

Eee, so good for me

An UMPC user reveals how the device has changed his life

HE'S used the Ultra Mobile PC (UMPC) for some time already, and now, chief information officer (CIO) Waleed Hanafi gives his take on it.

UMPC bought: Asus Eee PC

Why did you buy it? As a CIO, I have a professional interest in technology advances.

All the UMPCs that I had looked at over the years were functional but not really usable. The fact that Asus was able to create a notebook device at this low price point was astounding, and I was curious to see what it had to offer. And to quote a member of my former computer club in Hong Kong: "There are only two reasons to buy something. Your friends don't have one or your friends already have one."

How much did you pay? \$598

Is this your first UMPC? I have looked at many UMPCs over the years, but I have never bought one. The screen was usually too small for me to read and the keyboards were a joke.

What are its pluses? The Eee has the ability to run Skype and has a built-in webcam. This makes it cheaper than a cellphone and gives you a communications device capable of voice and video calls.

The Eee also gives me a place to offload photographs from my digital camera and be able to instantly share the results on a larger screen.

Finally, it is also a media player, so I can upload both music and video into the device. The fact that the Eee PC is in a solid state also means that it can take a lot more abuse than a normal thin laptop, which tends to be fragile. Effectively, the Eee replaces a whole bunch of standalone devices in a clean, neat, inexpensive package.

You are using it for...? There are many times when I just need to surf the Web or connect to a LAN network but don't fancy the weight



PHOTO: ASUS

"With the device's relatively low price, I was a lot more comfortable with leaving the Eee in my hotel room than I would have been with my laptop or smartphone."

Waleed Hanafi (left), on the Asus Eee PC

and size of a laptop. The Eee is a device that I can place in the living room and be a part of my toolkit.

For instance, if I am watching a movie and feel the urge to look up an actor's bio on IMDB.com, I just reach for the Eee.

I also happened to go on a family holiday just after purchasing the unit. I promised my wife that I would not take my work laptop,

but I did take along the Eee.

As it turned out, we needed to change flights and I was able to go online and handle the arrangements easily. I was also able to use the Eee PC's Skype function to talk to the airline staff. Also, with the device's relatively low price, I was a lot more comfortable with leaving the Eee in my hotel room than I would have been with my laptop or smartphone.