



Viglen's Incepta is nicely turned out, but misses a few essentials.



Pentium III

VIGLEN INCEPTA 650RA

Another EasyPC sees the light of day, but exactly who is it supposed to be easy for?

Specifications:

Processor 650MHz Pentium III **RAM** 64Mb (512Mb max) **Drives** 19.1GB Fujitsu hard drive, 5-speed TEAC DVD drive
Video Intel 810, 4MB plus main memory **Display** Viglen Envoy 17AP **Expansion** 2 USB sockets only
Other hardware 3Com V90 modem, Intel SoundMAX sound chip with Altec Lansing ACS33 speakers, Intel Ethernet adaptor **Operating system** Windows 98 SE **Software** MS Works Suite 2000, DVD/modem/sound utils

PRICE £999 ■ EX VAT £850 ■ SUPPLIER Viglen ■ PHONE 0181 758 7000 ■ WWW www.viglen.com

The trend towards Easy PCs continues unabated and Viglen has now got in on the act with the Incepta. This is a tiny and compact PC conforming to the Easy PC specification, so there are a few things missing when compared to a traditional desktop.

Where's the floppy?

You can see the first of these just by looking at the diminutive case, with its prominent Viglen logo; there's no floppy drive.

Without this simple and inexpensive device there's no easy way of getting information out of your machine. You either have to add a USB external floppy, Zip or Superdisk to your Incepta, or be able to transfer files to another machine over the Internet – neither option is ideal.

This deficiency is common to all EasyPCs of course, not just Viglen's. It was written out of the spec as an unneeded 'legacy device', but until every machine is fitted with a CD-RW or some other removable media drive, this was a mistake. Yes, technology has to move on, but not at the cost of convenience to you and me.

The Incepta does have a DVD drive – a five speed TEAC, notebook-style device mounted vertically in the front of the case. This works well enough, but looks a bit odd as the only piece of black plastic in Viglen's trendy, cream and dark blue livery.

You'll look in vain for most of the traditional sockets on a PC. There are no serial ports and no

parallel port – not good news if you own devices which use these interfaces. What you have at the back is a pair of USB sockets, for keyboard and mouse, and a standard 15-pin video socket for the monitor. There are also 56K modem and 10/100 Ethernet sockets providing for local and wide-area networking.

At the front is another pair of USBs and a pair of audio sockets. With USB the only way of connecting peripherals, it would be good to have more than two spare sockets, perhaps via a USB hub built into the monitor.

Chips away

The Incepta is based around a 650MHz Pentium III with 64MB of main memory and a 19.1GB Fujitsu hard drive. This should be a healthy combination, but unfortunately, it is let down by the use of the graphics sub-system available in Intel's 810 chipset. This chip uses main memory for video storage as needed, though here it has 4MB of dedicated memory as well.

Graphics from the 810 are limited to 16-bit colour depth, even at low resolutions. Video performance was acceptable at 640x480, but dropped right off at 1,024x768, scoring just 2,135 on the 3DMark benchmark.

This is a shame, as the 17-inch Envoy monitor is certainly well capable of supporting a better graphics card. There's no chance of upgrading, either, as the Incepta has no expansion slots. The core application SYSmark benchmark did better, producing a PC Plus Index of nearly eight and a half, which is okay.

The keyboard and mouse combination is better than in most machines in this price bracket, with one of Microsoft's ball-less Intellimouse Explorer mice giving the system a usability boost. Sound, which also comes from the Intel system board,

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runs into an above average set of Altec Lansing ACS33 speakers.

Even compared with other EasyPCs such as Advent's e-go, though, Viglen's Incepta lacks expandability.

Who's it for?

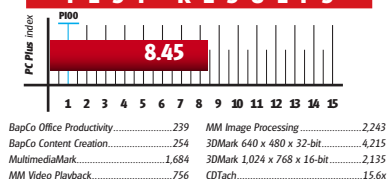
Overall, it may address a niche market for those with simple needs, but considering the economies available by leaving out the floppy drive and using an integrated MicroATX system board, £1,000 is expensive.

Overall, if a general lack of space is a driving force behind your buying decision, you may be better off looking at a notebook – Viglen produces a fine range. In the meantime, this doesn't really offer enough to get excited about.

Simon Williams

PC Plus

TEST RESULTS



PC Plus

VERDICT

VIGLEN INCEPTA 650RA

For Small system box. Good keyboard and mouse

Against Poor expandability. Poor video performance. Expensive.

System unit	7
Keyboard & mouse	9
Video system	5
Performance	7
Bundles & warranty	7
Value for money	5

6/10