

Ebooks are real page turners

Sony has new ebook readers – the Reader Pocket (£180) designed with commuters in mind, and the Reader Touch (£250) that's packed with features and navigation tools.

The Pocket fits comfortably into a jacket rather than jeans pocket but, with a 4-inch screen, it's about as small as you can go with such a device. If you need to zoom in fully, you won't fit many words on a page. But, with good eyesight, text is as clear as any reader we've seen.

Content is uploaded via a micro USB connection (cable is provided) – you get up to 350 standard ebooks, according to Sony, and up to two weeks of reading time per battery charge.

Handy for commuting, many controls are laid out for single-handed operation. However, scrolling through pages on the Pocket is slower than on the Touch, and turning to a page with an illustration can cause quite a delay.

It has a connection for a wrist strap and this model comes in silver or pink (right).

The slightly larger Touch – in silver or black

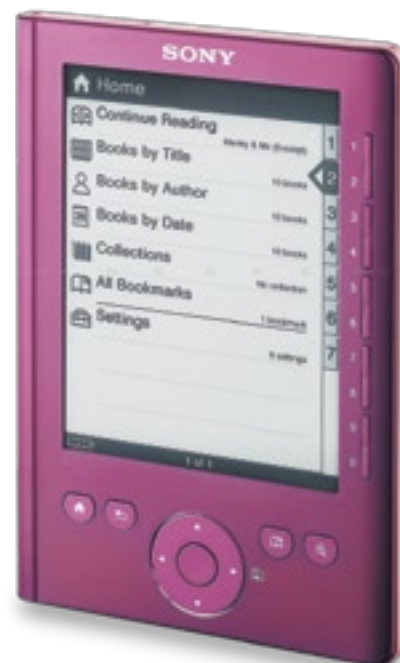
– has a 6-inch screen and also shows text as clearly as any other ebook reader.

Navigated using buttons, or via the touchscreen for most functions, this reader is one of the quickest we've seen. You may need to apply a little more pressure when swiping than you think, however. There's also a stylus, in the spine, which can be used to handwrite notes or highlight text – but you can use the touchscreen keyboard for this if you prefer.

Other features include the ability to bookmark, add sticky notes and find out the meaning of words with the Oxford Dictionary.

In addition to a micro USB port and cable, there's a Sony Memory Stick Pro Duo slot and a standard SD card slot. It also features a 3.5mm headphone socket, so you can listen to music and audio files when reading.

VERDICT Both models have useful features, and are more compact than previous Sony versions. For all our ebook reader first looks, visit www.which.co.uk/ebookreaders.



Vac that's great for cars

The Black&Decker Dustbuster Flexi range offers a design twist on the handheld vac.

With the hose coiled, it's easy to hold with one hand – and the switch is within easy reach.

But it really shines in difficult-to-reach places. The 1.5m hose can reach high shelves and small gaps – which is great for car interiors.

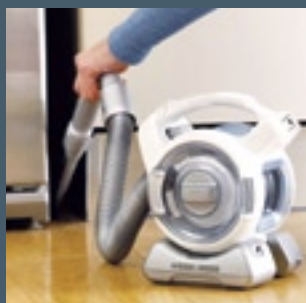
In our first look, we had seven minutes of good vacuuming per charge before the battery started to run down and the suction dropped.

The top-of-the-range PD1200 (£70) comes with a crevice and brush nozzle, a long crevice nozzle, and a motorised brush attachment that has its own battery. This is quite a noisy vac and emptying the dust

container is a bit messy.

This model is one of the best for tight spaces we've seen but suction drops sooner than with its rival, the Dyson DC31. See how they compare in our video at www.which.co.uk/handvaccompared.

VERDICT It didn't seem quite as powerful as some vacs we've tried, but it's great for attacking hard-to-reach spaces.



TomTom app needs drive

TomTom's arrival as an iPhone application has been eagerly anticipated. It costs £59.99 and has UK and Ireland maps.

Entering and finding places with the on-screen keyboard is fast and simple, menus and maps are easy to read and navigate, the zoom function works well and audio directions are loud and clear. Routes are accurate, but GPS reception can be patchy, especially in cities.

Useful features include IQ Routes – the fastest routes based on previous drivers' speeds – and speed camera details. But it lacks live services such as Google search and traffic updates, and you can't add points of interest.

Using the iPhone as a satnav takes its toll on battery life, so you'll need an in-car charger. If you don't



have one, this will be available as part of an in-car kit (around £114) – so your iPhone can attach to a windscreen – due to be launched as we went to press. It includes an enhanced GPS receiver.

VERDICT Good – but there are cheaper alternatives such as the £25 CoPilot Live. Car kit is pricey. See www.which.co.uk/satnavapps for more on this and the CoPilot Live.

A closer shave

Panasonic's new Pro-Curve is an electric shaver that gives a close and comfortable shave. It claims to have the world's sharpest blades, but we couldn't compare sharpness against other models in our first look.

The pivoting shave head helps get round face contours with ease, but some longer hairs can be missed if they're not upright – and tidying up sideburns with the simple pop-up trimmer is no problem at all.

If you're switching to an electric shaver, or using a new



one, it can take a few days for your skin to become accustomed – but the Panasonic felt comfortable from the first shave when we tried using it.

And, as this model can be used with shaving foam, this may provide extra comfort. The rubberised grip is secure to hold.

The Pro-Curve (£68) is particularly simple to clean, as the foil can be removed very easily and a cleaning brush is supplied.

VERDICT A shaver with no negatives – close shave, easy to use and clean.

GREAT STARTER DSLR



The Nikon D3000 – an entry-level 10.2Mp DSLR – is sure to appeal to newcomers.

Perhaps the most interesting feature is its guide mode, which uses the 3-inch LCD to explain each key function and how to use it.

The camera – at about £500 with a single kit lens – is comfortable to hold, lightweight and portable, and the screen text is large and easy to read.

There's no live view, however, so you'll need to use the viewfinder to compose shots. The camera also lacks a video mode.

But when it comes to photographs, the D3000 offers an arsenal of post-shooting touch-up features, from trimming and red-eye reduction to artistic options, such as image overlaying and a 'miniature' effect that makes



distant people and buildings look like toy models. Changes that don't work can be erased without losing the original photo.

VERDICT Great compact DSLR for first-timers, with fun effects, but it lacks a video mode. Check out its features in our video at www.which.co.uk/nikond3000.

JUST OUT

A peek at what's new on the shelves

Sony PS3 Slim £249

Available from www.uk.playstation.com

The PlayStation 3 games console has been revamped by Sony, which has reduced its size and price tag. It's now £50 cheaper, at £249 – and Sony says the new version uses significantly less energy.

It has a Blu-ray disc player, wireless networking, access to BBC iPlayer and a free on-demand music video service.



Sharp fridge-freezer SJF79PSSL £1,300

Available from independents and online



Better known for TVs and microwaves, Sharp has launched three fridge-freezers, including this stylish four-door model.

This frost-free model has the refrigerator compartment over the freezer.

Sharp says that this fridge has a system that uses ionisation to avoid mould and bacteria. It says that this, combined with a honeycomb-shaped filter, will help reduce odours from foods such as cheese and fish. This will be the first Sharp fridge-freezer we've tested, so we eagerly await the results.

Dulux Perfect paintbrushes From £3.69

Available at B&Q (to be extended)

Dulux has launched a range of 'Perfect' paintbrushes designed to help make painting quicker and more convenient.

Each brush has a tin opener on the end, a soft grip handle and split-end bristles which, Dulux says, help deliver a brush-mark free finish. They're also designed to be put down flat, without picking up dirt or leaving paint on the surface. We'll have a hands-on look at these soon and publish the results online.



Bosch dishwashers £TBC

Will be widely available

Bosch is launching two compact dishwashers, in five colours. They come with four or five programs, and take up to six place settings. Bosch says the table-top models use just eight litres of water on a normal wash.

The Bosch SKT5102 is the only compact dishwasher to be made a Best Buy to date, so we'll test one of these new versions soon.

