

[all change]

We review new products

Speedy battery chargers

The Uniross Sprint 15 Minute Charger and Varta 15 Minute Charge & Go claim to be able to charge their supplied fast-charge AA or AAA size batteries in 15 minutes flat (for a normal charger it's 16 to 24 hours.)



This charger does the job in just 15 minutes

We fast-charged the AA batteries several times to test the claims. The Varta batteries took 16 minutes and 23 seconds on average. The Uniross took 15 minutes 10 seconds, although Uniross recommends the batteries be left for 15 minutes to cool.

Although the chargers work well, they're expensive. The Varta costs £40 online; the Uniross is £35 online. Both come with four fast-charge high-capacity AA batteries.

On balance, we think a better option is a slower, cheaper charger and several batteries (around £19), so you can use one set while the other is charging.

Mac for the masses

You rarely see the words 'affordable' and 'Mac' in the same sentence but now you can pick one up for just £339. OK, so you don't get a keyboard, mouse or screen, but you do get Apple's unparalleled ease of use, reliability, design and construction quality. You also get the traditional Apple downside of not having such a large choice of software as a PC, particularly when it comes to games.

The Mac mini is 16.5cm square and 5cm deep, silver and rather fetching with its mouth-like DVD drive. It won't take over the room like a full-sized computer and would be easy to slip into a bag and carry around – making it good for people on the move. It has sockets for a standard VGA monitor

(DVI is also supported), telephone line, Ethernet, FireWire and USB. You can use only a USB mouse and keyboard (£38 from Apple).

In terms of raw computing power, the Mac mini is roughly equivalent to one of Apple's bottom-of-the-range iBook laptops. This will be fine for internet browsing, email, basic photo editing and music (software for all of which is included).

However, give it a tough job to do, like video editing (software also included), and things will slow down.

The price looks good initially, but suppose you add a wireless interface (£50), double the memory to 512MB (£50) and fit a DVD burner (£70) – you'll see it go above £500. At the time of writing,

Decent

The Hotpoint WD 640 washer-drier is another new release since our big test of washer driers last August (see 'Do washer-driers add up?', *Which?*, August 2004, p41, and 'All Change', January 2005, p36). Unfortunately, it falls victim to our usual complaint that, despite being a decent washer, it struggles with drying.

Wash capacity is 6kg and it cleans as well as our Best Buys. However, it struggles with rinsing and is noisy during the wash cycle. It does the





you can go along to Dell's website and get a well-specified Windows desktop machine complete with 17-inch flat panel, mouse and keyboard for £441.

The Mac mini is indeed a cheap Mac, but it's not a cheap computer. In some ways, though, this is to miss the point: what the Mac mini really offers you is an affordable way of avoiding the seemingly endless stream of viruses and spyware that Windows computing currently suffers from. For some people, this will be invaluable.

The 1.25 GHz Mac mini costs £339, or you can opt for the quicker 1.42 GHz £399 version. To order online or locate a stockist, visit www.apple.com/uk or call 0800 039 1010.

Phone prints pronto

The Fujifilm MP-100 Digital Mobile Printer is aimed at people with cameraphones to enable them to print and share their pictures 'anytime, anywhere'. We asked seven people with Sony Ericsson and Nokia cameraphones to give it a try (for a full list of compatible phones, look on Fuji's website at www.fujimobile.co.uk).

Once you've taken a picture with your phone, you point it at the printer and send the picture via infrared (all current cameraphones have this ability). The printer uses the same technology as a Polaroid camera to print photos. All our testers agreed that

it's an absolute breeze to use. Judgements on photo quality varied, though most felt photos were good quality and clear. The printer claims to correct colours on over- and under-exposed photos; three of the users felt colour correction was evident, but the others weren't convinced.

One user told us: 'The Polaroid-style snaps it produces are the sort of photos you'd stick on a fridge or in your wallet'. Another pointed out that the printer doesn't

support Bluetooth, which the next generation of phones will come with instead of infrared.

In general, users thought it was a lot of fun, but said the price (£100 from Boots) would put them off buying one. The cost of batteries (around £14 a set – enough for 130 prints) and the paper (£10 for a pack of 20) means each photo costs 61p, not including the cost of the printer, so it's expensive to run.



washer but poor drier

work in a reasonable time – one hour and 46 minutes for a standard load – but the short wash shaves only 15 minutes off this time.

We had high hopes for the Hotpoint because, unlike many

other washer-driers on test, it claims to be able to dry 5kg – almost the whole washing load. However, although it dries clothes evenly, it takes an age to do it – a whopping three hours and 55 minutes to dry a

standard load, double the time per kg taken by our Best Buy Zanussi.

If you need a washer-drier, opt for one of our Best Buys. The Zanussi ZWD1480W scores well for both cleaning and for drying. The AEG

L16810 matches the Zanussi's wash performance and, although not quite up to scratch for drying, it's still worth considering. Zanussi and AEG washer-driers are average for reliability.

WHICH? EXTRA

For all the latest information on models that are still available from previous tests – 10 washer-driers, 28 washing machines and 26 tumble driers – visit www.which.co.uk/whichextra

Washer-driers

MODEL

	Specification		Performance		Convenience	Score
	Price (£)	Max capacity (wash/dry) (kg)	Overall cleaning	Overall drying	Overall ease of use	(%)
1 Zanussi ZWD1480W	439	6/3	★	○	★	58
2 AEG L16810	550	6/3	★	●	★	54
3 Hotpoint WD640	355	6/5	★	●	★	52

KEY

★ ☆ ○ ● ●
Best Worst
■ Best Buy