

HANDS ON ULTRABOOK™: PART 1

Are you in the market for a new laptop? No doubt you will find much ado about the new "Ultrabooks" that the top PC makers are applauding. Finally, the rest of the industry has managed to manufacture some competition to Apple's MacBook "Air." Purported to be the slimmest, fastest and most innovative laptop, the Air operates only wirelessly and comes with typical Apple software such as iPhoto, FaceTime, etc. On the other hand, there are Windows users who have grown up with XP, Vista and now Windows 7 with Windows 8 coming next. These users still make up the vast majority of PC users worldwide...no contest there. So what's so special about "Ultrabooks?" Here's what we've found:

The first thing that impresses you is its weight...versus any traditional laptop, it is practically "feather light" by comparison. They range between 2 and 3 lbs., varying by manufacturer. So for the frequent traveller who must do some serious work on the go, the Ultrabook™ hits the mark between the traditional laptop and not-inclusive tablet. Talk about hand luggage!

The second impressive thing is the speed that it processes information; Intel Corporation has advanced forward with its new technologies (more on this next month.)

Notwithstanding the effects of server speed and your service provider, the pages virtually "explode" on the screen.....no waiting for most pages to load. For those of us who hate to wait, this aspect is worth every penny.

The third thing we liked was the smooth interfacing between programs and webpages. Everything seems to work harmoniously. And for Adobe "Flash" fans, you can do that which an Apple product does not easily: view Flash files at any time (without downloading an APP).

The fourth aspect that we find important is the ability to operate both wirelessly and via Ethernet cable....not available without an adapter on the "Air." For security purposes using a cable connection when desired, especially for personal banking and purchasing, is an absolute must. We like the fact that users can choose either option whenever we wish.

The last feature we liked was the longer battery life: depending on the model, you can have between 5.5 and 7 hours of battery use...enough for an average flight time or day away from an electric outlet.

All in all, the Ultrabook™ is a really nice, smooth transition for the conventional laptop user to go from a heavier, clunkier model to a freer-spirit, state-of-the-art device without the limits of a tablet (iPAD or Android). Although the screen size is smaller (no larger than 14" right now), one can get used to it. Expense? To be fair, one must compare apples to apples (no pun intended) or pears to pears so the range for similar features and attributes is from 800€ up, more or less similar to the upper end range of better-made laptops today.

The top 5 manufacturers to consider are Sony, Toshiba, Asus, HP, and Dell....visit their websites and compare models. More next time on Ultrabook™ technologies.