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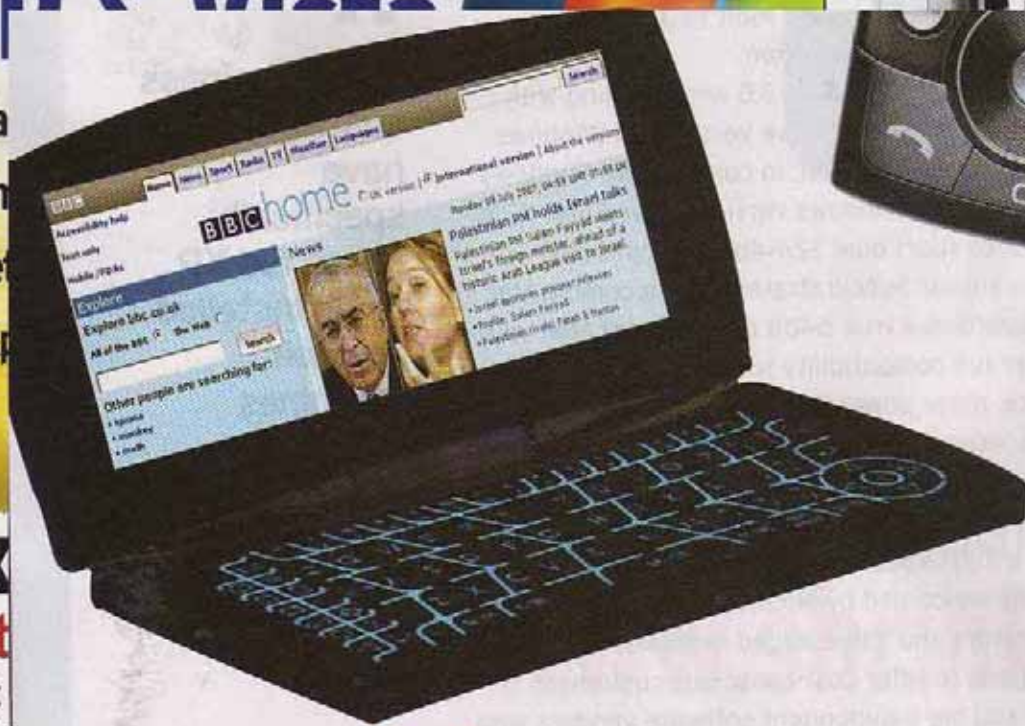
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PocketSurfer2

Wireless internet access device

We're pretty excited about the PocketSurfer2, a pocket-sized device that gives you 20 hours per month of mobile internet access for a set price of £180. Web pages are stored on its web server and compressed by up to a factor of 30 en route to you. You then view websites on this landscape device, killing popups with a single X button. See page 18 for more information.

>£180 inc VAT

www.pocketsurfer.co.uk

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News

PC ADVISOR

Which of the following wireless setups do you use most often while on the move?

From a total of 488 votes, August 07

Internet-enabled mobile phone	32.2%
Free public Wi-Fi hotspot	41.1%
Paid-for Wi-Fi hotspot	15.8%
3G-equipped laptop	10.9%

THE INTERNET, FREE EVERYWHERE

Datawind's PocketSurfer2 brings the wireless web to your fingertips, free and any time, any place

A mobile device due to launch as we went to press promises free wireless internet access anywhere in the UK. Datawind claims its PocketSurfer2 is the first portable device to provide the 'real Internet' at usable speeds. It does this by accessing websites via a proxy server that compresses data and delivers it to the device over a GPRS network.

Datawind said the technology enables the 2.5G GPRS-enabled PocketSurfer2 to access the web at speeds similar to 3.5G mobile handsets. A video demonstration showed the PocketSurfer2 loading several sites in the time it took an iPhone to load one. The company claims the PocketSurfer2 can load any web page within five to seven seconds.

Unlike 2004's original PocketSurfer device, the PocketSurfer2 doesn't need a third-party mobile phone to connect to the net. It has a built-in SIM and GPRS antenna.

In our first look, the access speeds lived up to the promise. We downloaded a PDF file from the web and, while we had to do a fair amount of scrolling to view the content on the 640x240-pixel widescreen display, the PocketSurfer2 was able to load anything we threw at it fairly quickly.

Widget, Datawind's UK partner, will sell the PocketSurfer2 for £179. For that you get up to 20 hours per month of free wireless web access anywhere in the UK for a year. Unlimited access in the first year costs £6 per month, while the second year's contract will cost no more than £40. Datawind promises that in subsequent years web access will be completely free, subsidised by sponsored links and deals with developers whose web-based apps will be tightly integrated with the PocketSurfer.

Indeed, the main interface on the PocketSurfer2 we tested provided a link to Zoho, the web-based word processing

application, together with a number of other preferred sites.

The availability of Zoho and other applications on the interface shows that Datawind sees the device as more than a simple web-browsing tool. Also on the main screen is an email icon which can be set up to give users one-click access to whichever email account they choose.

Extra features

Datawind CEO Suneet Singh Tuli said the company plans to include 25GB of online storage. Other features include a dedicated zoom button and the ability to kill pop-ups by clicking a key on the PocketSurfer2's qwerty keyboard. The keyboard is illuminated and, unlike a mobile phone handset, has a separate numeric row.

We were unable to perform a full battery test during our initial preview, but Datawind claims the PocketSurfer2 lasts four to five



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The PocketSurfer2 is the first portable handset to provide the 'real internet' at usable speeds
”

hours on a full charge. The built-in battery is not replaceable, however.

In a few years' time the PocketSurfer2 could be available far more cheaply, according to the company. It's likely that buyers will pay for the hardware, but the company is confident that it will be able to encourage third-party web-based developers to subsidise users' data charges.

"We want people to use it, our whole purpose is to generate revenue from sponsors," said Singh Tull.

The PocketSurfer2 launch coincides with the hype surrounding Apple's iPhone, which could be released in the UK as early as October. Like Datwind, Apple has been claiming the iPhone delivers the 'real internet' on a mobile device, although internet access speeds in the US have been crippled by AT&T's slow network. Apple is rumoured to be planning a 3G iPhone to speed up the handset's web speeds.

WOODEN PC DRAWS JUST 45W

'Carbon neutral' PC powerful enough to run Windows Vista

PC World owner DSGI (Dixons Store Group International) has revealed more details about its 'carbon neutral' Advent PC. DSGI claims the PC will draw just 23 percent of a standard PC's 200W of power, yet will have enough juice to run Windows Vista.

Wood will encase the keyboard, screen and mouse, while recycled materials and the low electricity needs will reduce its carbon footprint to 85 percent of a standard PC.

The 'green' PC is made mostly from recycled aluminium, steel and plastics. There is an external power supply and the hardback book-sized aluminium chassis has lots of ventilation slots, so it won't need a fan. Simply removing a fan doesn't reduce a PC's power-draw by 155W, however, and the expectation is that the wooden PC will use a laptop-class CPU and graphics chip, making it a pedestrian performer. Enhanced and power-hungry graphics capabilities will probably not be available.

PC World said it will buy carbon offsets to make the wooden PC carbon neutral. Such carbon offsets are criticised for allowing

people to use carbon-emitting devices now, when there's no guarantee that an equivalent amount of carbon will be taken out of the atmosphere over the next 10 to 30 years.

DSGI has climbed aboard the green bandwagon, with its Currys outlets no longer selling incandescent light bulbs and all of DSGI's UK retail chains promoting their green credentials since the introduction of the WEEE recycling directive. Plus, some DSGI set-top boxes are graded 'Energy Saving Recommended' by the Energy Saving Trust, while the group is encouraging the use of recycled carrier bags and working to phase out use of standby functions.

John Clare, DSGI's chief executive, said: "Electronic devices form a key part of our lives. As the number of appliances we own increases, we will work to offset the trend of increased energy consumption."

The wooden Advent could be on PC World's shelves by autumn and cost £399 with the wooden flat-panel screen costing £100 more. A model with an integrated screen will be available later on.