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HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 review: HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

Stephanie Bruzese

Oct. 12, 2003 10:00 p.m. PT



Review summary



7.7

HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

THE GOOD

Small and light; long battery life; much faster than its predecessor; stylus doesn't need a battery.

THE BAD

Cramped detachable keyboard; docking station costs extra.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Despite its quirky, clip-on keyboard, this system is still one of our top tablet picks for the office or the home.

HP juiced up its new Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 today, adding many of the improvements we sought in the old TC1000. Upgrades include a 1GHz Pentium M processor, which leads to better performance and longer battery life; a battery-free writing stylus; and sturdier hinges and latches. Thankfully, HP didn't change the tablet's basic design: at 3.1 pounds, it's still small and easy to tote. Although a few quirks remain in the form of a small, snap-on keyboard and a costly docking station, the TC1100 stands as one of the best tablets available for both home and business users. The 3.1-pound, 10.8-by-8.3-by-0.8-inch Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 is one of the smallest and lightest slate-design tablets available. Clip on the 1-pound, detachable keyboard, and it resembles a 4.1-pound ultralight laptop with a twist: the tablet rotates 180 degrees, allowing others to view presentations without having to turn the whole system around. The

station/monitor stand that features a swappable bay for secondary storage drives. Unfortunately, the detachable keyboard will cramp your style, but you can always attach a full-size keyboard into a USB 2.0 port on the tablet or the docking station. And if you plan to write and tap on the screen with only the stylus, you can leave the small keyboard behind.

"=" --="">/sc/30573412-2-200-DT3.gif" width="200" height="150" border="0" alt="" />

The docking station/monitor stand costs extra.

"=" --="">/sc/30573412-2-200-DT4.gif" width="200" height="150" border="0" alt="" />

The keys are cramped on the detachable keyboard.

When the tablet is sitting in the dock, you can swivel it between Landscape and Portrait modes while the operating system automatically adjusts the screen image. Unfortunately, although the dock is handy, it will set you back an extra \$299.

The Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 retains the handy ports, slots, and buttons offered by its predecessor: two USB 2.0 ports, a VGA port, one Type II PC Card slot, a Secure Digital slot, three programmable buttons, three audio jacks, and a wheel on the tablet that lets you scroll through menus and documents. The docking station provides additional connectivity, including three more USB 2.0 ports. The tablet also includes a battery-free variation on the previous model's writing stylus--much handier. We're happy to find that the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100's various hinges and latches feel sturdier than those of in its earlier iteration. HP gave the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 a much-needed component boost, resulting in this significantly faster and longer-lasting tablet. When you buy, you can choose either a 1GHz Pentium M or an 800MHz Celeron processor; a 32MB Nvidia GeForce4 Go 420 graphics chip; a 30GB or 40GB hard drive; and from 256MB to 2GB of fast 333MHz DDR SDRAM. With Intel's 855PM chipset and Pro/Wireless 802.11b mini-PCI card, the TC1100 qualifies as an official Centrino.

Our test configuration, featuring a 1GHz Pentium M, 512MB of memory, and a 40GB hard drive, performed more than twice as fast as the previous model did in CNET Labs' tests. The Pentium M's power-saving capabilities also lent a hand with the Compaq's battery life, helping it last 34 minutes longer than its predecessor.

The Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 features more software than its older sibling, including a few useful tablet PC apps, such as Corel Grafigo for tasks such as sketching and annotating, plus a trial version of FranklinCovey's TabletPlanner--personal organizer software that's designed specifically for tablets. HP also bundles its useful QMenu program for manipulating system settings, as well as Roxio Easy CD & DVD Creator for those who have purchased an optional CD-RW or DVD/CD-RW drive. The operating system remains Windows XP Tablet PC Edition. The Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 delivered good performance in our tests, earning it second place in this small tablet test group. But the Acer TravelMate

Gateway Tablet PC's score, the lowest in this test group, was undoubtedly hurt by its lesser amount of RAM. In short, the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100's performance while running office and content-creation apps will satisfy most users.

Mobile application performance (Longer bars indicate faster performance)

BAPCo MobileMark2002 performance rating

Acer TravelMate C110 Tablet

133

HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

124

Gateway Tablet PC

119

To measure mobile application performance and battery life, CNET Labs uses BAPCo's MobileMark2002. MobileMark measures both application performance and battery life concurrently using a number of popular applications (Microsoft Word 2002, Microsoft Excel 2002, Microsoft PowerPoint 2002, Microsoft Outlook 2002, Netscape Communicator 6.0, WinZip Computing WinZip 8.0, McAfee VirusScan 5.13, Adobe Photoshop 6.0.1, and Macromedia Flash 5.0).

Performance analysis written by CNET Labs assistant lab manager Eric Franklin.

Find out more about how we test [notebooks](#).

System configurations:

Acer TravelMate C110 Tablet

Windows XP Tablet; 900MHz Intel Pentium M; 512MB DDR SDRAM 266MHz; Intel 82852/92855 GM/GME Graphics Controller (up to 64MB shared); IBM Travelstar 40GB 40GN 4,200rpm

Gateway Tablet PC

Windows XP Tablet; 1GHz Intel Pentium M; 256MB DDR SDRAM 266MHz; Intel 82852/82855 GM/GME Graphics Controller (up to 64MB shared); Hitachi DK23EA-40 4,200rpm

HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

Windows XP Tablet; 1GHz Intel Pentium M; 512MB DDR SDRAM 266MHz; Nvidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB; Fujitsu MHT2040AT 40GB 4,200rpm Thanks to its 11.1V, 3,600mAh (40WHr) battery, the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 achieved very long life, clocking in at nearly 4 hours. The Gateway Tablet PC was only a few minutes behind it--not surprising, considering its battery is the same size as the Compaq's. The Acer TravelMate C110 Tablet, with a smaller battery, came in a distant third, clocking in at 2 hours, 17 minutes. In other words, the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100 offers great battery life--a must for a tablet PC--when

Battery life (Longer bars indicate longer battery life)

BAPCo MobileMark2002 battery life minutes

HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

232

Gateway Tablet PC

227

Acer TravelMate C110 Tablet

137

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HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100

Windows XP Tablet; 1GHz Intel Pentium M; 512MB DDR SDRAM 266MHz; Nvidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB; Fujitsu MHT2040AT 40GB 4,200rpm No surprises on the Compaq Tablet PC TC1100's warranty: it comes with the same one-year term as most portables. Still, we'd prefer a three-year standard warranty for a system with this many moving parts. The policy includes free parts and labor via return-to-depot service. HP offers additional service options, such as three years of service, accidental-damage protection, and onsite repairs for various prices. As always, HP's toll-based tech support forces you to pay for the cost of a call to a support rep, even while the system is under warranty, and unfortunately, the company's support Web site lacks user forums where customers can go for help from each other.

Luckily, Compaq's printed documentation provides extensive, clear information on setting up and operating the tablet, and there's detailed troubleshooting help on a CD.

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