



Product Reviews

Laptops

Getac E100 [PC Pro]

COMPANY: GETAC

PRICE: £1,900 exc VAT

RATING: ★★★★★★

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Verdict: A pricey but very solid and lightweight rugged tablet PC with plenty of features and a high-quality TFT touchscreen.



Aimed at field workers and service technicians, the latest E100 from Getac claims to be the lightest rugged tablet PC on the market. Its magnesium alloy case certainly plays a big part in this, as the complete unit tips the scales at a very modest 1.4kg.

The E100 has an ingress protection rating of IP54, which should provide enough protection for general outdoor usage. It's protected against dust interfering with its internal operations, and can withstand splashed water. It's also been tested to US military standard MIL-STD-810F, which means it can handle a lot of rough treatment.

The standard unit can tolerate temperatures down to freezing point, but Getac offers an optional hard disk heater, which increases this tolerance to temperatures as low as -20C.

The E100 feels very well built, with the case further protected by chunky rubber caps on each corner and all input ports sealed with rubber flaps when not in use. The Li-ion battery is quoted as being good for up to five hours of normal use, which seems acceptable. We tested this by running the lometer utility continuously on the E100's hard disk and it lasted for 3hrs 15mins.

With the great outdoors in mind, the display needs to be good and we certainly weren't disappointed, as the 8.4in TFT touchscreen is bright and easy to read. Getac offers an optional 800 nit display, but we found the standard display worked very well, even in full sunlight.

Bear in mind that the top resolution is only 800 x 600, which we found a pain, with a number of applications requiring a lot of scrolling. Nevertheless, we found general operations using the stylus easy enough, and the case has a light sensor that can automatically adjust the brightness in step with ambient lighting levels.

A keypad sits to one side, providing easy entry of numeric data, and each key serves two purposes determined by the Function button above. These can be used for right mouse-button clicks, turning off the touchscreen function, and so on, but the key icons are minute and very difficult to see. There is a keypad backlight feature, but it only illuminates the numbers and not the icons below, so you'll need to learn their functions.

Tapping an icon in the System Tray pops up a software [keyboard](#), and Getac's G-Manager utility provides access to a number of key functions. It keeps you posted on wireless signal strength, CPU utilisation and load plus memory status and offers a useful battery status screen showing the charge left and the estimated operating time. Pressing the menu button on the keypad brings up an interface for enabling or disabling wireless, setting up Bluetooth and providing quick access to the default email client and web browser.

The E100 also supports TPM (trusted platform module), and with this enabled in its BIOS and configured from the bundled Infineon software, you can send and receive secure email, encrypt files and folders and use authentication for browser access.

As with all rugged devices, you pay a premium for this extra protection, with the E100 coming in at a shade under £2,000. Nevertheless, it looks capable of withstanding the rigours of outdoor usage, the screen works well in a wide range of lighting conditions and it has a good battery life.



By Dave Mitchell

SPECIFICATIONS:

800MHz Intel A110, 1GB DDR2, 100GB IDE hard disk, 800 x 600 pixel (SVGA) colour 8.4in TFT touchscreen, 802.11bg wireless, Bluetooth, 2 x USB, Gigabit Ethernet, PCMCIA/ExpressCard34/54, smart card reader, audio out, Li-ion battery, external charger, IP54 rated, Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, 1.4kg.

<http://www.pcpro.co.uk/reviews/216537/getac-e100.html>