connects their video baby monitor, bathroom scales and blood pressure monitor to home network and the Internet.

Personal Wellness

This leads me to mention that Germany's hearing-aid association have now become part of the IFA. This is due to the hearing aid or cochlear implant being more than just an amplifier for the ear. These devices have DSP technology and this association are working on interlinking them to communications and entertainment technology that is part of the connected lifestyle in a better way than the traditional induction loop.

Computing and Communications

This field of consumer computing and communications is growing very strongly especially with the arrival of tablet computers and smartphones.

Tablets

Samsung to present Galaxy Note which has a 5.3" screen. It is intended as a device that bridges between a smartphone and a small tablet computer. They were also going to use the IFA 2011 to launch the Galaxy Tab 7 which has a 7" AMOLED screen, Android Honeycomb, 2Mp front camera and a 3Mp rear camera. There was also the Galaxy Tab 8.9 which was intended to fill the gap between the coat-pocket 7" tablet and the larger 10" that you could cradle around.

This has been limited by legal action that Apple took against Samsung concerning certain "patents on style[2]" that Apple were jealously guarding in relation to the iPad.

Acer were using this show to launch the Iconia Tab A500/A501 series tablets which I have reviewed in HomeNetworking01.info [3]. As well, Viewsonic had used IFA to field their ViewPad 10 Pro which is a 10" tablet that could dual-boot between Android or Windows 7.

Sony have launched two tablet computers in a way to present themselves as a force that Apple would have to reckon with. These Android tablets are the Tablet P which has a pair of 5.5" screens that work in a similar vein to the Nintendo DS games consoles; and the Tablet S which is a standard design with a 9.4" screen.

Intenso was a name associated with data-storage technology but have fielded a low-end 8" tablet that runs Android 2.3 rather than Android Honeycomb.

Smartphones

Microsoft is intending to use the IFA 2011 event as a platform to release Windows Phone 7 "Mango" operation.

HTC is using this event to launch the Evo 3D smartphone in Europe. Here, this Android 2.3 smartphone implements an ersatz 3D effect and is the first smartphone to implement a two-stage shutter-release button. This is similar to what we have been used to with film and digital still cameras which use auto-exposure and /or auto-focus. This is where you hold the shutter-release halfway to cause the camera to adjust itself for the shot, then press fully to take the shot.

LG have advanced a few smartphones to the European market this year. One is the Prada K2 which is a 4.3" unit running Android 2.3, equipped with 8MP camera and 1.3Mp front camera. This luxury phone also has 16Gb on board. They have also launched the Optimus Sol smartphone which has "Ultra AMOLED" display technology as well as the Optimus 7 smartphone which is based on Windows 7 "Mango".

Samsung are using the IFA 2011 to launch a range of smartphones. One of these is the Wave III which is a 4" smartphone driven by the Bada operating system; as well as another Bada-driven smartphone that has Near-Field Communications technology.

They are also releasing newer models in the Galaxy Android-powered range. The Galaxy Y which is a 3" LCD smartphone with a 2Mp camera and Swype /TouchWiz user interfaces. The Galaxy Y Pro has the same abilities as the Galaxy Y but is equipped with a QWERTY keyboard. The Galaxy M Pro

runs Android 2.3 "Gingerbread" and has a 2.66" LCD screen and a 5Mp camera. The Galaxy W has a 3.7" LCD and 5Mp camera; but will come also as a white version.

As LTE 4G wireless-broadband technology is being rolled out around Europe, Samsung are rolling out LTE versions of their Galaxy S2 and 8.9" Galaxy Tab. It is also worth noting that the Galaxy SII smartphone was caught up in the lawsuit concerning Apple's "patent on style[4]" and was blocked from sale in Germany.

Of course, Samsung haven't passed Windows 7 "Mango" by. This operating system is driving the Omnia W which is a 3.7" unit as well as the Omnia 7.

Acer have released a 5" Iconia Android smartphone with 1024×480 resolution as well as a Windows Phone 7 "Mango" phone with HDIM connectivity and DLNA-compliant media playback software. Medion have also come to the Android smartphone and tablet party and, in my opinion, these could show up in one or more Aldi stores.

It is also worth noting that Deutsche Telekom are fielding the SpeedPhone 700. This is another of those fixed-line cordless phones which are designed along the same line as a smartphone and like some of these phones, it is Android-driven.

Philips have also released a range of speaker docks that are designed to work with Android phones. Unlike the iPhone speaker dock which connects to the iPhone using the proprietary dock connector, these speakers interface to the phone via a Bluetooth A2DP wireless link but provide power to the phone via a microUSB flylead.

Laptops

There is still activity on the consumer /small-business laptop front at the IFA.

Acer have used this show to launch the Aspire S3 which is the first of the new "Ultrabooks"[5]. These 13.3" ultraportable computers are designed to be very slim and light but have a very long battery runtime. These will typically be available with solid-state drives for secondary storage and have integrated Wi-Fi as the sole network connectivity. As we know already, they are intended to "snap at the heels" of the Apple MacBook Air series of ultraportable, but have commonly-used peripheral connections.

But Acer is not alone with Samsung using this show to promote their Series 9 "ultrabooks". Sony is also exhibiting the VAIO Z Series which have solid-state drives for secondary storage and integrated wireless broadband. These units come with a module which has a Blu-Ray reader /DVD writer as well as dedicated graphics. The VAIO Z Series is claimed to run for 14 hours on its own battery before needing to be charged.

As far as regular "new computing environment" laptops go, there has been some activity.

Toshiba had used this show to launch the Qosmio F750 multimedia laptop which is equipped with 3D display technology. As well, Acer launched the Aspire Ethos 8951G multimedia laptop which is able to be set up for comfortable video-viewing use with an optional accessory.

It is also worth knowing that Samsung are using this show to try their hand with their own "Chromebook" which is a networked notebook that runs Google Chrome OS and works "in the cloud".

Peripherals and Software

Acer have tried their hand at a 50-Lumen microprojector which uses a single USB connection for power and data. LG have also run with the LSM-100 mouse which doubles as a scanning wand. This reminds me of those handheld scanners that you had to drag across the artwork to the scanned and required a steady hand to operate.

Kaspersky Labs have answered the call to develop security software for the MacOS platform and are now offering this software. This is because the Apple Macintosh platform is acquiring a user base that is on a par with the Windows platform due to Intel-driven Macintosh computers and the popularity of Apple iOS-powered mobile-computing devices.

Network and Internet

One major trend for Europe that is occurring is the rollout of 4G LTE high-throughput mobile broadband by most of the mobile-phone carriers. This is happening alongside various next-generation broadband rollouts that are occurring across most European communities.

Hama, a German photo-video-computer accessories brand have released a 3-in-1 router. This unit can work as a "Mi-Fi" Mobile broadband router for a Wi-Fi wireless LAN, an Ethernet-ended broadband router for a Wi-Fi network or simply as an auxiliary Wi-Fi access point with a wired backbone. Medion have provided a 2Tb NAS but I don't know what kind of setup or facilities it has.

Devolo have restructured their HomePlusg product lineup with three different product packages. One is the MultiConnect Set which consists of a HomePlug AV-Ethernet bridge and a HomePlug AV /802.11n wireless access point /3-port Ethenret switch. Another is a typical "pair of homeplugs" described as the "Internet To TV" package. They are also running a wireless laptop-TV package which uses a proprietary point-to-point link.

They have also fielded the Home TV Sat 2400CI+ which is a satellite TV setup with a HomePlug AV backbone as a credible alternative to satellite cable run to the main living area. The set-top box in this kit will also work with the DLNA Home Media Network

AVM, known for their FritzBox range of home-network routers has now re, leased the FritzApp Media DLNA media control point for Android. This is after they previously released the FritzWLAN wireless network repeater which can work as a DLNA-controlled music player. They are also reinforcing their three-stream 450Mbps 802.11n-capable FritzBox lineup,

As well, Deutsche Telekom have utilised the LTE technology to boost the Internet abilities of their rural Internet customers. Here, those customers have had their "Call & Surf Comfort" plans augmented with higher network throughput for rural wireless links (download 3Mbps now 7.2Mbps, upload 1Mbps now 3Mbps). There is no cost penalty associated with these upgrades. Here, this is a step for German country dwellers having real proper Internet service.

Seagate have used this platform to launch their GoFlex Satellite [6] wireless NAS for iDevices and I have touched on this device before on this site.

Stay tuned for more on the Internationaler Funkaustellung 2011 in the next part of this series.

Links

[1]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/IFA-Logo.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[2]

[/2011/08/do-we-need-to-patent-the-style-or-interface-of-a-device/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/08/do-we-need-to-patent-the-style-or-interface-of-a-device/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[3]

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[4]

[/2011/08/do-we-need-to-patent-the-style-or-interface-of-a-device/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/08/do-we-need-to-patent-the-style-or-interface-of-a-device/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

[5]

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[6]

[/2011/06/seagate-goflex-satellitea-new-breed-of-network-attached-storage/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed](http://2011/06/seagate-goflex-satellitea-new-breed-of-network-attached-storage/#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed)

Product Review-Brother P-Touch PT-2730 label writer

07/09/2011 03:26

Introduction

I am reviewing the Brother P-Touch PT-2730 label writer which can turn out printed labels for attaching to various items. Unlike most labellers, it is one of those units that can be connected with a computer so you can create customised designs or have your office software prepare labels for printing out.



[1]

Price

Recommended Retail Price: \$129

The unit itself

Setup

The Brother P-Touch can be operated on AC current using a supplied transformer or can be used on the road once four AA batteries are installed in it. Personally, I would like it to support the use of rechargeable batteries with in-situ charging and /or receive its power while tethered to a host computer via its USB port.



[2]

Tape compartment where the label tape goes

The PT-2730 uses Brother's "TZ" label tape cartridges which are dropped in to the unit in a similar manner to how you would put a tape cassette in to a small cassette recorder. The only main point of confusion is that there is a white lever which can confuse new users when they load the cartridge in the machine.

Use



[3]

TZ label cartridges as used by this labeller

The Brother P-Touch label writer uses a thermal-transfer method for writing on the labels. With some cartridges, it may involve the

use of two tapes in a similar manner to the typical low-end plain-paper fax machine and in others, it would mark like the typical receipt printer.

When the unit turns out the labels, it automatically cuts labels to the correct size.

As well, there is a large choice of Brother "TZ series" label tapes available for the user to buy, with laminated tape in different colours or clear tape. There is even the ability to buy fluorescent tape, tamper-evident security tape or iron-on fabric tape for needs that call for these materials.

Standalone operation

A person can use the Brother P-Touch labeller to turn out a label without any special training, just by powering on the unit, typing up the characters on the keyboard and pressing PRINT.

If you need to enter accents that are required for foreign languages, you have to enter the letter that needs the digraph, press the ACCENT key repeatedly until desired character appears, then press OK. Some characters peculiar to certain languages like German or the Nordic countries may require you to enter a "close letter" then press ACCENT until you find the character. An example of this is using S for ß or A for æ. This may make it easier to create vocabulary labels that you attach to objects in order to help with learning foreign languages.

If you needed to enter currency symbols like the euro (€) or pound (£) symbol, you would have to use the SYMBOLS option and "pick and choose" the symbols to use them.

There is the ability to determine the text typeface, appearance and size using the TEXT button. As well, you can determine the label layout using the "LABEL" button. The Barcodes option supports the creation of most of the single-dimensional barcodes that are in common use nowadays. You can also print the current time and date to a label once the internal clock is set, which can be of use in date-stamping perishable foods that you have added to your fridge.

Tethered

Once the Brother PT-2730 is connected to your computer, it works with Brother software that is supplied on a CD that comes with the unit. This allows you to upload label designs or can work as a printer for the host computer. This kind of arrangement is very similar to what is needed for the computer-aided-craft-design software that Brother embroidery sewing machines come with.



[4]

Side view with AC socket and USB port

I was expecting to use some inept software for the machine but Brother had offered more, such as an easy-to-use program. You have access to the full TrueType font library on your computer but this is only for creating the designs that you will upload to your labeller.

What I would like to see is for Brother to license the device for TrueType and other standard font families so that you can upload a TrueType typeface to the unit for creating labels on that typeface without the need to use the computer.

The Brother P-Touch software can support “merged labelling” with data that is brought in from resources held on your computer system. At the moment, it handles data held in Word, Excel or Outlook as well as the usual comma-separated /tab-separated text file suspects. It can connect to Microsoft SQL Server database resources but I would like to see it work with ODBC database resources which encompass MySQL and desktop databases like MS Access. There is also add-in programs that run with MS Word, Excel and Outlook for making labels from these programs.

Limitations and Points of improvement

Power Supply

I would like to see some improvements regarding the P-Touch PT-2730's power supply. One would be that the labeller can work with rechargeable batteries and charge those batteries in the unit while connected to the AC supply. This will allow for intense labelling projects where you might think you will “blow through” many packs of Duracells to complete the projects.

As well, it could be feasible for the unit to be powered through the USB port while it is tethered to a computer. This may then obviate the need for carrying the AC adaptor when you use the Brother labeller with a laptop. This ability would be more important for those homes and workplaces that have moved to the laptop-based New Computing Environment.

Usability and Software Design

An improvement that I would like to see for Brother P-Touch label writers is a WYSIWYG view during label creation. Here, the unit provides a coarse multi-line view of the label when you write in the text but it could work better.

The software could be improved with direct import of data from ODBC-compliant databases; and /or integration with the desktop databases like MS Access or FileMaker Pro. As well, there could be an “in-unit” or software-based option to create calibrated “measurement tapes” using the labeller. This may please user groups like photography, police /security and health-related disciplines who want to make up a measurement chart like a height chart.

The USB interface could be exploited further with clock synchronisation to the host computer. This could also include support for “UTC+timezone-offset” timekeeping and improved handling of daylight-saving time.

There could also be a further option where the keyboard could become a USB Human-Interface-Device keyboard. Here, the QWERTY keyboard could be set to work as a standard USB keyboard for text entry on other devices like LED signs, or network AV equipment like the Sony BDP-S380 or Sony PlayStation 3. The function could then be enabled as a menu option in the Setup menu.

Conclusion

The Brother P-Touch PT-2730 label writer would be considered a highly-capable labeller that can be used in a standalone fashion or alongside a computer and I would recommend it for most organisations.

Links

[1]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-017-Brother-P-Touch-PT-2730.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[2]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-020-Tape-compartment.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[3]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-021-TZ-Label-tape-cartridge.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

[4]

http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-019-Brother-P-Touch-PT-2730-Side-View.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Product Review-Dell Vostro 3550 business laptop computer

07/09/2011 02:20

Introduction

I am reviewing the Dell Vostro 3550 series of 15" business laptop computers, which is infact the first business laptop that I have reviewed from this company. It can be purchased from Dell's online store[1]as one of a few preconfigured options or you or your IT contractor could order a customised system through the Dell website.



[2]

Price

- this configuration AUD\$1199 Processor Intel Sandy Bridge i7-2620M cheaper options
 Intel Sandy Bridge i5-2410M RAM 4Gb
 extra cost 6Gb shared with integrated graphics Secondary Storage 500 Gb hard disk
 extra-cost 750Gb hard disk DVD burner, SDHC card reader
 Display Subsystem AMD Radeon + Intel HD Graphics 1Gb
 display RAM (discrete mode) Screen 16" widescreen (1366×768)
 LED-backlit LCD Network Wi-Fi 802.11a/g/n Ethernet Gigabit
 Ethernet Bluetooth 3.0 + HS Wireless Broadband 3G HSPA
 Connectors USB 2 x USB 3.0
 2 x USB 2.0
 (1 shared with eSATA) eSATA 1 x eSATA shared with USB 2.0
 ExpressCard 1 x ExpressCard 34 Video HDMI, VGA Audio 3.5mm stereo output jack,
 Digital output via HDMI,
 3.5mm stereo input jack Operating System on supplied configuration Microsoft Windows 7 Professional Windows Experience Index
 - this configuration Overall 5.7 Graphics 5.7 Gaming (Advanced) Graphics 6.5

The computer itself

Aesthetics and Build quality

The Dell Vostro 3550 laptop is finished in a silver metal housing that shows that it is well built and durable. This can be available to order as a burgundy or bronze finish if you buy it through Dell's website. Unlike most laptops, the lid is recessed down with the hinges set towards the centre.



[3]

Keyboard detail emphasising chrome trim

The screen escutcheon and palmrest are finished in a charcoal grey finish with the keyboard and trackpad set off with chrome piping. This styling reminds me of the way the dashboards on various classic cars have been styled.

User interface

The Vostro's keyboard is an illuminated keyboard but doesn't have a numeric keypad. This may not affect most users but those of use who need to enter in lots of figures like accountants will miss the feature. Here, they could use a USB numeric keypad for the data entry. On the other hand, you get the proper feedback which is important if you do a lot of touch-typing.

This is supported by a trackpad which, like all of the trackpads on recent Dell notebooks, is distinctively highlighted. It works properly as a trackpad and allows for proper navigation.

The Vostro 3550 does support fingerprint-recognition and Dell supplies a "software keyring" that links Web passwords with your fingerprint. Infact I was offered the option to tie my Facebook password to my fingerprint with this software.

As well, there are hot keys with one for the Mobility Center, one for Dell Support access and one you can define to launch a particular program.

Connectivity and Expansion

The Dell Vostro 3550 business laptop range is well endowed when it comes to connectivity and expandability.

The review unit came with an integrated 3G wireless-broadband modem as well as Bluetooth 3.0 and 802.11a/g/n Wi-Fi wireless. The 3G modem is available as an option on other configurations in this model range. The SIM card for the 3G service is installed in a slot located in the battery compartment and it takes the standard small-form-factor SIM card rather than the "micro" SIM card.

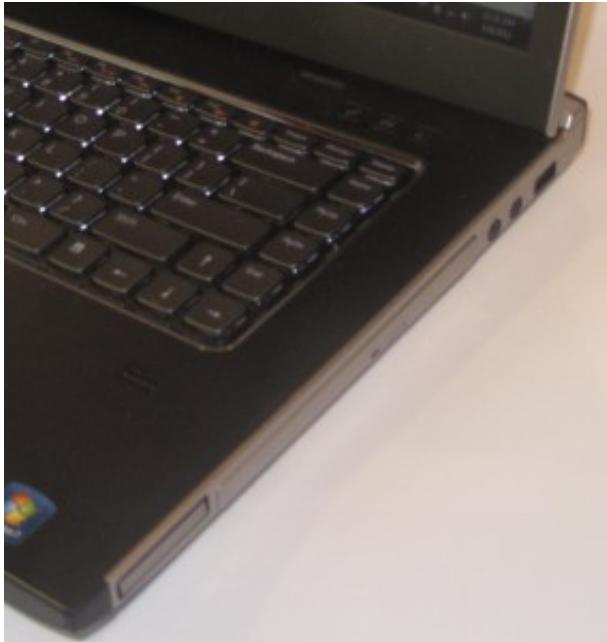


[4]

Left hand side with SD card reader, USB /eSATA socket, USB socket and HDMI socket

On the other hand, I don't see why the 3G modem couldn't, with Bluetooth, support the SIM Card Access profile for authenticating to mobile-data services. Here this setup allows authentication to mobile services via a mobile phone SIM card using a Bluetooth link. The function has been available with integrated car phones that allow authentication and phone service using the driver's SIM card held in their mobile phone, and could support "one account, one bandwidth quota" operation for both the mobile phone and laptop.

On the other hand, the 3G modem technology used in the Vostro's integrated modem may be considered too slow in the face of upcoming 4G LTE deployments that are occurring in most countries. Of course this is taken care of with the USB ports and ExpressCard slot being ready to accept LTE modems.



[5]

Right hand side with optical drive, ExpressCard slot, audio jacks and USB 3.0 socket

The Dell Vostro has a promising array of two USB 3.0 ports alongside two USB 2.0 ports with one doubling as an eSATA slot. There is an ExpressCard slot available for use with LTE or WiMAX wireless-broadband cards or whatever comes one's way.

Of course, the computer offers for removable storage a card reader for use with SDHC and similar memory cards as well as a DVD burner.

Audio and Video

A feature that is worthy of note for the Dell Vostro is the integration of a microphone array. Here this allows for improved audio results with video conferencing or speech-recognition-based dictation by using microphone combinations to focus on the voice and cut out the background noise.

This is like when you use a stereo recorder that is equipped with two microphones to record your voice, then play the same recording through stereo speakers or headphones. Here, it is easier to catch your voice because it is dominant across both channels.

The Dell Vostro 3550 uses a dual-mode graphics setup with AMD Radeon graphics for discrete high-performance graphics and Intel HD graphics for power-saving economy-mode graphics. I have seen the benefit of this setup before when I reviewed the HP Pavilion dv7-6013TX which is similarly equipped. Here, I ran it through a DVD rundown test while the laptop was using the Intel HD graphics and it was able to play longer than previous discrete-only setups.

There is support under the new AMD control software for application-driven switchability. Here one can set a video-editing application or graphics-rich game to go with the high-performance graphics while other applications like Web browsers or word-processing can work with the power-saving graphics mode.

On the other hand, there isn't a distinct manual switch in the AMD software to switch between discrete or integrated graphics.

The Vostro 3550's screen doesn't have any of the glare that is common with a lot of consumer laptops and this nicety may be peculiar to business laptops. At least this means that you can use it in most environments without seeing yourself in the mirror when you use the laptop.

Battery life

The Vostro 3550 has achieved long battery runtimes thanks to the Intel Sandy Bridge technology. I had run it on a DVD rundown test by having it play a feature movie continuously off the DVD. This ran for 6 hours 38 minutes on the integrated graphics while showing good-quality movie images.

I have also run the laptop on regular tasks and it appeared as if it was sipping the battery rather than wolfing through it. It has what appears to be a larger battery pack but this pack is the standard one for the Vostro 3550 series.

Conclusion



[6]

Rear view with VGA, USB 3.0, Ethernet and power sockets

The Dell Vostro 3550 Series is another of the value-for-money durable laptops that I would recommend as a standard-size “work-home” laptop if you just transport it between locations. If you intend to do a lot of numeric data entry such as accounting or statistics work with it, I would recommend that you use the Vostro with a USB numeric keypad.

Here, I would make sure you get as much RAM and hard disk space as you can afford. You could get away with the i5 processor for most tasks and choose the i5 processor for tasks that demand more like graphics for example. If you had to cut your cloth accordingly, you may have to forego the integrated 3G modem and use an external wireless-broadband modem or tether your mobile phone for your wireless-broadband use as a way of focusing money on the performance or capacity aspects.

Links

- [1] <http://www.dell.com/au/business/p/vostro-3550/pd>
- [2] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-002-Dell-Vostro-3550.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [3] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-004-Keyboard-detail.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [4] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-007-Dell-Vostro-3550-LHS-shot.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [5] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-006-Dell-Vostro-3550-Side-shot.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
- [6] http://homenetworking01.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2011-09-07-008-Rear-shot.jpg#utm_source=feed&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed

Should mobile carriers charge a premium for tethering your mobile phone to your computer?

01/09/2011 02:40

Article

BBC News - Mobile web users at the end of their tether[1]

My comments

This article is pointing to a common practice amongst most US and European mobile-phone carriers concerning the tethering of mobile phones.

What is tethering?

This is where one uses a mobile phone as a wireless 3G modem for another computing device like a laptop computer or a tablet. It can be done wirelessly using a Bluetooth link or the phone operating as a wireless router when certain software is run. On the other hand, it can be done simply by connecting the phone to the PC using a USB cable and running a driver set on the PC.

Why tether than use a separate modem

Tethering has an advantage over using a separate modem to service a device's data needs. Here, one doesn't have to manage different data plans for each device - the mobile phone, the tablet computer or the laptop. Instead, they can work with a larger plan that is shared amongst all the devices.

Laptop users also benefit from tethering. This is because, unless they have a 3G-enabled laptop, they only need to think of one device i.e. the mobile phone rather than making sure they have a 3G USB or ExpressCard modem with them.

The common practice with mobile carriers

Most of the US phone carriers like AT&T or Verizon, as well as some of the European carriers treat the tethering as a distinct “wireless-modem” usage compared to using a phone for integrated Web browsing. Here, they insert premiums for this usage in to their tariff charts for this kind of usage and the US carriers even implement software to discourage tethering unless the user subscribes to a plan that specifically allows tethering.

My experience with Telstra

I have maintained a mobile phone service with Telstra[2] since 1997, working through six subsidised-handset contracts over this period.

Last year, before I went to Sydney, I went to a Telstra store to ask about my data options with respect to my then-current phone contract. Here, I asked about whether I should tether my handset to my laptop or buy a 3G “stick” either as an extra service on my bill or as a prepaid service. They suggested that I consider tethering and increase my plan’s data allowance and I had paid for the extra data allowance.

Here, Telstra offered lower-allowance data plans as part of their mobile phone plans but allowed customers to “buy on” more data allowance. Here the tariff charts don’t discriminate between using your phone as a modem for another device and using the phone as its own Internet terminal. This is although they sell a range of 3G “sticks” and “MiFi” devices alongside the mobile phones.

I didn’t need to do anything to the phone to enable tethering and was able to be sure it worked on a “utility” laptop that I had and was intending to take to Sydney. This was before I was lent the Dell Inspiron 15r laptop which I reviewed as part of the trip. Here, I had made sure that the Inspiron had the necessary drivers for the phone before I had left.

Recent steps with some European carriers

Some European carriers have taken the same step that Telstra has been doing for the many years. That is to modify the tariff charts to remove the distinction between tethered (modem) and handset-specific data.

It is to cater for the reality that the same device uses the same bandwidth whether it is for its own use or another device’s use.

Tethering can benefit the carrier as well

Mobile-phone tethering provides a financial benefit for the carriers as well as a utility benefit for the users. Here, it allows the carrier to see increased per-service revenue. Typically this can be brought about by customers increasing their data allowances in the same way that I did – buying on extra data capacity to their plans where the tariff chart allows.

This is although most customers don’t “burn up” their call or data allowances that they pay for. Rather, if they anticipate extra use, they would increase the allowances. One reason is to allow the customers to budget for a predictable amount for their communications.

Tethering and the Internet-enabled car

When one starts to think of Internet-based infotainment like listening to Internet radio while driving or Internet-driven synchronous traffic-status updating for navigation systems, one would think of how they get the data to the vehicle.

I had touched on this previously in the article about Internet radio in the car[3] and have mentioned that tethering a mobile phone to a vehicle’s infotainment system would be one of the paths. Infact it may be a logical path as Bluetooth is used to facilitate handsfree calling in the vehicle.

Conclusion

What I would see is that tethering shouldn’t be treated different from phone-specific use and that users should be aware of this as an alternative to operating separate modems and accounts.

Links

[1]

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/click_online/9573538.stm

[2] <http://www.telstra.com.au/mobile/>

[3]

/2010/02/internet-radio-in-the-car-why-not-2/#utm_source=feed&

utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feed
