

## MEDIA CENTRE PC • 50IN PLASMA TV

MEDIA CENTRE PC  
LEWIS  
MC1200  
★★★★★  
£ 2800 (online)

**FOR**  
Powerful spec; flexibility of three digital tuners; excellent off-air and video performance; simple to use

**AGAINST**  
Crashes far too often, and suffers intermittent playback glitches

**VERDICT**  
Promised much and delivered almost entirely in terms of simple performance, but sadly the playback problems were just too persistent to be ignored

# Lewis won't solve the PC puzzle

**THIS MEDIA PC** from UK company Lewis wears the robust, bombproof look favoured by the likes of Uvem. Beneath the *Terminator* shell, however, it's perfectly refined, with an AMD3000+ 64-bit processor, nVidia 6800 graphics card, and Windows Media Center 2005 software on board.

## Ultra-high resolution

It can deliver High-Def at 1920 by 1080 resolution – or even higher, says Lewis – and boasts a DVI socket. There are also optical and coaxial digital outputs, plus a multichannel analogue speaker output for surround sound systems.

Three digital TV tuners give a myriad of viewing and recording options, and 800GB of the meaty 1200GB hard disk is available for recording, which can store around 400 hours of digital-quality TV.

Off-air reception is good, while recordings are simple to make and faultlessly faithful. Using the DVI output, the DVD performance is



The Lewis was beset with stability problems, crashing too often for our liking

pleasing, too, with only fast motion causing some loss of poise. High-Definition content is suitably impressive. Movie sound via the

**“800GB of space is free for recordings – that’s about 400 hours of TV”**

digital connection is dynamic enough to involve, too.

However, this is a computer beset by glitches and crashes. We

had plenty of the latter, but more worryingly found playback of both DVDs and hard-disk material induced regular ‘hanging’ problems. No matter what we tried – stopping the anti-virus software, turning off the screensaver – it still remained. It’s not acceptable.

In terms of the spec, and the video and audio performance, the Lewis might well be a four-star performer, but with the problems we had, it sadly can’t be more than a two. We await an improvement.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

**UVEM CLASSIC 200/1000 RA**  
★★★★★  
£3500  
October 2005  
Superb picture quality, no matter what content you feed it, coupled with good flexibility and fine sound, mean this is excellent value

**ELONEX LUMINA**  
★★★★★  
£2500  
December 2005  
Cool piece of kit that makes our ‘normal’ TVs look positively mundane – superbly flexible and perfectly able

50IN PLASMA TV  
FUJITSU  
50XTS40  
★★★★★  
£ 3795

**FOR**  
Vibrant, natural colours; excellent contrast; good levels of detail

**AGAINST**  
Some evidence of grain and noise; the off-air pictures are a little soft

**VERDICT**  
Cracking picture that’s as adept with bright, vivid action as with dark, natural scenes – just let down by occasional noise and judder

# Broad Fujitsu has lots to offer

**WHEN YOU REALLY** want to blow someone’s socks off, there’s just no substitute for a massive television. While previously we would have reached for a projector, screens of 50in and above are not only becoming more widespread and more affordable, but they’re also becoming substantially better.

This Fujitsu has the spec we’ve come to expect from a screen of this size and price: there are HDMI and DVI-D inputs, plus two com-

**“Screens of 50in and above are becoming substantially better”**

ponent and three Scart inputs. It also boasts an impressive, HD-Ready 1366 x 768 resolution.

We were impressed with DVD action via HDMI. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* shows off bright, bold and sharp colours, while the Fujitsu is equally adept with more natural palettes, such as that offered by *The Island*, where it reveals superb levels of detail.

Movement is, for the most part, smooth and without smearing, though there is the odd unwanted judder during fast-moving scenes.

## High-Def’s presented sweetly

Watching high-definition via a media centre PC, the Fujitsu screen again looks good. However, that problem with judder occasionally interferes, and there’s digital noise in the most testing dark scenes.

Via component and RGB Scart, images also suffer these minor flaws, but otherwise have much to offer.

The off-air TV picture is decent, if a little soft, so we’d add a digital set-top box – it’s £50 well spent, if only for the rise in picture quality.

This is a fine big-screen plasma, but not quite a five-star performer.

The 50in Fujitsu 50XTS40 boasts an impressive 1366 x 768 resolution



ALSO CONSIDER ?

**PIONEER PDP-50SXDE**  
★★★★★  
£4000  
August 2005  
Delivers a superb picture with DVD and HD, and is well-equipped

**SIM2 DOMINO 55M**  
★★★★★  
£4000  
July 2005  
Size matters, kids. This SIM2 gives you an extra five inches of rear-projection screen for your cash, and via HDMI the picture is splendid