

Toshiba Portégé R200 and Toshiba libretto U100

Toshiba Portégé R200

BOTTOM LINE: The Toshiba Portégé R200 lightens your load while letting you stay immensely productive on the road. If you travel often and need to keep up with work back at the office, you'd be remiss not to check out this system. And you'd be toting the sleekest notebook out there.

PROS: Supersleek and light design. Improved battery life. New security suite. Fingerprint reader.

CONS: External optical drive.



By Cisco Cheng



It's as if Toshiba melted all its expensive silverware and draped it around the body of its latest lightweight R200 ultraportable. This luxuriously thin, silver-clad beauty barely tips the scales at 2.7 pounds (system weight). Like its predecessor, the R100, the R200 is just 0.7 inches thick, practically the size of a legal pad. Best part: It has a comfortable, full-size keyboard. There's little not to love about the R200, which is why it flies away with our Editors' Choice for ultraportables.

The R200 makes some much-needed improvements to the hardware. For example, 512MB DDR2 memory is now standard for optimal performance. Toshiba also moved to Intel's next-generation Centrino solution, including a 1.2-GHz Pentium M 753 ULV processor and the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 900 GM (128MB shared). Sweetening the pot is a 60GB hard drive,

enough for some serious storage.

SYSmark scores were slightly better than those of our most recent ultraportable Editors' Choice, the IBM ThinkPad X40, which hasn't been upgraded to the latest Centrino parts. (The recently announced IBM X41 will have updated components. Look for our review in the next couple weeks.) Battery life also has been improved significantly over the R100's: The R200's battery went from a 17-Wh battery to a 41-Wh battery. Consequently, BatteryMark test scores improved from 2:07 (hr:min) to 3:32, a 60 percent improvement. If you opt for the second battery pack (US\$199), you'd add about 5 hours more and incur only a minimal weight gain.

Toshiba steps up security, implementing its EasyGuard suite on the R200. Similar to IBM's ThinkVantage suite, EasyGuard offers the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) hardware security chip.

Though they work similarly, IBM's solution is a little bit easier to configure and manage. Toshiba also integrates

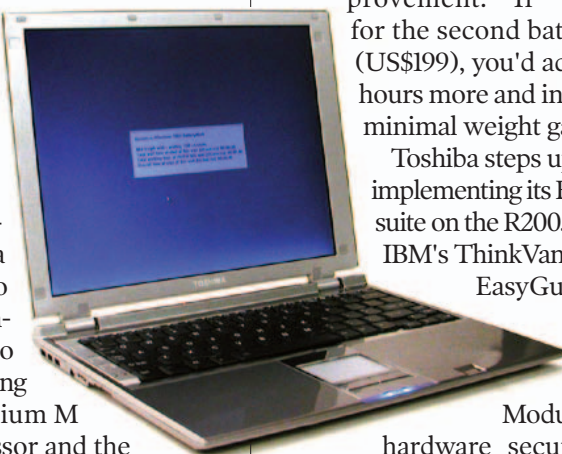
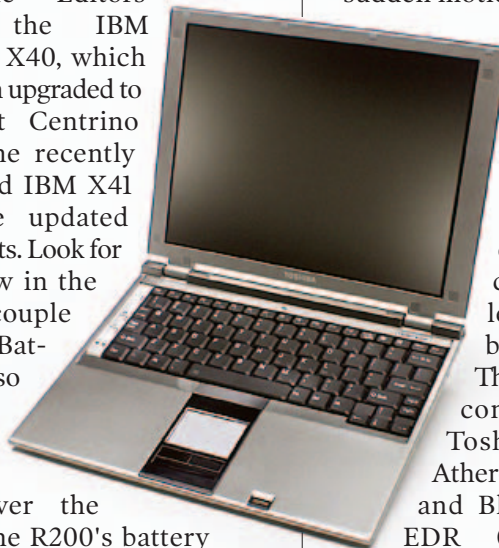
a fingerprint reader to safeguard precious passwords. In addition, a built-in accelerometer guards against sudden motion that could affect

your hard drive, similar to IBM's Active Protection. And Toshiba offers a diverse set of software utilities that let you do everything from configure your wireless to manage your battery life.

The R200 is built for connectivity as well. Toshiba includes the Atheros Super G wireless and Bluetooth 2.0 with EDR (Enhanced Data Rates), though there are currently few devices available to take

advantage of the claimed increased speeds (up to 3 Mbps). Other features include two USB ports, a VGA port, and an SD slot. The R200 lacks a built-in optical drive, though an external optical drive is optional. The external USB 2.0 combo drive costs US\$249.99, and the external USB 2.0 Super Multi Drive is US\$379.99.

The Toshiba Portégé R200 not only lightens your load, it gives you what you need to be immensely productive on the road. If you travel often and have to keep up with work back at the office, you'd be remiss not to check out this system. And let's not forget, you'll also be toting one of the sleekest systems around.



Toshiba libretto U100

1.2-GHz Pentium M 753 ULV, 512MB DDR, 60GB hard drive, 64MB Intel 82855 GME, 7.2-inch LCD, 802.11g, 2.1 pounds, DVD±RW (dock), two USB 2.0, one FireWire, Windows XP Home, \$2,099 list. Toshiba America Inc., www.toshiba.com.



The Toshiba libretto was ahead of its time when it made a brief appearance in 1997. Lately, however, a flock of minis have paved the way for its return. This time around it's the 2.1-pound libretto U100, which packs a great screen, a big hard drive, and a battery that lasts. It's great for meeting notes, downloading e-mail, listening to MP3s—even creating PowerPoint presentations. We wish its ergonomics were better, but it's still the best multimedia mini.

The libretto U100 is just 8.3 by 5.7 by 1.2 inches (HWD). The keyboard takes some getting used to, but we were able to pull off short e-mails with practice. It has a pointing stick instead of a touch-

pad; this is fine, but it's between the mouse buttons, making two-handed navigation more comfortable than our usual one-handed style.

The libretto's 7.2-inch widescreen is by far the biggest of the minis, and thanks to Toshiba's TruBrite technology it's nice and bright. Its 1,280-by-768 resolution is great for DVDs, but tough on the eyes because the text and icons in Microsoft Word documents are very small.

There are two USB 2.0 ports, a FireWire port, a 10/100 Ethernet port, and a modem jack. The libretto's VGA-out capabilities require an easily misplaced dongle. It also has

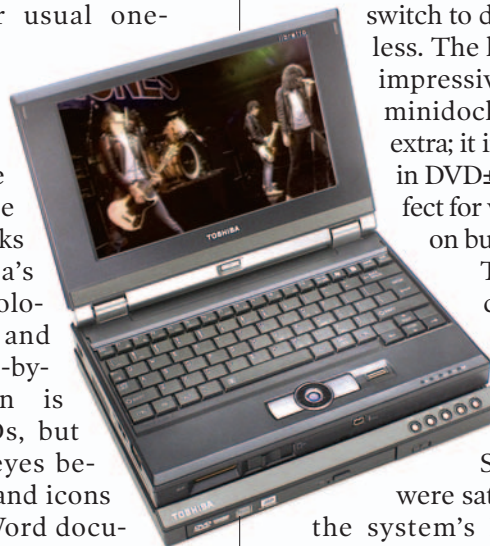
an SD slot and a PC Card slot for removable storage, built-in Atheros 802.11g wireless, and a switch to deactivate wireless. The hard drive's an impressive 60GB. A minidock is US\$379.99 extra; it includes a built-in DVD±RW drive, perfect for watching DVDs on business trips.

The libretto came in at 3 hours 57 minutes on our Battery-Mark tests.

SYSmark scores

were satisfactory, with the system's 1.2-GHz ULV Pentium M processor and 512MB of RAM.

If you need something small to keep you caught up while on the go, the libretto should be your tiny notebook of choice.



Excerpted from PC Magazine, July, 2005 with permission from Ziff Davis Media Inc.
©2005 Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings Inc. All rights reserved.