

Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

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IdeaPad S10 netbook

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, there were several companies with netbooks; one of these was Lenovo. Theirs is officially known as the S10 IdeaPad.

A netbook is a small computer with a small screen, designed for light weight and capable of accessing the Internet. Typically, it has no DVD or CD-ROM drive, although often one can be an external add-on. The operating system is usually Linux or Window XP.

The Lenovo netbook has all these characteristics. It has two USB ports, and it can connect with a network, WiFi or other. It's conceivable, then, that some applications could be added through either of these. It also has a video out port, so you can show PowerPoint to your client, or whatever you want to display.

A netbook is probably most often used by a traveling person looking for something very light and easy to use. The Lenovo netbook certainly satisfies these criteria. The long battery life is a real plus when traveling.

The keyboard is quite usable, even though the space for it is reduced, compared with a typical notebook computer. The Lenovo keyboard reminds me of the original IBM keyboard, being quiet and having a responsive feel when pressed.

There is an integrated camera, which can be used for photos or video. One interesting feature is the ability to use it for face recognition, in particular to identify you when logging in.

The hardware features include: Intel Atom



processor (1.60 GHz), Windows XP, 10.1" display, 2.64 pounds, one inch thick, 2 USB ports, 1 card reader slot, one PCI Express card slot, one VGA out port, battery good for about 5 hours, 130 GB hard disk (one partition of 30 GB devoted to system restore files), built-in WiFi, audio in and out receptacles, LAN port.

One unique feature of this netbook is the OneKey Rescue System. It gives you a very easy way to back up. You can do a complete backup or an incremental one. If you want to restore, you can do so either to the factory default (as it was when originally shipped) or to your last backup. One unusual way to use OneKey is when your computer is turned off. Just press the OneKey button to restore and, if you wish, use the virus detection and cleaning feature.

The S10 comes with a Start-up Guide, a User Guide and the OneKey Rescue System Guide. Each of these is very well written and understandable. The S10 also includes the power supply and a wall outlet cord. The power supply is a long tube which attaches to the rear of the computer. It can only be charged through the computer.

This is a great computer for a traveler – light, fast, long battery life, inexpensive.

About: IdeaPad S10 netbook

Manufacturer: [Lenovo
www.lenovo.com](http://www.lenovo.com)

Price: about \$350

Solio H1000

This is just what you need! It's a battery for charging various of your portable devices – cell phone, MP3 player, iPod and more.

It can be charged from a wall outlet or by the sun, which is a bit more useful, since the sun is pretty much always available, at least here in Tucson.

The rather odd-looking device comes with an attached cable, an auxiliary cable and three attaching device plugs for common device sockets, and has a

built in carabineer clip. It also has a several-page folder labeled Quick Start Guide.

The Quick Start Guide should be redone. It is almost totally graphic and the pictures aren't all that helpful. Some of them may be intuitive for some people, but they weren't for me. What is the point of a Quick Start Guide if you can't easily understand it?

The auxiliary cable is used to connect between the device and your computer's USB port. Charging takes some 4 hours. Apparently charging by sunlight takes 6 hours, but if you are away from electrical power, the sun is a handy back-up. You can tell the level of charge by pressing the large button on the back of the device. A light blinks a number of times, each blink representing 20% of charge.

Once charged, you can connect to your MP3 player, cell phone or whatever with the supplied plugs and the attached cable. One thing nice about the attached cable is that you can't lose it or leave it behind! I charged a MP3 player for about one-half and hour, which pretty much fully charged it. The remaining level of charge in the Solio was only 40%.

This is a handy, compact device for charging your other electronic tools. It is limited by the plugs to those devices which accept that type of plug, but most MP3 players, cell phones, GPS navigation devices and the original iPhone are pluggable.

Solio H1000 is available direct and from many electronic and variety stores.

About: Solio H1000

Manufacturer: www.solio.com

Price: About \$80, available direct and from many electronic and variety stores



Tomtom XL 340S

Just about every ad for technology you see has quite a few devices that offer navigation by use of GPS signals and software. I was loaned one of the leading of these devices for testing.

A navigation device does several things, but the most important of these is to provide you a route between two points. The route can be expressed in terms of a map, which is the easiest to use, in my opinion, or in terms of a turn-by-turn description.

I used the XL 340S on a trip from Tucson to San Diego. The presumptive beginning point is your current location; you can also enter a beginning point. Mine was my home. My destination was Town and Country Resort, 500 N Hotel Circle, San Diego.

When I typed in San Diego, I got a screen for the street address. As I typed it in, the software knew I wanted either N Hotel Circle or S Hotel Circle; all I had to do was select the right one by tapping it on the screen. Then, I had to enter the 500 part of the address. That's it! Now I have directions or a map from my house to the Town and Country.

As I started out, the map showed my home street and instructed me to turn right onto Old Spanish Trail. This was a vocal instruction in a woman's voice, although I could choose to change it to any of several other voices.

As I proceeded on my route, the map screen moved along, showing cross roads as well as the next change in road I would need to use and which direction I would turn onto it. You could hardly go wrong! If I made a mistake or decided



to go a different way, the software would recalculate the route and give me directions from where I was.

As we approached San Diego, instructions became more and more specific. I was told to stay to the right, continue on route 8, or use the next exit and keep to the right. The directions led me directly to the resort's front door! The only problem with the system is that one is drawn to looking at the map, which takes one's attention away from the road.

While the primary information on the map is the road you are traveling, the cross streets and the next turn, other information is shown, too. You get Points of Interest, or POIs, configurable to include any or all of an extensive list of airports, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, churches and so on. The publicity material says there are up to 7 million of them available!

One thing I really liked is the mount for the device. You can mount it on your dash or windshield. The dash mount really requires a beanbag sort of pad, which is not included, but there is an adhesive disk that can be used instead. The windshield mount is attachable to the device and incorporates a twist dial that increases the suction on the mount. The attachment is a ball-and-socket arrangement that allows you to rotate and tilt the device so as to make it easily visible.

One included feature is the Map Share technology. The update feature allows you to connect with Tomtom to update your database of information. The sharing feature allows you to make changes or incorporate those made by your friends. These features keep your database up-to-date.

The kit includes not only the device and mount, but also a very nice Guide manual, cable to attach the device to your computer through USB, cable to plug into a power outlet in your car and a CD-ROM with everything you need to update your device. Available maps for the device include US, Canada, Mexico and Brazil.

There is also planning software for your PC that can work out your route and easily display it. You can print the turn-by-turn directions if you wish.

The GPS navigation system uses at least 4 of the 24 satellites orbiting the earth. The signal received from a satellite tells you how far you are from it and the time the signal was sent. Using the data from 4 satellites enables

determination of your location accurate to within a few feet. It also can tell your altitude above sea level. This is a most ingenious system!

About: Tomtom XL 340S

Manufacturer: www.tomtom.com

Price: About \$180, Tomtom GPS navigation devices are available from most electronics stores

Everio S Video Camera

The flyers with the Sunday paper are filled with ads for video cameras. How to choose which one to buy? The choices are three-fold based on storage medium: mini-tape, which is the oldest methodology; CD-ROM or hard disk; and memory card, the latest.

I received an Everio S video camera from JVC for testing. This model uses only Secure Digital (SD) cards, from 2 GB to 8 GB, depending on the make of card. I used a 2 GB card for testing. The camera has two card slots, so you can double the storage capacity. The camera automatically switches from card A to card B during recording.

The camera kit comes from JVC with the following: Instruction Manual, Product registration card, Accessory Guide, Warranty, Easy Start up Guide, application CD-ROM, camera, battery, charging cable, USB connecting cable and video transfer cable. There are also two core filters, which reduce noise interference.

The Instruction Manual is extremely well done! This manual should be the standard that all companies use when they design their manuals. The use of text and drawings makes each step of usage crystal clear. There are two pages detailing the function of each of the buttons and sliders on the camera. Many are intuitive, but not all.

The first step in using the camera is to charge the battery. The



supplied battery is charged while in the camera by use of the charging cable. Any wall socket is a suitable electrical source.

Next, you should set the clock, time zone, date and time. These are set by use of a touch screen on the LCD monitor. When you open the monitor, the camera turns on and the monitor displays whatever the camera lens is seeing.

There is a Menu button, one of five at the bottom of the monitor. Pressing the Menu button gives you a list of things you can do. The monitor screen is not touch-sensitive, but rather you highlight items on the menu by using the slider at the left side of the monitor. One of the bottom buttons is "OK." By use of these three tools, you can display and select the various items that control the camera settings.

I first used the camera to update my household inventory. I wasn't able to complete the task because I ran out of storage space. It turns out that there is a setting for video quality: ultra-fine, fine, normal and economy. The default setting is ultra-fine, which takes much more space, or to put it another way, allows much less recording time. When I changed the setting to economy, I had ample time to do my inventory.

The operation of the camera is very simple. There is a Record button at the upper right of the frame, placed so that your right thumb can press it easily. You start and stop recording with this. Each time you stop recording, a separate video file is created on the SD. If you want a single recording instead of several separate ones, you can use any movie maker software you have to do so.

You can review the video you just shot from the monitor. Before transferring the file, install the CD-ROM software. There are two software applications, Everio Media Browser which helps you make the transfer and allows you to review your video. Downloading it requires you attach the USB transfer cable from the camera to your computer. The video can be exported to other media. JVC has included a special feature that allows you to upload your video to YouTube, in view of the popularity of that service.

Video files are quite large, so you must be sure you have enough hard disk space to store the large files. My inventory was a bit over 18 minutes,

which took over 920Mb of hard disk space. This was the economy setting, which translates to 720 X 480 resolution, far from the highest quality the camera can capture.

Another software product on the CD-ROM is Digital Photo Navigator, which allows you to import photos, save them as albums and export to other media. The camcorder can take still pictures as well as video, so this tool can be used with them.

You can also view your video directly on a TV set if you wish, or copy it directly to a DVD.

This is an excellent product with many capabilities. I found it easy to learn how to use it. It comes in three colors, red, black and blue. One thing that users want to know is the zoom factor. For this camcorder, it's 80X. At that level of zoom, holding the camera by hand is not recommended!

About: JVC Everio S Memory Card Camcorder

Manufacturer: camcorder.jvc.com

Price: about \$300

