

# Nokia Booklet has flashy looks, but little substance

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Nokia Booklet 3G

If the iPhone ushered in the era of cell phones that act like computers, then the recently released Nokia Booklet 3G netbook is an attempt to bring some of the features of a smart phone to a computer.

The mini-laptop is the first netbook ever made by the cell-phone handset manufacturer, and it's even priced like a cell phone. It costs \$300, a good deal for a netbook, but you only get that price if you buy it with a two-year AT&T Data Connect plan (\$60 a month). Without a data plan, it costs \$600.

For the purposes of this column, I'm going to review the Booklet 3G with the AT&T data plan, because that will likely be the most common scenario. Plus, \$600 is too much to pay for a netbook these days.

As the name suggests, the Booklet 3G has built-in connectivity to AT&T's 3G network, so you always have an Internet connection without any additional hardware. There's also Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connections.

While I loved not having to attach a bulky cell-phone modem to get online, I found the AT&T coverage to be a little spotty and slow at times. For instance, while sitting in my office, I had two bars of coverage on the Booklet 3G, while my [iPhone](#) (which also runs on AT&T's 3G network) had full coverage.

Besides the 3G connectivity, the Booklet's other headlining feature is its stylish and sleek design, which looks like one of the new Apple MacBook Pro laptops, only a lot smaller. It's made from a single piece of aluminum, weighs only 2.76 pounds and is 0.78 of an inch thin. The design is gorgeous, and best of all, unlike many laptops, the battery is on the bottom of the machine, so it doesn't jut out, and it allows the Booklet to sit flat on a table.

But once I opened up the Booklet 3G and started using it, I was very disappointed. The keyboard is way too small (though its Chiclet-style keys are nice) and the touchpad can be maddening to use if your hands sweat even a little bit. There are three USB ports and even an HDMI port to connect the netbook to a TV or projector, but there's no Ethernet port or VGA port. You can buy adapters, but unlike the razor-thin MacBook Air, it appears there would have been room to include them on the Booklet.

Like many new netbooks, the Booklet 3G runs Windows 7 Starter edition and has 1 GB of RAM, but it's not as fast as other netbooks, especially when I was using Internet Explorer 8.

In my tests, the battery lasted eight hours, and if you turn the Internet

connections off, it will last even longer. Nokia says it can last a whopping 12 hours.

Other cell-phone-like features include a GPS antenna and maps program, a "Flight Mode" option and an app for checking updates on social-networking sites. If you do own a Nokia [cell phone](#) (I don't), connecting it to the Booklet will let share contacts, messages, software, maps and sync other data.

With the built-in GPS, the computer can detect your location and use it to provide driving directions and information about nearby shops and restaurants. But the GPS has a hard time detecting your location when you are inside, and the online Ovi Maps program is not very user-friendly.

The Booklet 3G comes with a free program called the Nokia Social Hub, which lets you manage your social-networking accounts and send and receive text messages. It's a little like the free program Tweetdeck because it allows you to track your friends' updates in columns and get pop-up notifications when there's a new one. But there are lots of missing features, such as the ability to check more than one account per service.

So overall, the Booklet 3G gets high marks for design and battery life, but it falls short in many other important areas. Although its usefulness may go up if you have a [Nokia](#) phone, you'd be better off spending \$300 or \$400 on a netbook like the Acer Aspire One or ASUS Eee PC or spending a few hundred more for a thin and light laptop that falls in between a [netbook](#) and full-fledged laptop.

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