

PeeWee Pivot Tablet Laptop could be a hit with your kids

July 30 2009, By Jim Rossman



PeeWee Pivot Tablet Laptop

Netbooks are a popular choice for people buying laptop computers, and they seem sized appropriately for kids.

A netbook is a small, lightweight laptop without an optical drive that is designed for light duties such as Internet surfing, checking e-mail and word processing.

The PeeWee Pivot Tablet Laptop (\$599, peeweepc.com) is a pretty full-featured netbook aimed squarely at kids.

So, if netbooks are a dime a dozen, what makes the PeeWee Pivot a good choice for kids?

The Pivot looks like most netbooks, but its 8.9-inch LCD (1024 by 600 pixels) is a touch screen that rotates and pivots to close in tablet mode (think Etch-a-Sketch).

Input methods for the PeeWee Pivot include the trackpad, a finger or a stylus.

It's drop- and spill-resistant. There is a rugged outer case (drop-tested from 20 inches) and a water-resistant keyboard. There's also a plastic carrying handle that can be removed for older kids.

The Pivot ships with Windows XP Home installed with a Disney theme and 10 pre-installed software titles that are age-appropriate for your child.

When you place your order, you can specify pre-kindergarten, early elementary or upper- elementary software bundles. You can also change the XP theme from among half a dozen Disney or Star Trek themes.

Also included is a security software suite so parents can control what kids can access online and set time limits for daily use.

Software includes Microsoft Works 9.0, ArtRage 2 (a painting program), MyScript Stylus (handwriting recognition), and an e-book reader and PDF viewer.

The Pivot has an Intel Atom processor (1.6 GHz), one gigabyte of RAM, a 60- gigabyte hard drive, an SD card reader, two USB 2.0 ports, 802.11 b/g/n [wireless connectivity](#), an ethernet jack, a VGA port and jacks for headphones and a microphone.

There's also a Web camera that rotates 180 degrees and a built-in microphone for video chats.

Upgrade options to the \$599 base Pivot include Windows XP Pro (\$186), your choice of Microsoft Office suite (starting at \$186) and a bump to two gigabytes of RAM (\$89).

The PeeWee Pivot Tablet is designed for your kids, but it's a serious laptop. It has most of the features a grown-up needs to get some work done on vacation or as a second computer.

A one-year warranty is included (a three-year warranty adds \$98) and a charity donation -- you can choose from a list of three -- is made for each computer sold.

I liked the Pivot's response times and bright screen. I'm afraid my fingers are too big to do any serious typing on the built-in keyboard, but I'm sure it's perfect for young fingers.

Quite honestly, while I love the small form factor of netbooks, the keyboard size is what keeps me from buying one.

I'm not sure I'd feel comfortable leaving a normal [netbook](#) with a 3-year-old child, but the PeeWee Pivot should be able to stand up to more than a little abuse.

PEEWEE PIVOT TABLET LAPTOP

Pros: Full-featured, rugged, touch screen, parental-control software.

Cons: Too small for my fingers, but I'm not the target market.

Bottom line: Matches up well with similar netbooks from other manufacturers, and the kid-specific features make it a great first computer for your children.

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