



Tony Browne reviews some of the smaller products that caught his eye this month

TEAC BABY MOUSE

Teac, a company normally associated with hi-fi separates, has brought out the sweetly christened Baby Mouse. "Isn't it cute," rang the cries from certain members of staff in the *PC Plus* office the day this miniature iMac coloured rodent was delivered.

This little mouse is perfect for those with small hands – mainly women and children. Furthermore, it is easy to set up and, although it comes without a thumbwheel, is very responsive. This is a good, inexpensive buy.



PC Plus 7/10

HAUPPAUGE WINTV USB WITH FM RADIO

TV tuner cards are useful devices – no more missing your favourite programme while you're working at your PC.

Hauppauge's latest addition to its range contains an excellent FM radio tuner and aerial.

The WinTV interface has had a facelift since we last saw it – it uses an external module, so you don't have to use up a PCI slot. Like most other TV tuners on the market, there are facilities to capture video clips and snapshots.

At only £70 it's certainly worth a look.



PC Plus 8/10

Guillemot Maxi Flat speakers

PC Plus 7/10

Computer speakers are all the same, right? They never look and sound as good as the ones that you can get at a hi-fi specialist shops. Wrong. Some companies are trying to improve the quality of their speakers by bringing out smaller models with great sound quality, interesting colours and novel features. Guillemot has produced a set of totally flat speakers that come with a power output rating of 2x6 watt RMS and a frequency response of 150–20,000Hz.

Setting up these super thin speakers is easy, even though our pair lacked a set of instructions. Ironically, for a set of cutting edge speakers, there is no USB socket to add a subwoofer. There is, however, an amplifier that also acts as a control centre with rotary dials that adjust the treble, bass and volume. Listening to the speakers reveals a flat sound that requires the volume to be turned up, in our opinion.



TERRATEC M3PO

Isn't this the biggest MP3 machine you've ever seen? But this is not your usual player. This one has an infra-red remote control, you can play audio CDs on it and it has an optional facility to hold a hard drive of your choice. This can store an awful lot of MP3 files, giving you access to several days of continuous music.

To use this player, you can either link it to your hi-fi after burning MP3 files on to a CD, or you can store your files on a

standard 2.5-inch hard drive and then transfer them to the M3PO.

You're then free to play your downloaded files on your M3PO through your home hi-fi. Although the sound quality isn't too bad, the world's first separate MP3 player does have some interface and control problems. It isn't all bad news: the display is quite smart and the ability to flash the BIOS is good. Overall, the M3PO is a neat idea but it needs further refinement.

BUSBY USB VIDEO CAMERA

PC Plus 6/10

There are so many different WebCams on the market now, but how do we at *PC Plus* choose the best one? We look at the following areas: how it links to our PC; what the picture quality is like; if it has one, what the built-in microphone is like; and what software and documentation is supplied.

Although the Busby USB video camera supports single frame snapshots in VGA mode (640x480 pixels), has reasonable picture quality and a good software bundle (Photo EZ, Photo Cards, Photo Magic, Videoplayer, Video Game), it doesn't have a built-in microphone and is poorly documented.



MUSTEK BE@RPAW 1200 SCANNER

PC Plus 6/10



It's been a while since we've reviewed a product with an animal name but now we have one: the 36-bit Be@rPaw scanner from Mustek. This USB equipped flatbed model comes in iMac blue and beige and has a maximum optical resolution of 600x1,200dpi. The name Be@rPaw comes from the paw-like arrangement of quick task buttons located at the front of the device. These buttons – labelled Copy, Fax, Panel and E-mail – enable you to scan in objects and then manipulate them.

Setting up the Be@rPaw was one of the most difficult USB installations we've ever encountered. We tried it on two different PCs and, even then, the software wouldn't work properly, constantly causing our test machines to crash. When we finally managed to get a picture (by using the TWAIN driver and a generic piece of imaging software) the results were good and they were scanned in quickly.



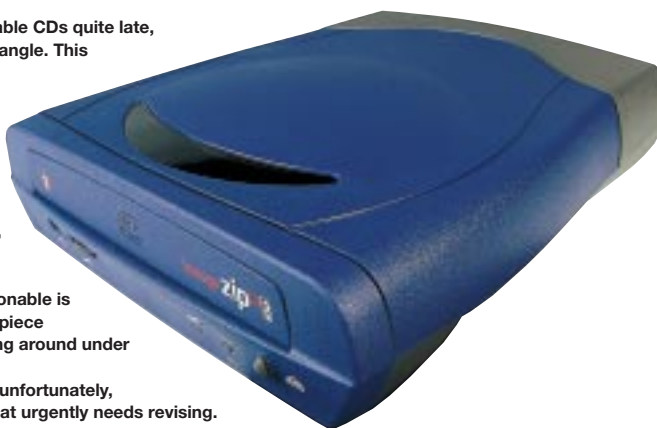
PC Plus 7/10

IOMEGA ZIP CD 650

Iomega entered the world of re-writeable CDs quite late, and the company has taken a unique angle. This drive comes equipped with the IomegaWare basic backup tools and Adaptec EasyCD Creator for Windows 98. If you're running Windows 2000, you are limited to the IomegaWare software.

It's a four-speed write, and a full disc takes around 17 minutes to burn, which is up to par. Although it isn't surprising that the drive requires an external power supply, what is questionable is why Iomega chose a large black two-piece affair – not something you want kicking around under your desk.

All-in-all, it is a solid drive which is, unfortunately, accompanied by a software bundle that urgently needs revising.



PC Plus 6/10

PRODUCT FACTS

Terratec M3PO

■ PRICE £349 ■ EX VAT £297

■ SUPPLIER Digiteq UK

■ PHONE 0870 901 0021

■ WWW www.terratec.co.uk

Tested on Evesham Vale Pentium II 350
Gamestation with 128MB RAM, Win98 SE

Extra information Most modern hard drives can be fitted

Teac Baby Mouse

■ PRICE £11 ■ EX VAT £9

■ SUPPLIER Teac UK

■ PHONE 01923 225235

■ WWW www.teac.de

Minimum requirements Any PC with Win98

Tested on HP Vectra VE with 64MB RAM, Win98 SE

Hauppauge WinTV USB with FM radio

■ PRICE £90 ■ EX VAT £77

■ SUPPLIER Hauppauge

■ PHONE 0207 378 1997

■ WWW www.hauppauge.co.uk

Minimum requirements P166MHz, Win98

Tested on HP Vectra VE, 64MB RAM, Win98 SE

Mustek Be@rPaw 1200 scanner

■ PRICE £129 ■ EX VAT £110

■ SUPPLIER Evesham.com

■ PHONE 01386 769600

■ WWW www.mustek.com

Minimum requirements Pentium 200MHz with 32MB RAM, Win98

Tested on HP Vectra VE, 64MB RAM, 4GB hard drive, Win98 SE

Extra information Comes with Ulead's Photo Express SE and Xerox Textbridge Pro

Guillemot Maxi Flat speakers

■ PRICE £30 ■ EX VAT £25.50

■ SUPPLIER Guillemot

■ PHONE 020 8686 5600

■ WWW www.guillemot.com

Minimum requirements 386 compatible or higher

Tested on HP Vectra VE, 4GB hard drive, Win98 SE

Busby USB video camera

■ PRICE £43 ■ EX VAT £37

■ SUPPLIER Busby

■ PHONE 01732 350666

■ WWW www.busby.co.uk

Minimum requirements P166MHz with 16MB RAM, Win98, USB port

Tested on HP Vectra VE, 64MB RAM, Win98 SE

Iomega Zip CD 650

■ PRICE £229 ■ EX VAT £189

■ SUPPLIER Iomega

■ PHONE 0207 365 9527

■ WWW www.iomega.co.uk

Minimum requirements PC/Mac with USB

Tested on 500MHz Pentium II, 128MB RAM, 8GB hard drive, Win2000