Introducing The Litl WebBook

By Adam Scinto / November 19, 2009 / Uncategorized / Home and Kitchen, Netbook, Tablets, Ultra Portables, Wireless / 5 Comments

There's a new 'WebBook' on the market called Litl, and it's a top-to-bottom operation that's designing the whole widget with the philosophy of "The computer works for you (not the other way around)". Litl has designed both the hardware and the software with the web experience as the priority, and they call the resulting 3lbs beauty 'Litl'. Besides it's new OS, the high-end 12.1 LCD panel with a 178 degree viewing angle really sounds nice. Accompanying the awesome display is an Atom processor, 1GB of ram, 2GB of CompactFlash storage, and from the 720p video acceleration I'm guessing they're using Nvidia's ION platform. The OS appears to be a web-centric design with a 'Card' based homescreen that looks a Litl (sorry) like Safari's 'Top Sites'. Read on…

The hardware has some really useful features like HDMI output, an 'easel' display mode that swings the keyboard out of the way, and a 'wheel' control on both the unit and the remote to scroll through items. Plus, since most of your data is stored in the 'Litl' cloud, it looks like they can quickly swap units if your Litl breaks or gets stolen; Litl can even track down the thief using the stolen device. I think the keyboard looks

LiTL Exhibit 2007
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silly, and it's layout is going to take getting used to, but overall I like design. The Litl is a bit more expensive than a high-end netbook at $699, but the excellent design and unique feature-set seem worth it. Whats more, this company really stands behind their product with an unconditional 2 year guarantee; If you're not satisfied, they'll replace it or refund it.

http://www.litl.com/

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About The Author

Adam Scinto

Complete and utter gadget freak; I've always been unable to resist a nice shinny object with blinkin' lights and buttons. If it has switches and dials too, even better. Professionally I'm a systems engineer, specializing in the Macintosh platform. I spent 5 years at Apple and then a couple years at a cross-platform remote engineering company. I'm currently looking for my next opportunity.

5 thoughts on "Introducing The Litl WebBook"

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LITL_PHIL
NOVEMBER 19, 2009 AT 10:40 AM

Hi Adam,

Thanks for writing on our product. Yes, that price tag is a direct reflection of our stunning LCD and sturdy build quality, not to mention the innovative engineering and design that has obviously gone into our webbook. We've been designing and developing this product for several years now – there are good reasons why it is not directly comparable to standard boring netbooks and you've spotted some of these.

Concerning our keyboard – engineering-wise it is a quality low travel scissor action model, like Apple use. The unusual design is a consequence of applying our core litl principles (see the 'philosophy' section of our website) to the standard US keyboard and saying "well, what should we move or get rid of here that people don't really need when using the web?"

A lot of thought went into this – many passionate discussions, mainly between our awesome CEO, John Chuang, and our interaction designers and hardware engineers. (Ok getting rid of caps lock shouldn't come as much of a surprise – there have been people campaigning to get rid of that for years). John has always been adamant that litl is about, among other things, getting rid of stuff people don't need for our core use cases. The dominant keyboards in use today still have design remnants from early PCs, even from teletype terminals and typewriters. Remembering that the litl webbook is a consumer appliance for the home rather than a "desktop replacement" laptop, and what it is intended to be used for, we don't expect our users to miss these keys for long. It may take a little time to get used to our keyboard if you're a frequent pageup/pagedown user for example, but you will find it works well with our custom UI.

One thing that some blogs and articles are clearly missing is that we have a grand plan here: we're building a new platform for people to get more out of the web at home and the webbook is just the start. The UI and keyboard are different for a reason, we're not just trying to be cute. We're developing a whole range of specialized apps (litl channels) that will customize and simplify your experience of selected webapps, streaming media and other content. These and other features will continue to grow on your device through our remote update system that upgrades your software while you sleep. Nothing to install or re-install, ever.

Keep watching us at litl.com!

Reply

BALDSPOT
NOVEMBER 19, 2009 AT 8:27 PM

This definitely looks interesting for kids and grandmas.
1. What about the potential for virus and malware problems.
2. Is word processing, spreadsheets, etc. done with online apps like Google's or are the apps on the machine?

Reply

ADAM SCINTO
NOVEMBER 20, 2009 AT 12:50 PM

For #1 – Very little. I haven't seen the Litl product yet, but it looks like they're using a Linux (Ubuntu?) based OS thats totally customized for ease of use.

For #2 – With the limited local storage and web-centric philosophy, I think it's mostly web-apps.

Reply

RIOT
NOVEMBER 24, 2009 AT 11:25 PM

Adam,

> from the 720p video acceleration I'm guessing they're using Nvidia's Tegra platform.

It's worth taking some time to research this area before posting guesses like that. They are not using Tegra because Tegra is a SoC with an ARM processor. As you noted, they are using an Atom processor.

Reply

ADAM SCINTO
NOVEMBER 25, 2009 AT 10:14 AM

You're right – It's the ION platform, I posted Tegra by mistake, but thanks for the snarky correction.

Reply

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