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## Computers & Internet

Posted on Mon, Oct. 20, 2003

**PIONEER PRESS**

### Cheapo scooters do Segway speeds

BY JULIO OJEDA-ZAPATA  
Pioneer Press

Don't have the bucks for a Segway? A fraction of that electric scooter's eye-popping sticker price gets you wheels that charge up just as quickly, move about as fast and travel nearly as far.

Dean Kamen can rest easy, though, because budget electric scooters are little more than toys in some ways even though many of them are aimed at adults.

Such contraptions include Razor USA's brand-new line of four E-series scooters, which complement its cheaper, less powerful models for children.

Razor USA rose to prominence with kids' non-motorized kick scooters that seemed to be everywhere in 2000. The firm has lately pushed electric scooters and claims this is a decisive year for such self-propelled gizmos.

"Demand has been much higher than anticipated," says Katherine Mahoney, Razor's vice president of marketing. "Every product that our factory can possibly make is (spoken for) through January."

Recent improvements in battery-power technologies finally allow for decent performance at affordable prices, and the E-series scooters are among the first to seize on that potential, Mahoney says.

I spent the weekend with Razor's top-end E300, an oversized push scooter fitted with a chain-driven motor, a rechargeable battery, 10-inch tires, a sturdy metal deck and simple controls built onto a height-adjustable handlebar.

This is no Segway. Without gyroscopic balancing, it's a more precarious ride. Its smaller wheels mean bumpier going. It can't move in reverse. And while an E300 will narrowly outpace a Segway on level terrain, it

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struggles to get up steeper inclines.

But what do you expect for \$230? Bottom line: I loved puttering around downtown St. Paul on this thing (but I should have worn a helmet).

I also wanted to try the E-Scooter, a product of China-based Leoch E-Vehicle Co. The E-Scooter is now sold at local Target stores for about what the E300 costs, but I couldn't arrange a test drive.

Note that the E-Scooter is a sit-down model with a bicycle-style seat and a small headlight.

If \$200 sounds steep to you, look for a deal on eBay. Lots of E-Scooters were available as of this writing, but no E300s.

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