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And then there were three...

We knew 2015 would be a year of change for the mobile phone business. So it has come to pass. No sooner were we back from the Christmas break than Three's owner Hutchison Whampoa said it intended to take over O2 brand owner Telefonica for around £13 billion.

Then we heard EE will be scrapping the Orange and T-Mobile brand. EE, in turn, is to be bought by BT. By the end of the year there will only be three networks – BT, Three, and Vodafone. And some are predicting a deal between Vodafone and Sky. That's a big change from 10 years ago when we had Orange, T-Mobile, Vodafone, O2 and Three.



The reason for all this activity can be summed up in one word – convergence. No longer are mobile phones for voice calls. Mobile phone networks' voice and text revenues have been hit by instant messaging apps like Facebook or WhatsApp and accessing the internet over Wi-Fi. Our mobile phones are now our laptops and TV set. Fast mobile broadband is now a bigger requirement than voice. It makes no sense to have five different networks each installing separate networks of thousands of masts. Fewer networks makes it much simpler to share resources).

Competition should still remain health. It is the Regulator's job to ensure there is no monopoly. The consolidation could benefit users in other ways. Patchy coverage means there are many areas where it is impossible to make or receive a call. Filling in these 'not spots' requires hundreds of millions of pounds of investment which much bigger networks should be able to more easily rectify.

The What Mobile team

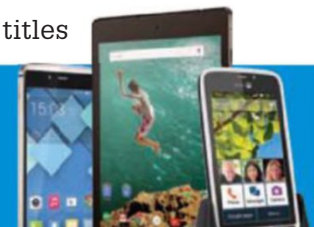
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Project Ara

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1 8 months ago a project entitled 'Phonebloks' was officially revealed to the world. It was met with equal parts wide-eyed optimism and scornful, mocking cynicism, depending on just how tech-savvy you believed yourself to be.

The reveal video showed a CGI rendering of a prototype smartphone. This phone was a metal husk, until various components were inserted into it. One component would be the battery, for example, whilst another could be the camera. The choice would be left up to the consumer, with the idea at the heart of it being that people would finally have an entirely renewable smartphone that could be upgraded in instalments.

As with so many fanciful things, the internet promptly shot it down. It was declared ludicrous, overtly simplified, and simply technologically impossible. Six months later, Google revealed the Phonebloks project to be its own and that work had begun on making it a reality.

ROOM FOR RENEWABILITY

We now know Phonebloks as Project Ara, and it's set to be the world's first 'modular smartphone'. What this means is that almost every core component will be interchangeable. You purchase an aluminium and

steel skeleton of a smartphone with one of three screen sizes on the front of it, and from there you fill in the rest as you please.

Prioritise battery life over processing power? Then buy a large battery component at the expense of squeezing in a smaller processor. Or perhaps you just want a cheap phone that you don't have to worry about being totally obsolete in 24 months time. You can buy a low-end set of components safe in the knowledge that in a year's time you can just swap in more memory (or storage, or processing power, or whatever you want).

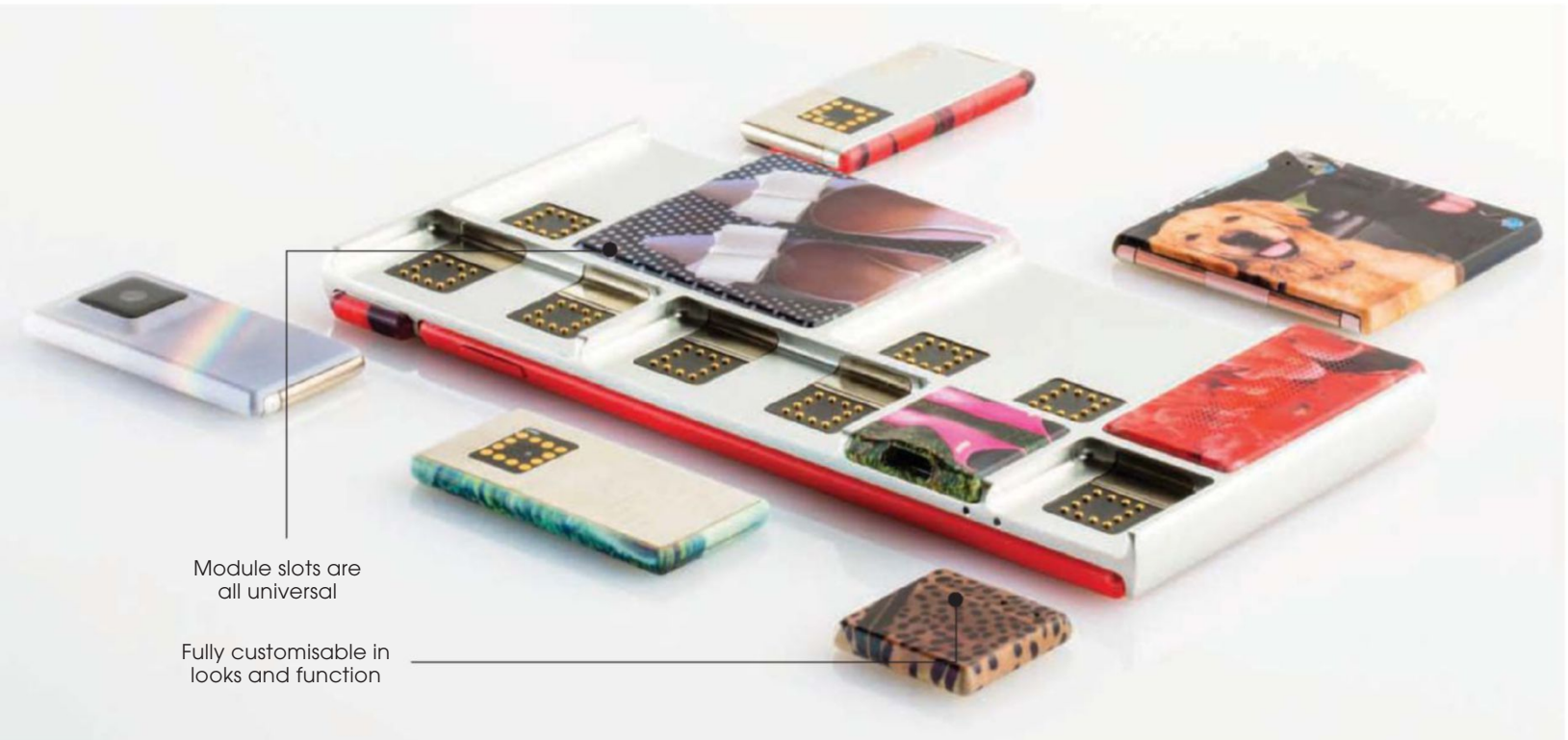
The environmental perks are equally bountiful. A recent survey found that there are around 124.8 million handsets sitting unused and forgotten in UK homes - that equates to around £11 billion worth of tech. If everyone switched to Project Ara the pollution from manufacturing and staring put on recyclers would be drastically cut.

GETTING THE GOOGLE TREATMENT

Incredibly, Google has managed to get Project Ara to work whilst sacrificing little of its original artistic vision. After all, this thing can't look like the Franken-phone that it is - if you're going to try to appeal to the casual smartphone user it's going to have to be palatable.

The modules that you'll be using to build the rear of the Ara will be available in a number of colours, patterns, and even textures, ensuring





Module slots are all universal

Fully customisable in looks and function

that each device has the potential to look as unique on the outside as it is on the inside.

There will be an Ara Configurator website which will function similarly to Motorola's Moto Maker. You can upload a favourite image to the configurator which will then extract key colours and shapes to make a unique pattern for your Ara modules.

FREE-FOR-ALL

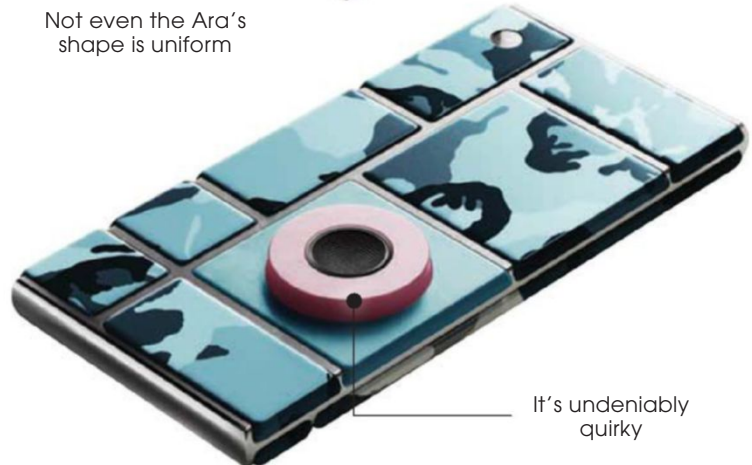
Another exciting aspect of Ara's modularity is that rather than being made by one singular manufacturer (like Motorola for the Google Nexus 6, for example) there will instead be competition amongst manufacturers to make the best components. Audio giant Sennheiser has already worked closely with Google to make a speaker component for the device, and you can expect similar involvement from photographic companies with camera components. Google has even said that it's looking into the possibility of releasing schematics so that owners can 3D print their own backs to components.

Google has assured us that you needn't worry about these modules falling out. We don't know for sure just how they'll be mechanically locked into place, but apparently you'll need to go into an app on your handset and tell it to release each one individually before you slide them out for replacement. That does mean that the modules will be hot-swappable, though, meaning there's no need to power down when you want to make a change.

Perhaps most astonishingly of all, Project Ara is actually looking set to be on target for an early 2015 release. Working prototypes already exist, and Google has stated that it expects the basic model to cost as little as \$50 (~£33) upon release. Of course we expect the modules to make up the bulk of the cost of the final device, but there's been no word from the Google camp yet as to how much they'll be.



Not even the Ara's shape is uniform



It's undeniably quirky

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Our friends at Santok have blessed us with THREE Karbonn A19's to give away. For a chance to win just answer this question:

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- B. China
- C. India

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The winner will be contacted via email the following month.

Sweating the small stuff: 1. The promoter of this competition is Clark White Publishing Ltd. 2. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 years or over, excluding employees of What Mobile, all participating companies, its agents or families and any company associated with this competition. 3. By entering, all entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules. 4. All entry instructions form a part of the terms and conditions. 5. Closing date: 3 February 2015. 6. Only one entry per email/IP address will be accepted. 7. The correct winning entry will be selected randomly by the administrator of the What Mobile Facebook page. The winner, who must be a UK resident, will be sent a Doro Liberto 820. 8. No cash alternative or other device will be offered. 9. No correspondence will be entered into except that the name of the winner will be available upon written request.



THE SMARTPHONE THAT WORKS AT YOUR PACE



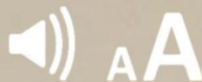
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Around the world

The Asian handset market isn't all just iPhone knockoffs you know... It just so happens that this month it is. There's also the world's new thinnest handset from Oppo, a debut from Gionee's high-end brand, and a supercharged device from Japanese photography buffs Fujitsu.

Meizu M1 Note

When China's Meizu unveiled its MX4 at the end of 2014, the immediate reaction of anybody with a set of eyes was to compare it to the iPhone. The resemblances, aesthetically at least, were immediately apparent. It was no mistake either, and whilst Meizu may have raised eyebrows in the West it raised sales in the East.

What better way to follow up your totally-not-an-iPhone than by releasing a totally-not-an-iPhone 5c? Meizu has clearly realised it's on to a winning formula and so its latest phone, the Blue M1 Note, has seemingly been designed with Apple's other handset in mind.

We can't say we mind all that much though - particularly when the components inside live up to the billing of the outside. A 5.5-inch 1080p HD Gorilla Glass 3 display, 2GB of RAM, Mediatek octa-core processor, 13-megapixel camera, dual-SIM capacity... it's really a rather appealing device.

Oh, and it'll only cost ¥999. That's about £105. Fingers crossed Meizu can continue its meteoric rise so that we might actually get our hands on one one day. We're even fans of Meizu's 'Flyme' OS, which is the company's simplified, skinned version of Android. Yes, it looks an awful lot like iOS, but surely that's the best of both worlds? The M1 Note will be unveiled in the coming weeks with, presumably, an Asia-only release date.



Oppo R5

One Chinese company which has managed to make its way to the West is Oppo. You won't find its handsets sitting on the shelves of your local Carphone Warehouse, but they're certainly available if you know where to look.

And a good thing too, as the Oppo R5 is the world's thinnest smartphone. Straight up, no ifs or buts - just the thinnest smartphone ever manufactured. It measures in at an insane 4.85mm in thickness, smashing the previous record (held by Asian rival Gionee's Elife S5.5) by a whole 0.65mm.

Sure that may not sound like a lot, but the difference when you hold the R5 in your hand is immediately noticeable. The R5 is an absurdly thin device, more akin in build to a particularly thick sheet of glass than a conventional smartphone.

Much like the comparatively-obese iPhone 6, the slender nature of the R5 means that the camera protrudes from the back of the phone a fair bit. Hardware protuberances aside, there's not really had



to be any sacrifices made by Oppo in creating the R5.

Its display is a reasonable 5.2-inches - not grotesquely stretched out to accommodate all the innards - and full 1080p HD in resolution. There's a bog standard 16GB of internal storage and a decent 2,000 mAh battery, and a Snapdragon octa-core processor with 2GB of RAM powering everything.

Those are solid specs by any phone's definition, never mind the thinnest in the world. It also has one of our favourite features, first demonstrated on the Oppo Find 7 - you can take 50MP images. Sort of. Oppo's smart photographic software uses the R5's 13-megapixel camera to take a sort of 'patchwork' image, wherein four separate snaps are combined to create one huge image.

After all this, there's even more good news: the Oppo R5 is available to purchase in the UK. You can only pick it up from Oppo's official website, and it'll set you back €399 (~£305). Not an unreasonable price, we're sure you'll agree.

IUNI U2

If you haven't heard of IUNI before that may be because it's the high-end banner used by Gionee (a brand pretty obscure over here in its own right). This is a little confusing though as, despite being a fairly impressive device, the U2 is first and foremost unbelievably cheap.

Like the Meizu M1 Note it costs just ¥999, or ~£105, and you get a whole lot of bang for your buck. It may not look quite as nice as the M1, but it does have a rather fancy aluminium body. This sort of sturdy, premium build is fairly rare for Asian smartphones of any price, so it's more than welcome here.

There's also a rather compact 4.7-inch 1080p display, Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core processor, 2GB of RAM and a 16MP camera. Those are all very nice figures, definitely pushing the upper limits of 'mid-range'. For £105. We really feel that bears repeating.

There's actually two variants available: the one we've just listed (which features 16GB of internal storage) and a slightly more expensive version which features 32GB of storage and 3GB of RAM. It's an extra ¥200, or £21, which is just as incredible a steal as the original price point.

Unfortunately IUNI seems to have deemed the U2 too good of a deal to waste upon Western markets, and the only way you'll be able to get your hands on one for the foreseeable future is via import sites.



Fujitsu Arrows NX F-02G

Now here's a smartphone. Trust a Japanese manufacturer to take a look at the current technological landscape and say, "Nope, we need more". The Fujitsu Arrows NX F-02G is a ridiculously high-end smartphone, no doubt about it.

Even in Japan itself Fujitsu is hardly a name traditionally associated with high-end communications. It's good to see that the company's experience with high-end cameras has been put to good use though, as the Arrows is a device we'd be very much interested in owning.

The first thing you'll notice about the handset is that it's actually hexagonal, with corners that look like they've been snipped off. Its premium build featured IP58 certification, meaning it's fully water and dust proof, and a Gorilla Glass 3 screen.

That screen also boasts a quad-HD resolution. With it only having a diagonal measurement of 5.2 inches that's an insane 565 pixels-per-inch. It's total overkill and we love it.

Its processor is a 2.5GHz Snapdragon 801 with a huge 3GB of RAM, and the rear-facing camera is 20.7 megapixels (curiously made by Sony, not Fujitsu).

All this tech is powered by a 3,500mAh battery which is sizeable, but we have a feeling battery life may suffer for that QHD display. Fujitsu has worked in an ultra power saving mode, though.

Unlike China, there's no culture of cheap electronics in Japan. Predictably (and fairly) enough the Arrows will set you back the equivalent of around £590 - similar to a top end Apple or Samsung device. Not that you'll be able to buy it over here anyway.

PATENTLY OBVIOUS

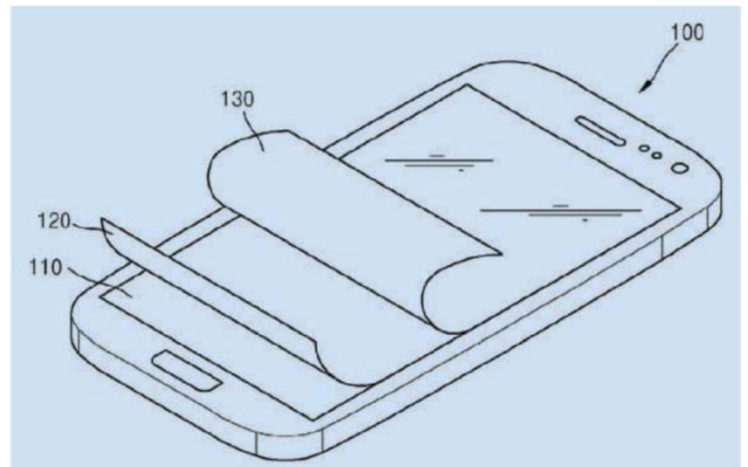
Apple has gone patent-bonkers this month with five new ideas. Some are believable, like public transit navigation in the latest version of iOS, whilst some are slightly more far fetched. A phone that rotates mid-drop? We'll believe it when we see it...

Generating power via the 'triboelectric effect' Samsung

We've featured unique and interesting ways companies are looking at generating power here before, but this is one of the most exciting developments we've seen yet. In an effort to improve smartphone battery life Samsung recently filed a patent for a generator which harnesses something known as the triboelectric effect.

The triboelectric generator uses a layer of something called a 'piezoelectric' material. When this material is subjected to pressure, deformation, distortion, bending, vibration or sound it generates power. This power is then converted and pumped straight back in to your device. As you may have already guessed, this layer would be placed over your smartphone's display so that every touch, swipe and tap is converted into energy.

Obviously this is an exciting prospect, although it's worth bearing in mind that it would only provide supplemental power to your device - with charging still being required. There's also the fact that for all we know this technology may never see the light of day. Still, this patent is a step in the right direction.



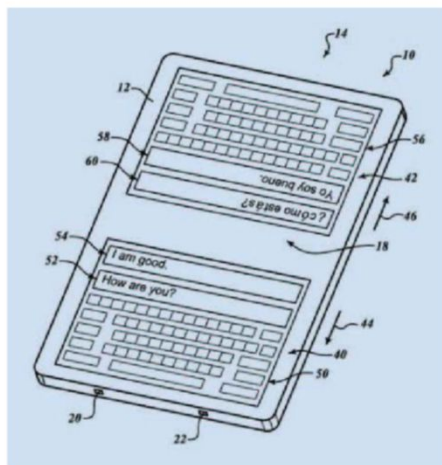
Real time translation tool Google

Here's something a little different to what we would usually cover - Google has filed a patent for an app.

The app would see your device (most likely a tablet) split in half so that two people can use it at once. Each side gets a keyboard, with the app itself providing real-time translation.

As one person types on their side a translation begins appearing on the other. This means that, in theory, two people separated by language barriers could have a full conversation.

Of course that's Google's rose-tinted perspective on things, but even if the reality simply means that you can ask someone in downtown Tokyo where the nearest public toilet is we'd say it's worth the effort. We also feel like not enough is made of the size of tablets given how commonplace they are today - just think how many other useful split-screen apps like this we've been missing out on.

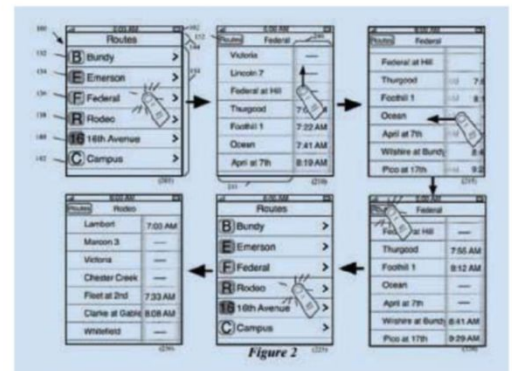


Public transit navigation Apple

Whilst iOS is widely lauded for its outstanding ecosystem and superior overall quality of apps, one feature which is often derided is Apple Maps. Despite a large rebrand and reworking of the app last year iPhone users are still much more likely to use alternative third party apps like Google Maps instead.

It looks like Apple could be set to introduce a major new feature to Apple Maps - one which we're very much looking forward to. This latest patent shows local public transport integration within the app, akin to what's offered in Google Now on Android. Entitled "User Interface Tools for Commute Assistant" the attached sketches show an app detailing public transport routes, including which stop you would need to head to, how far away it is, and how long your journey would take.

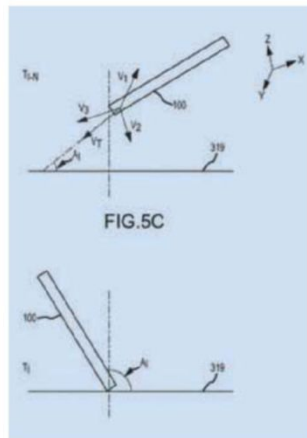
There's a chance this could be a separate app to Apple Maps entirely of course, and frankly we don't mind either way. Simply having a smartphone which is notably smarter is fine by us. Expect the improvement to arrive as a part of iOS 9, whenever that may be.





iPhone which never lands face-down Apple

We've all dropped our smartphone before. It's a simple occupational hazard, and is practically unavoidable. Some of us get lucky and will end up with only a couple of minor blemishes or scuffs, or maybe a nick or two. The rest get a cracked screen which can range anywhere from 'noticeably unattractive' to 'practically unusable'. Sure you could slap a case on your device, but why should you have to cover up an expensive device which was lovingly crafted by some of the world's greatest designers? You wouldn't stand for having to put a plastic case over your new Aston Martin, would you?



Apple, who's iPhone is particularly notorious for its fragility, has come to the conclusion that wrapping your new smartphone in a case isn't a very good deal for either party. That could be why Apple has filed a patent which suggests a rather far-fetched solution to stopping drop damage from happening.

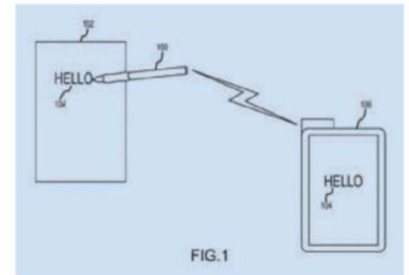
The idea is to implement a system which rotates the iPhone mid-drop so that it lands in a manner least likely to crack the screen. This would be done using already existing components within the device like the accelerometer, magnetometer and vibrational motor.

Upon detecting that it's falling, the iPhone would activate its vibrating motor to give itself a push in the requisite direction and theoretically land with only minor damage. We're all for it... if it works.

Magic, all purpose stylus Apple

So far Apple has managed to avoid the allure of the stylus. Prior to the iPhone any phone with a touch capacitive screen would come accompanied by a little plastic wand which would allow you to operate it. It was finicky, but the technology was young and we didn't know any better. The first iPhone created a new trend, and phones which required a stylus to operate them were seen as dated and uncool.

Now that smartphones are a good eight years older we're all a lot more comfortable with the concept, and can perhaps concede that on some occasions and some devices a stylus is actually a welcome addition. Apple has continued to hold out - until now, that is. This patent shows off what is a stylus designed by Apple. Unlike regular styluses though it is capable of writing on any surface and transmitting the data straight to an iOS device. This would mean that you could quickly scribble something down on a nearby flat surface, such as a table or wall or book, and it would appear on the screen of your device whilst leaving no mark in the physical world.



It is also designed to have interchangeable nibs. This would mean that you could use it like an actual physical pen if you wanted, where your writing appears both on paper in real ink and on the screen of your device. A third function would allow you to use the stylus directly on the screen of your device, which makes sense.

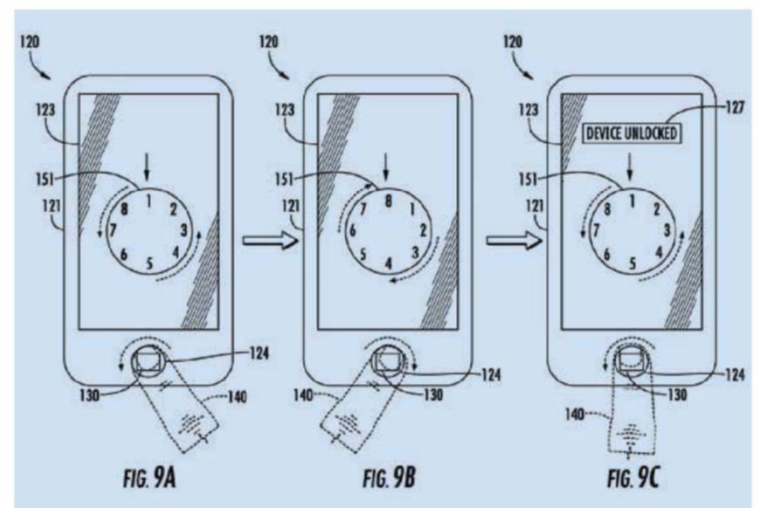
Combination lock style touch ID Apple

One of Apple's best innovations in the past few years has been the introduction of Touch ID, first implemented on the iPhone 5s. This fingerprint scanner added a whole new layer of security to the iPhone which had never been seen before in the consumer mobile market - at least not with such an excellent level of polish and integration.

The method isn't entirely flawless, however. Some have argued that a fingerprint is more appropriate as a username than a password, and that two-step authentication is needed. Perhaps Apple agrees, as this patent looks at an interesting way to make Touch ID even more secure.

Now the Touch ID sensor would operate both as a fingerprint scanner and a combination lock, like the kind you'd find on a safe. By rotating your finger or thumb on the scanner you in turn rotate the virtual combination lock which shows on-screen. This way your fingerprint becomes a username and password all in one.

Other types of finger motion seem to be outlined within the patent, too, so it certainly seems that this is something Apple is keen to push ahead with.



Flavours of the month

Ever grown tomatoes with your phone? How about printed a photograph? Well now you can.



01 / Archos Music Beany

£30

We've not gone mad, this is indeed a hat featuring within the accessories section of What Mobile. The hook is, this beany has bluetooth speakers built in to it, meaning you can listen to music transmitted wirelessly from your phone whilst keeping your head warm (and vaguely stylish) at the same time.



02 / Proximo Key Fob Bluetooth Tracker

£30

This smart fob attaches to your keys and, via the magic of bluetooth wireless communications, alerts you whenever it gets too far from your phone. Not only does this mean that you'll never lose your phone again, but it also works the other way round. You can even send a command from your phone so that the fob flashes in the dark - no more fumbling around the nightstand before work in the morning.



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Lumia 830

Fitbit Flex

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03 / Nova Bluetooth Flash

£49

The iPhone's camera is pretty spectacular, even by modern photographic standards. It's just a shame that the flash that accompanies it can let you down when you want to take a crucial shot. The Nova Bluetooth Flash offers affordable, professional-standard lighting for your mobile snaps. It's handheld and syncs wirelessly with your device for maximum ease.

04 / Mighty Purse

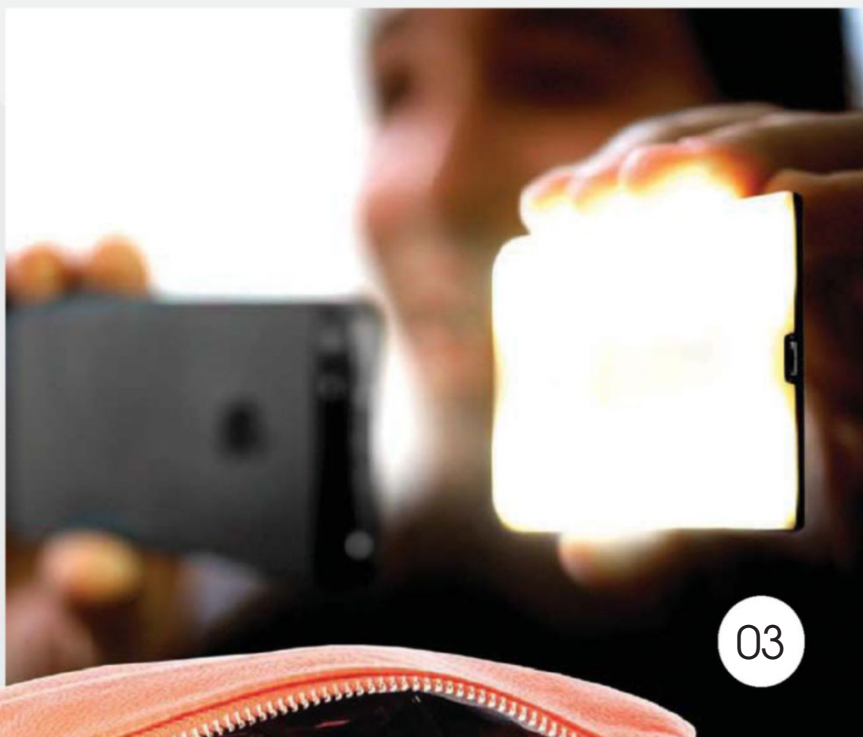
£90

Literally every smartphone owner ever has had their device's battery run out on them at some point. All we can do is hope that that moment doesn't come during the middle of a night out on the tiles - how do you find your friends? How do you get home? How do you find out where you are? With the Mighty Purse you never need worry about that again. It's a purse with a built-in micro USB and Lightning charger and, get this, it actually looks quite nice.

05 / Sleepshield

£13

We all know that staring at our phones before bed time is bad for our brains, but it's a hard habit to kick. Adding a SleepShield to your phone may not cure your habit, but at least it can negate some of the detrimental effects. This screen protector cancels out what's known as the 'blue rays' emitted by your smartphone screen, allowing you to get to sleep quicker and easier. It also protects from chips and scratches.



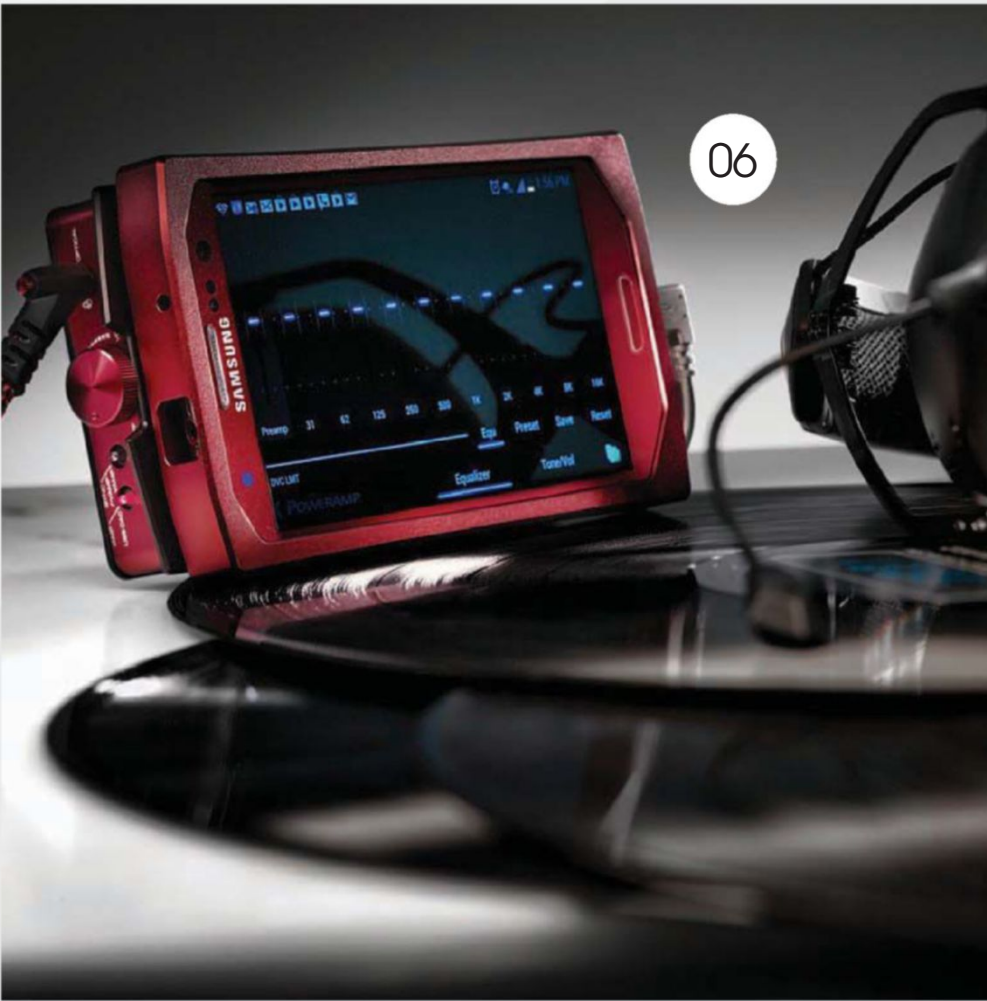
03



04



05



06 / **V-Moda Vamp Verza**

£399

The first of its kind we've ever seen, the Vamp Verza is far, far more than just a case. It actually converts your smartphone's audio output from digital to analog, meaning that the amount of compression and re-processing inflicted upon it by your device is undone. The result is astoundingly clear, high-fidelity audio without the need for a special music player. There's a ton of options for audiophiles to play with, and it looks pretty sleek too.

07 / **Fujifilm Instax Share Smartphone Printer SP-1**

£130

The Instax Share is the first wireless printer designed specifically for smartphones. It connects with your device to instantly (as the name implies) print old fashioned polaroid-style snaps as soon as you take them. The recent trend of retro for the sake of retro may be irksome to some, but there's no denying how nice it feels to have a physical photograph in your hands.



08 /
Niwa

£185

Just when you thought you'd seen it all, along comes Niwa - a connected hydroponic system. It comes in three sizes and allows you to grow all your favourite fresh produce from home. The accompanying app means you can control important factors like temperature, lighting and irrigation when you're away. The app even has preset produce so it can offer optimal settings for what you want to grow.



08



09



10

09 /
Netatmo Weather Station

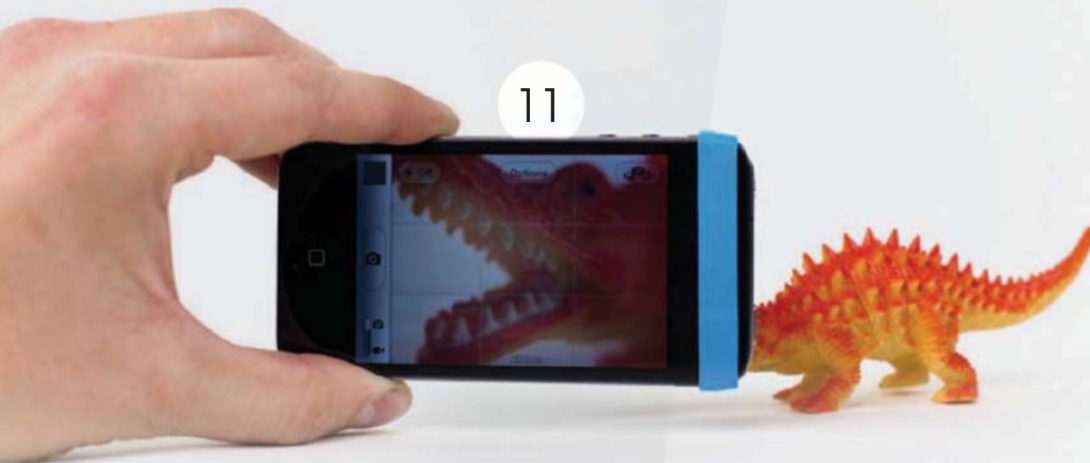
£128

The Netatmo Weather Station is comprised of two modules, one for inside your home and one for outside. The indoor module measures temperature, humidity, air quality, CO2 and noise levels, whilst outdoor module measures temperature, humidity, air quality, barometric pressure and provides weather updates. By monitoring all these readings on your smartphone you can be sure you're living in the healthiest environment possible - and that you never mistakenly leave the house without an umbrella again.

10 /
Holi Smartlamp

£129

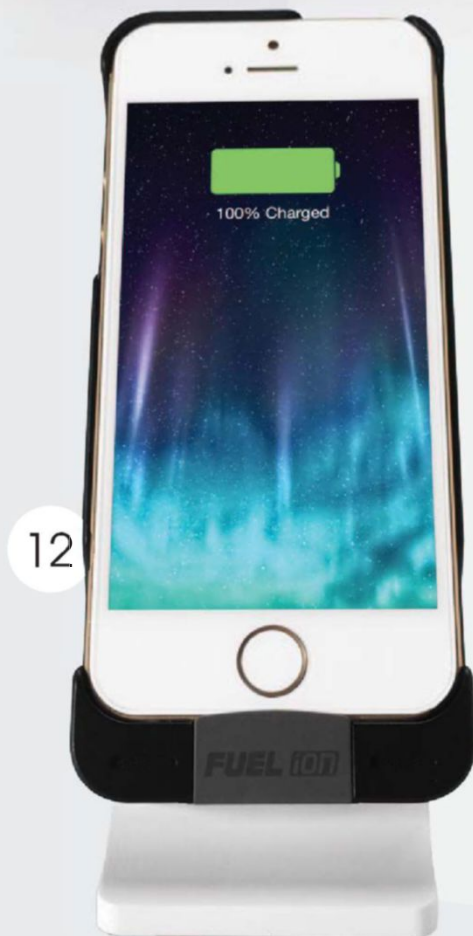
The Holi Smartlamp does what it says on the tin. It's a lamp - but smarter. You can change the LED colours it emits on a whim, as well as the brightness, and can even put it on a timer to gently wake you up in the mornings. It also syncs with your music for the complete ambient setup.



11 / Easy-Macro

£10

Anyone who's tried to take an ultra close-up photo on their smartphone will know that the camera can struggle to focus on objects too close to the lens. Easy-Macro is a simple solution to that problem that provides jaw dropping results. The Easy-Macro's 4x zoom lens straps around any smartphone and easily fits in your wallet for great close-ups whenever you need them.



12 / Fuel iOn Magnetic Charging Kit

£50

The Fuel iOn Magnetic Charging Kit provides two things the iPhone sorely needs - protection and wireless charging. Well, sort of wireless charging. The plain plastic case that you slip over your iPhone enables it to be charged via a magnetic contact pad on its rear. When coupled with the accompanying stand you can take it on and off charge without fiddling around with any cables.



13 / Keyboard buddy case

£66

There are some people out there who still, despite having had years to adjust, prefer a physical BlackBerry-style keyboard to their on-screen smartphone one. Whilst we may ridicule them, having a smartphone is all about choice. Now iPhone and Samsung users craving that old-school physical feel have a solution - the Keyboard Buddy Case.

WHAT MOBILE

REVIEWS

The Nexus 6 is one of the biggest handsets we've ever grappled with, whilst the Kazam Tornado 348 is one of the thinnest. The we round things off with two camera-centric offerings from Nokia and HTC.

"The Nexus 6 is fresh, fast and tremendously powerful"



24 / **Google Nexus 6**

28 / **Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2**

32 / **HTC Desire Eye**

36 / **Kazam Tornado 348**

38 / **Nokia Lumia 830**

How we review

To show you where a device succeeds or fails, we grade each device in five key areas.

Performance

First we fully test the speed and power of each device.

Usability

Next we find out how well the device functions in daily use.

Design

Then we rate the style and quality of the overall design.

Features

What kind of unique features and add-ons does it have?

Final verdict

A rating out of five, balancing cost versus performance.

Editor's choice

Only the very best devices will win our What Mobile Editor's Choice award.



olixar

TURN ON & TUNE IN

Fill your room with light and music with the Olixar Lightbeats
Control the music with your smartphone, tablet or laptop

3W LED | 3W amplifier and speaker | Bluetooth 4.0
Compatible with E27 screw socket and B22 bayonet fitting

**Olixar Lightbeats
Bluetooth Speaker Bulb**



FIND OUT MORE



Lights on, music on



3W LED bulb



Bluetooth Speaker

Available from


MobileFun.co.uk
Everything First

Google Nexus 6

If the huge Nexus 6 proves one thing, it's how other Android phones are filled with bloatware

Price: £499 Reviewer: Philip Brown



Glorious 6-inch display

The Nexus 6 is made by Motorola




Difficult to use with one hand

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2.7 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.96 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
Micro SD compatible? No

Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 2MP
Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 82.98 mm x 159.26 mm x 10.06 mm
Weight 184g
Battery 3,220 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
5 ₅	3 ₅	4 ₅

Motorola's been on a roll in the last year, unleashing hit smartphone after hit smartphone, and now it's tackling another category: the phablet. Half phone, half tablet, the six inch Nexus 6 is big enough to put your iPad out of a job, and still makes calls when you need it.

But this isn't a regular Motorola phone, like some sort of Motorola Moto X Plus. It's one of Google's premier Nexus devices, designed to show off what the Silicon Valley giant's operating system can do above all else. As such, Moto's been left to hardware duties alone while Google provides the software, vanilla Android 5.0 Lollipop without any manufacturer tweaks, or pointless network bloatware. Is it a worthy rival to the Samsung Galaxy Note 4? For the Android purists among you, absolutely.

SUPERSIZE

Okay, so we said this wasn't just a super-sized Moto X, but the Google Nexus 6 does admittedly look like one. Not that that's a bad thing: the sleek, curved second-generation Moto X was one of our favourite phones of 2014.

Though it has the Nexus logo stamped on the back, the Nexus 6 shares much of the same design language, from the pebble-like design to the matte black plastic - which doesn't feel cheap and smeary as so many cheap handsets do. It's sturdy to hold, does not flex, and looks a lot less garish than the terrible faux-leather back of a typical Galaxy Note phone.

The Nexus 6 is of course massive. It looks almost rude shoved in a trouser pocket, and the six-inch display is all but impossible to use completely one handed - you'll need to be an NBA player to reach the pull down notification shade. Even two handed, it's quite a chore to reach everything: unfortunately, there's no hidden stylus slot on the Nexus 6, as on all Galaxy Note phablets - you'll just have to make do.

The benefit of having such a large screen is hard to miss however. The six inch 2K (that's twice as many pixels as in your full HD TV) display is not only stunningly sharp, but so big it may prove the only screen you ever need. There's acres of display real estate to store all your apps and widgets, and videos look absolutely glorious.

If we're nitpicking, the colours on the AMOLED panel are vibrant to the point of over saturation, unlike those on an iPhone or Samsung smartphone. This looks great >>>

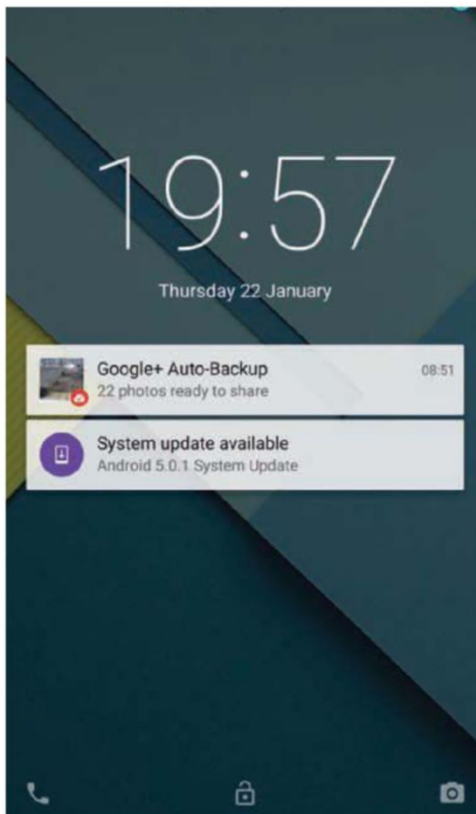
What is a Nexus device?

Google's better known for its search engine and software, but it's in the hardware business too. Ever since the Google Nexus One debuted back in early 2010, it's released a new Nexus device - in partnership with a rotating set of Android manufacturers - each year to tie in with the launch of every major new version of Android.

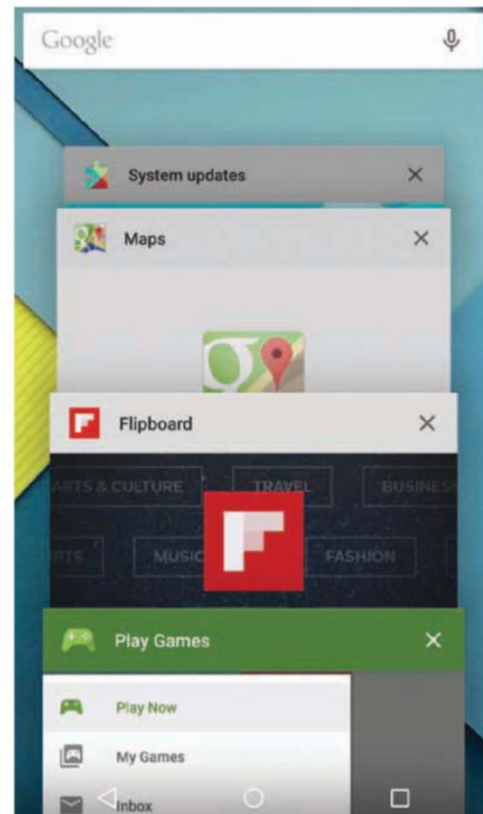
Now, Nexus devices aren't usually known for having truly spectacular screens, design or cameras: instead, they're all about offering the very latest software at a reasonable price. Consider them reference devices, designed to show every other phone maker the way forward. Hardcore fanatics love them as they are easy to root (see p43), and receive the latest Android updates before any other phones. Whatever comes after Lollipop (Android 6.0 Marshmallow?), you can bet the Nexus 6 will be the first phone in line to snag the update.



The first Nexus (above) by HTC



Clear skin - unencumbered by bloatware



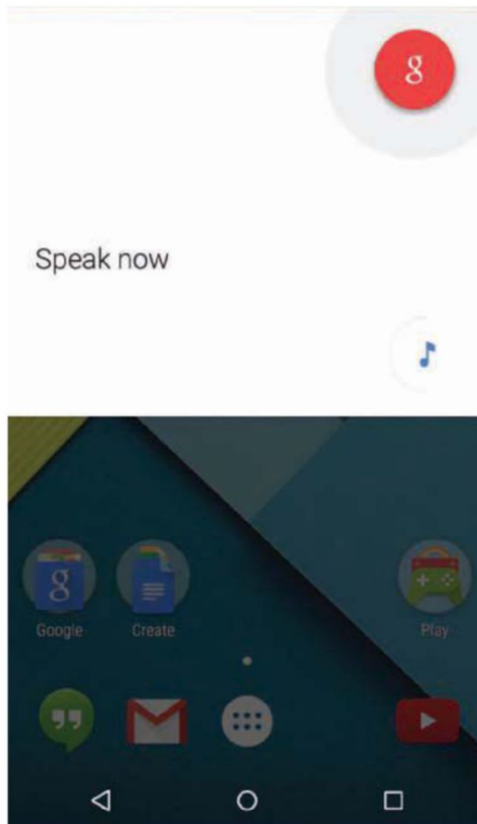
Lollipop - Nexus 6 packs latest Android OS

➤ when you first set eyes on it in a shop, but does mean images tend to look blown out all the time. Still, the sweeping amount of space you have to play with more than makes up for that: you can load full desktop versions of websites and actually read everything, or watch a movie with a friend while on the train. We've found that for casual web browsing a phablet renders a bigger tablet almost completely redundant; rest assured the Nexus 6 will do the same for you.

POWERHOUSE

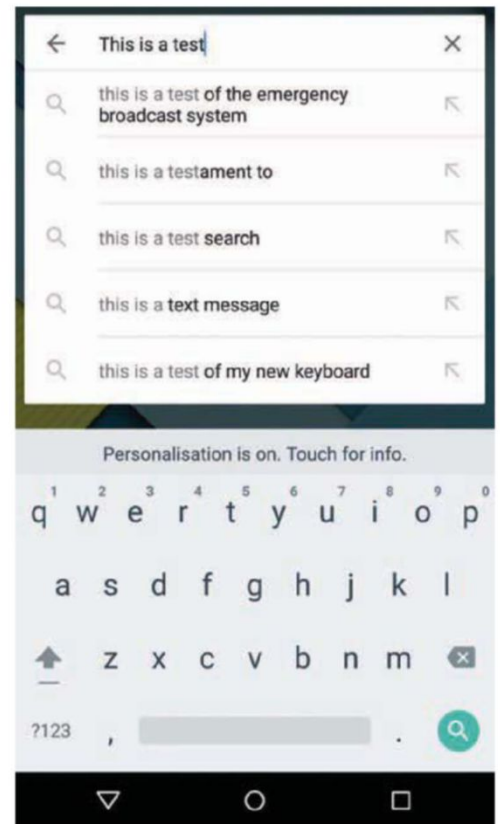
We mention desktops, as the Nexus 6 would certainly work well as one, if you could be bothered to plug it into a monitor and pair up a keyboard. Unusually for a Nexus device, the 6 is one of the most powerful Android phones we've yet tested. Its 2.7 GHz quad-core processor is very fast, narrowly edging the likes of the Note 4 in benchmark tests, while its 3GB of RAM makes mincemeat of multi-tasking, rapidly snapping between apps without a problem. Neatly, there's also Qi wireless charging support, so you'll be able to start taking advantage of all the wireless charging pads starting to pop up in cafes and coffee shops.

Nexus phones have seldom impressed with their cameras, with Google instead typically focusing on the software and the SIM-free price. But the Nexus 6 is better-specced than most, with a price to match, so we were expecting a bit more from the 13 megapixel camera. It just doesn't cut it compared to the iPhone 6 or a new Sony mobile sensor, with pictures coming out slightly washed



The Siri slayer – Google Now is arguably the best mobile voice assistant on the market

out by comparison, even in optimal lighting situations. On the plus side, we have few complaints with the smooth, super sharp 4K video it can grab - it's just unlikely you'll have anything to watch it back on in full resolution yet. As a Nexus device, the 6 runs stock Android,



Lovely Lollipop – Android has never looked better thanks to its latest OS update

and the latest variant, version 5.0 Lollipop, which is the biggest update in years. If history repeats itself, you won't see too many phones like this, since most manufacturers choose to change open source Android to their own ends, which is a shame, as Lollipop is a huge leap forward. Visually, it looks much

Is bigger always better?

You thought the Nexus 6 was oversized? Pfft. That's nothing. Check out these phablets going on tablets that can make calls just like a mobile.

SONY XPERIA Z ULTRA

At 6.4-inches, Sony's massive phablet is not much smaller than an iPad Mini, though to avoid the Trigger Happy TV look in public you can use a separate Bluetooth handset. That's right, a phone for your phone. Since it's nearly two years old however, it can be had for a steal - just £239 unlocked.



ASUS FONEPAD 7

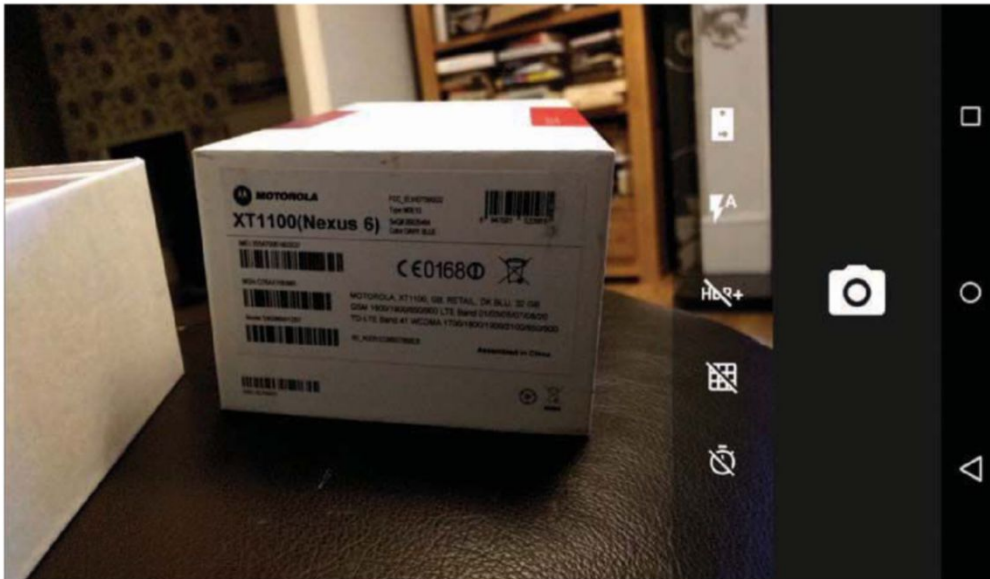
For the price of a new Motorola G - £150 - the Asus FonePad 7 is not a bad way to make calls, so long as nobody has to see you holding the 7-inch slate to your face. It even comes with dual-SIM support so two of you can look like fools together.



SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB 4 10.1

This really will turn heads if you try to answer it out and about. Not only does this Android tablet make calls, it's bigger than an iPad. Of course, with a built in stylus and Wacom technology, it's much better used as a digital easel than a landline.





Minimalist photography – The stripped-back Nexus camera app is simplicity defined

cleaner thanks to its new Material design language: everything has been boiled down to simple colours and icons. Even the Android navigation keys are now simple geometric shapes.

SPEED BUMPS

There are new features too, alongside the noticeable speed improvements. Notifications now appear in full on the lock screen (if you allow them too) as they do on iOS, while Priority mode lets certain people or apps break through your silent mode in case of emergency. There's also a Guest mode, which is particularly handy on a phone the size of a tablet that may be used by other members of your family, so you can hand your phone to someone else to use an app or play a game without fear of them snooping around or deleting anything. Lastly, the new native

Power Saver mode mimics the excellent stamina lengthening modes introduced by Motorola and Sony in recent handsets, and is a welcome way to eke out a few more hours in a pinch.

There's one drawback to running vanilla Android however, at least on a phone as large as the Nexus 6. While Google has made strides in recent years to get Android running viably as both a tablet operating system and a mobile one, there are a few missed tricks here.

For a start, you can't run two apps side by side natively (some apps on the Play store can help you get round this), dragging and resizing them to suit your needs. This is one of our favourite features of Samsung's larger phones, giving you a desktop-like option to have more than one app on screen at once. As a result, the Nexus 6 display sometimes feels like wasted space. You could be watching live

“Google has made strides to get Android running smoothly a tablet and mobile phone, but there are a few tricks missed”

VERDICT

The Google Nexus 6 is a paradox: it's a reminder of what so many manufacturers are doing wrong by modifying Android, tweaking it and overloading it with bloatware before selling it to customers. The Nexus 6 is fresh, fast and tremendously powerful. It's also a reminder that screens this large still need some additions to Android to make them manageable.

- + Android 5.0 is brand new
- + Huge screen
- + Solid battery life
- Large-screen options lacking
- Not practical for answering calls
- No stylus

Stylus selection

While its size certainly merits one, the Google Nexus 6 does not come with a stylus included, as all of Samsung's Galaxy Note models do. That's not to say you can't use one however, you just need to pick the right one. If you can recall those heady, pre-iPhone days, you may remember that almost every touchscreen phone came with a little plastic pointer - these won't work on today's touchscreens. You'll need a special capacitive stylus, but thankfully these can be had for just a few pounds on Amazon these days. Now all you need is somewhere to put it when you're not using it.

TV while Twitter runs in a separate pane, or browsing the web while keeping an eye on Google Maps, but you can't.

WHERE'S THE STYLUS?

There is no stylus (which Samsung always finds space for in its Galaxy Note) and helps make phablets much more manageable for smaller hands. Especially since pulling it out automatically brings up a menu of relevant apps for you to use. You can buy one but since it lacks Wacom's digitizer technology, it won't be as accurate as a Note for doodling anything more sophisticated than a note to remember to buy milk.

The Nexus 6 retains the phablet's other key advantage over smaller phones: battery life. Because it's bigger, there's more space for a bigger battery and the Nexus 6 runs for noticeably longer than its sibling the Moto X.

If you don't watch movies on full brightness, you can get two days' hoovering up email, browsing the web and nattering away on WhatsApp throughout. And isn't that what you really want this for? Nobody uses a device this big just to make phone calls.

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2

Is the Yoga Tablet 2's flexible selling point strong enough to move iPad-obsessed consumers?

Price: £249 Reviewer: Philip Brown



Rotating stand (top) - nice touch

Design makes it feel top heavy

Priced to undercut its rivals

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.86GHz quad-core
Screen 10.1 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB

Rear camera 8MP
Front camera 1.6MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 4G optional
Dimensions 255 x 183 x 7.2 mm
Weight 619g
Battery 9,600 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3[⁄]5

Camera



3[⁄]5

Battery



4[⁄]5

We've seen some tablets with ridiculous names in our time - the Motorola Xoom, the Asus Transformer Pad Infinity, the HTC Flyer. But credit where it's due, the Yoga moniker actually suits Lenovo's unusual series of slates down to the ground, designed as they are to flex into all sorts of unusual positions. Unlike iPads and the rest of their ilk, which just sort of lie there, really.

Though Lenovo's had some success with its Yoga Windows laptops, its previous Android models failed to flex the world on fire. Whether that's because Ashton Kutcher (Yes, *that* Ashton Kutcher) has been the supposed 'product engineer' for the Yoga line or not we'll leave up to you. On test today is the middle sibling of the bunch, the Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2 10.1, priced to undercut similarly sized rivals like the iPad Air - but its unusual design features make it a much more niche product, for better and worse.

DESIGN

Not too much has changed with the Yoga's silvery external design from the first generation. It's a ever so slightly heavier, and for the most part very sturdy metal, despite being extremely thin. Except, of course, for that hinge. It still sports that unusual rotating lever kickstand, which lets you lay it at a slightly raised angle, or near vertical, so you can tap and type with ease, or kick back and watch a movie (This very much is a tablet to stand rather than hold: its lumpy design and sharp edges mean it feels top heavy when grasped between your hands, and it's all but unusable in portrait mode).

These are nice options to have, especially for commuters and frequent flyers, or >>>

The best tablet homescreen launchers

Because Android is so customisable, you can swap out Lenovo's awful skin in a jiffy, and you should do so. We recommend one of these to replace it.

GOOGLE NOW LAUNCHER

This is Android as Google intended it, with its handy Google Now voice search service a swipe to the side away. It won't give your Yoga the new Material Design look of Android 5.0, but it's fast, free and actually well thought out, which is a start. A no frills experience which is a long way from what Lenovo are offering with the skin they ship with the device.



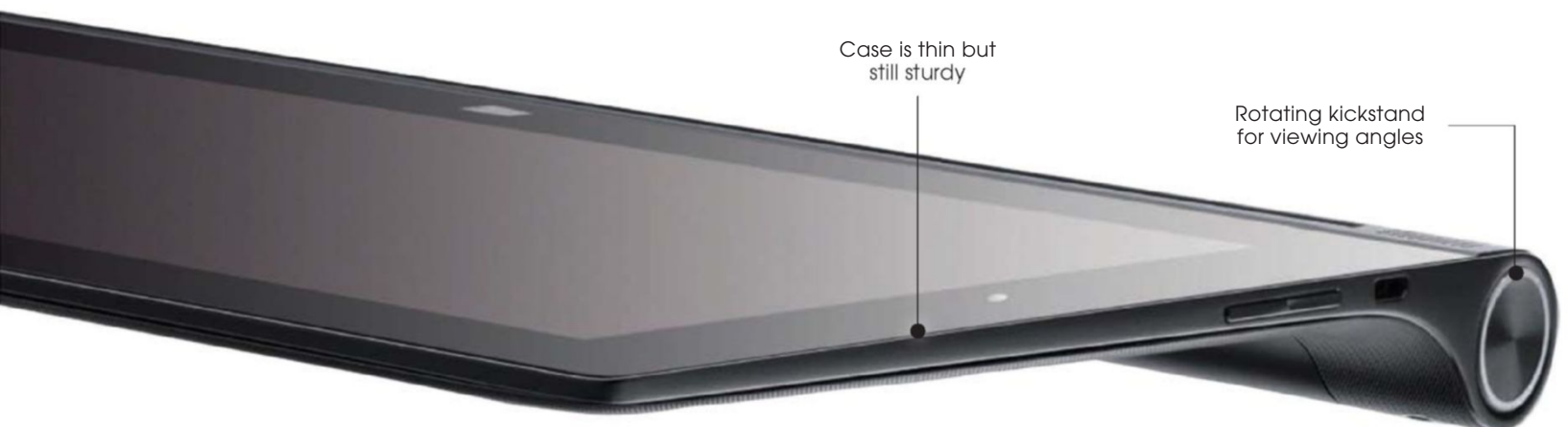
NOVA LAUNCHER

Want that same clean Google look, but a few more options when it comes to resizing widgets, how many icons you can have on screen, and the option to change the theme? This is what you need - best of all, a theme pack gets you that fresh Lollipop look on Android 4.4. Free, but a Pro version offers more features for £2.50.



3D SHELL

Who needs flat, 2D desktops and icons? Next Launcher does away with such staid design ideas, replacing them with swooping 3D animations and Tron-like visuals, all of which run surprisingly smoothly, and look awesome. Such shenanigans come at a price though: Next Launcher rings up £10.99 on the Google Play store.



Case is thin but still sturdy

Rotating kickstand for viewing angles

➤ if you want a second screen propped up easily at your desk at work. But they're not essential - it's not exactly a major chore to hold a lightweight tablet in 2015, and many folio cases can act as a kickstand for decidedly prettier tablet too.

Actually, we're much more taken with the Yoga's ability to hang. A small hole in the frame lets you park it at eye level, which is more useful than it may sound at first glance.

We're pretty sure a small subset of users will love this: you could string it up in the kitchen to cook and follow a recipe along on YouTube, or watch iPlayer in the bath without any fear of electrocuting yourself. You'll want to too, as the front speakers (combined with Dolby software on board) produce excellent sound, which can't always be said for today's modern wafer thin slates.

SCREEN

Sadly, the visuals don't quite match the audio. The 10.1-inch display is spacious, and at 1900x1200 resolution, it certainly is sharp. You can watch 1080p videos on it and enjoy every single pixel. But it isn't very pretty. The IPS LCD is washed out, lacking the colour accuracy of an iPad or the vibrancy of a Samsung slate. It's also quite noticeably recessed below the glass, so it lacks that delicious, sticker-like effect of images on something like the Google Nexus 9.

This isn't a top-price tablet, and the internals also reflect that. Unusually, the Yoga Tablet comes running an Intel quad-

core processor, the Z3745, paired with 2GB of RAM. Intel is still a rare sight in mobile devices, and can't quite keep up yet with the likes of chipmakers like Qualcomm and Nvidia, and it shows somewhat. The performance of the Yoga Tablet 2 in day to day usage was only so so, occasionally lagging and struggling with high end games in a way we've grown unaccustomed to of late. This isn't a gaming tablet, that's for sure - if that's what you want you'd be much better off with an Nvidia Android device, not least because you can now play Portal on them.

BATTERY

That said, the battery life of the Yoga Tablet 2 is rock solid - we got two and half days of heavy use surfing and playing games out of it - as you might expect with all that boot space near the kickstand. And surprisingly, the Yoga's eight megapixel camera built into the hinge actually isn't all that bad, and having the option to alter the angle of it via the hinge is useful if you want to frame a shot.

APP-PACKED OS

The Yoga Tablet 2 runs Android 4.4 KitKat, as opposed to Google's brand new 5.0 Lollipop upgrade and its slick redesign, which is a bit of a shame, but not the real problem with the software - KitKat is still a superb, easy to use and app-packed operating system.

The problem is that Lenovo has deigned to

WHY ASHTON KUTCHER KEEPS TAKING THE TABLETS

The tablets Ashton Kutcher's dreamed up are certainly different. Here are the other slates in the Yoga Tablet 2 line-up.

LENOVO YOGA TABLET 2 8

Like its bigger brothers, this iPad mini-sized Android tablet has a kickstand that lets you perch it at different angles, or hang it off a hook if that's what you're into. The Wi-Fi only model starts at £199, which is only a tad more than a Google Nexus 7 will cost you.

LENOVO YOGA TABLET 2 PRO

We can see how it happened. Ashton is chucking a stress reliever American football to tired designers in a room with no windows. The coffee has been there even longer than they have. 'Guys, come on, think. It's obvious. I'm an important go-getter. You know what every important go getter needs? A giant, 13.3-inch Android tablet. With a built in projector.' And that's what it has. Perfect for presentations, so long as you don't need to actually edit your PowerPoint first.



OR TRY THE 'ANYPEN'

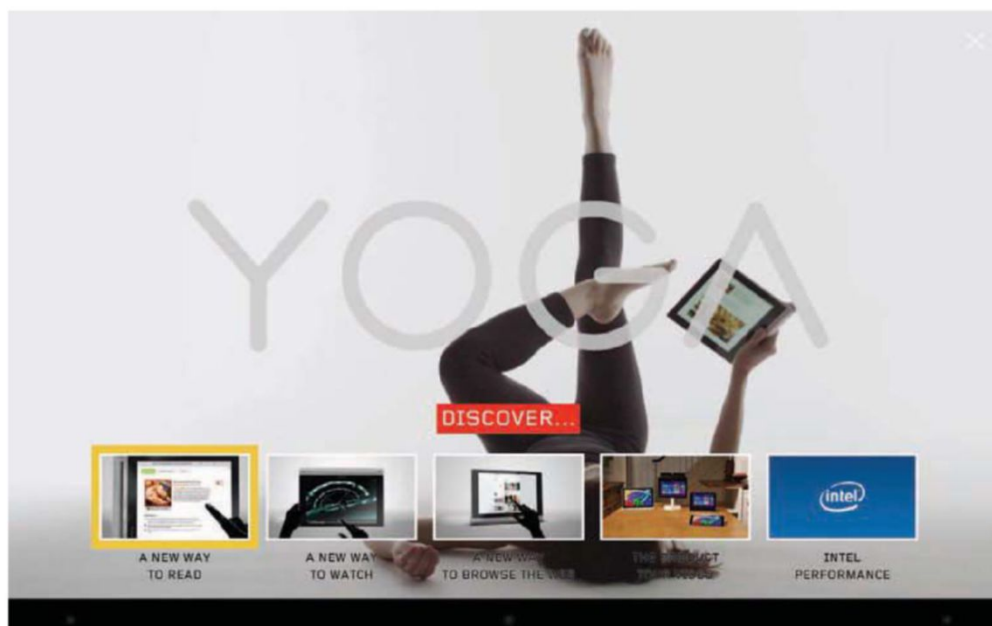
'What's this one?'

'It's a tiny eight inch tablet that runs full Windows 8.1.'

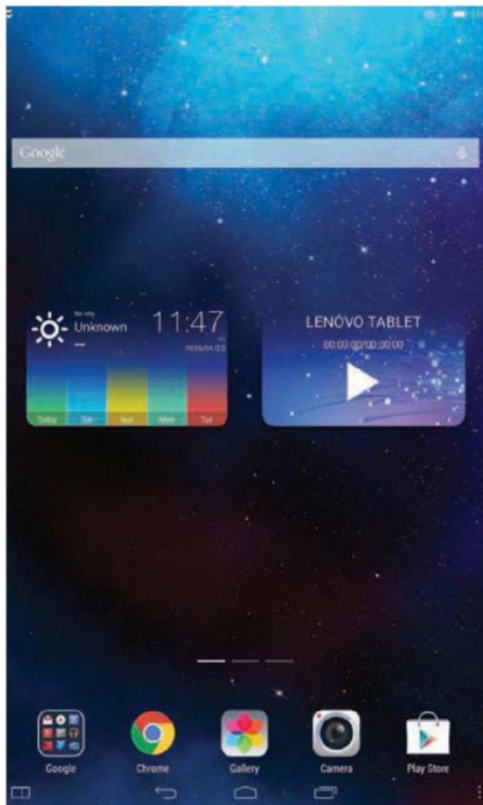
'Dude! It obviously needs a stylus that looks like a biro.'

'Fine. Can we please go home now?'

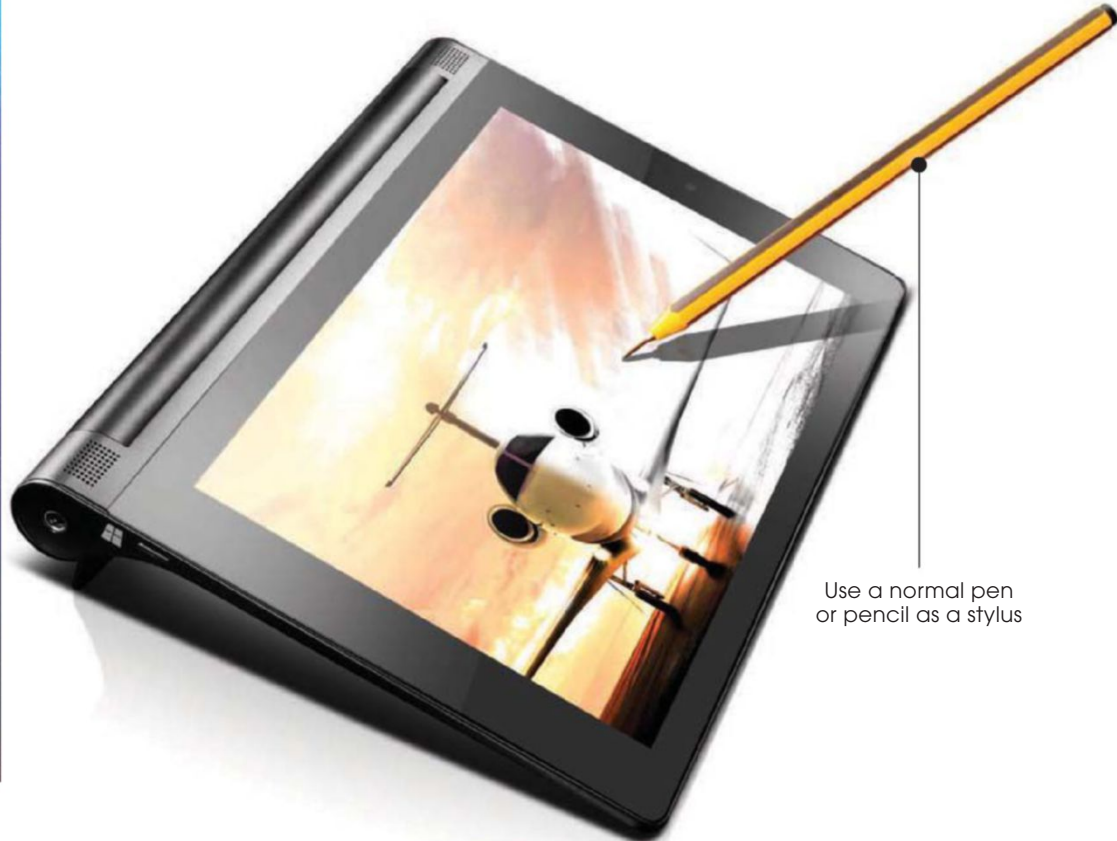
'Not yet. We're still ad-libbing. It needs a name.'



Display - The 1900x1200 screen is sharp, but the colours can appear washed out



Operating system - The Yoga runs Android KitKat rather than the new Lollipop 5.0



Use a normal pen or pencil as a stylus

change Android up a bit, inflicting its own vision on unsuspecting shoppers. Many of these Android skins come across as a tad Fisher-Price - colourful and overly kiddy, and this is no exception. For every feature it adds, it seems to remove one as well. There's no app drawer, for instance, so every single application you download has to go on your homescreen somewhere.

Lenovo's bundled a few garrish apps of its own as well, including a file-transfer app, and one that is a collection of videos of people using the Yoga tablet, which seems like preaching to the converted. It

“Lenovo has deigned to change Android up a bit, inflicting its own version”

does have one redeeming feature: a select group of apps can be run simultaneously on screen, and resized to fit your needs. Still, we'd replace the default homescreen with something else from the Play store - see the sidebar for our top picks.

NO PRICE ADVANTAGE

The Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2 doesn't do anything especially badly, in other words, and at least on paper seems fairly specced. What we can't ignore is the price. It's true that 10.1-inch tablets of any calibre are still a rare sight under £250, but it's certainly not

the case that there are no excellent tablets.

Last year's iPad mini, for instance, now goes for just £220, is more portable, packs a better quality display and is actually comfortable to hold, not to mention offers the better tablet app eco-system on iOS. The Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 10.1 meanwhile comes in at the same price and with a more traditional form factor - plus a stylus for digital doodling.

At £180, the Google Nexus 7 meanwhile is even cheaper - and already updated to the latest Android 5.0 firmware. All of these are options, in other words, and they're ones you should consider if you don't absolutely need the kickstand on the Yoga Tablet 2. Nice idea, Ashton, but like Two And A Half Men, it's one we don't quite get.

VERDICT

Lenovo certainly deserves credit for trying to create something that isn't just another black slab. The Yoga is an interesting attempt to do something different, but unless you have a real need to hang it up from the ceiling or to perch it upright on a train table every day its mediocre internals and display don't represent much value for money.

- + Handy kickstand
- + Great for kitchens
- + Impressive front speakers
- Ugly homescreen launcher
- Unusual design not for everyone
- Mediocre screen and performance

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

HTC Desire Eye

With its 13 megapixel front camera, HTC's Desire Eye is a selfie-obsessive's dream machine

Price: £365 Reviewer: Philip Brown



SPEC SHEET

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 2.3 GHz Krait 400
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes

Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 13MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5 mm
Weight 154g
Battery 2,400 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4⁷/₅

Camera



4⁷/₅

Battery



4⁷/₅

HTC's never been quite clear about what the Desire line is meant to be. A few years ago, the Desire was its top of the line Android smartphone range. Then as the One series was rolled out it was relegated to the mid-range: Android smartphones without the specs or the screen size of HTC's very best efforts. This lead to more than a bit of confusion, especially when HTC began launching its One Mini series of phones. **What is a HTC Desire?**

The HTC Desire Eye doesn't answer that question very well, but it does at least do things differently. Acting not particularly quickly to cash in on a trend, HTC's new mid-range phone has been built with selfie fanatics in mind. Unusually, its front-facing camera is just as large and powerful (13 megapixels) as the one on the back, meaning those shots of you with your friends will come out just as clear and sharp as your #nofilter landscape snaps.

CONCEPT

It might sounds as frivolous as posting shots or yourself in a nightclub booth to Facebook, but we're surprised at how useful it actually turns out to be - though we can't help but feel that by introducing the concept in a Desire handset, HTC is not going to give it the chance to shine that it deserves.

For this is a modern HTC Desire handset through and through. HTC's top of the range One and One M8 smartphones are absolutely beautiful, machined metal handsets with the elegance and precision of Apple's aluminium MacBook Pro laptops. The Desire Eye? Eh, not so much.

While it still retains the narrow, tall body and curves of its bigger brothers, it switches out the metal for plain old plastic, HTC presumably hoping that the vibrant colour schemes (white and bright red or electric blue) will distract you from the cheap feel of the phone. They do not.

Not that there's anything wrong with its construction - it's still handsome, there's no telltale creak - and it's always nice to be able to pop in a micro SD card, and the whole thing is water resistant, even the headphone jack. Nor its visuals and audio: the 5.2-inch display is almost identical to that found on the One M8, with a crisp full HD resolution that means you'll never see the rough edge of a pixel again, while the booming front stereo speakers remains the best on the market.

But that 'wow' factor is gone, and it is too big: the One M8's large bezels remain >>



Whatever the weather - The Desire Eye's sensor works great outdoors



Macro-media - Macro shots look great with the handset's autofocus



Highlights/Lowlights - BSI sensors ensure the camera performs admirably in low-light settings

REAL cameraphones

Don't take selfies but do want the best camera phone, no expense spared? Try one of these.

iPhone 6

With the possible exception of the beastly, 41 megapixel Nokia Lumia 1020, no phone comes close to Apple's latest when it comes to camera quality. It's not just the quality of the eight megapixel sensor: it's the tight integration with the software. It's blindingly, shockingly fast to focus, snap and process, easy to use, and comes with some awesome modes.

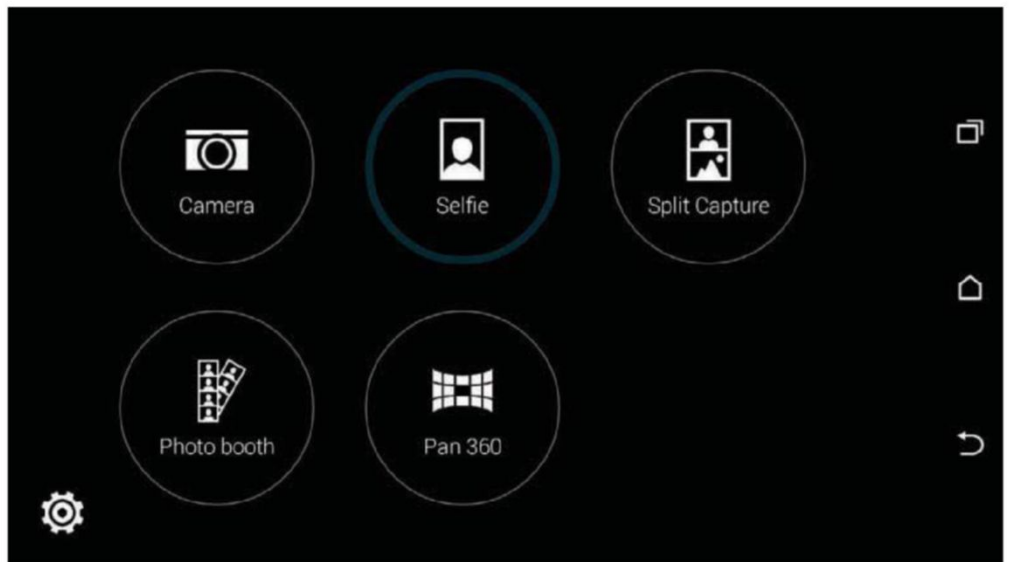


SONY XPERIA

On the Android side of things, you can't do better than the whopping 20.7MP sensor on Sony's most recent flagship. Its Exmor RS sensor draws from the company's camera division, and it shows in the results, with excellent low light performance and an unusual (and effective) high level ISO mode.



Impressive camera software – Toggling between sensors is easy



Selfie adjustment – The Desire Eye has a dedicated selfie mode, naturally

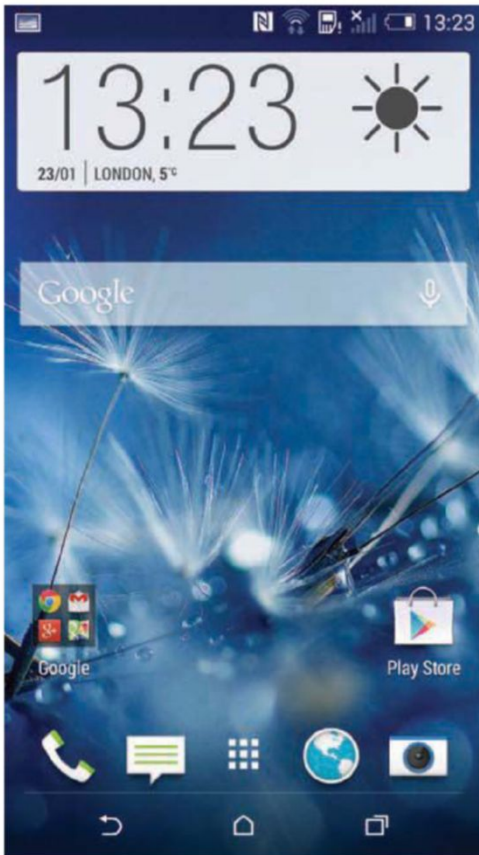
>> (in part no due to the massive selfie camera sensor), meaning that the Desire Eye is actually the length of a phablet with a substantially larger screen. It grabs fingerprints like a forensic scientist, and offers no software options for one-handed use like the iPhone 6 Plus does. It's bulky, and we're not sure why HTC felt the need to cloak this phone in particular in waterproof clothing. Are selfie takers always dropping their phones in their drinks?

POWERFUL

For a mid-range phone, the HTC Desire Eye is admittedly impressively powerful. We're used to seeing yesteryear's internals chucked into handsets like this but the Qualcomm

Snapdragon 801 chip inside absolutely flies. You'll have no problems with games, and there's more RAM in the mix than we'd typically expect, for seamless multi-tasking. One disappointing aspect is the meagre 2,400mAh battery, which will just about see you through a day, but not any more.

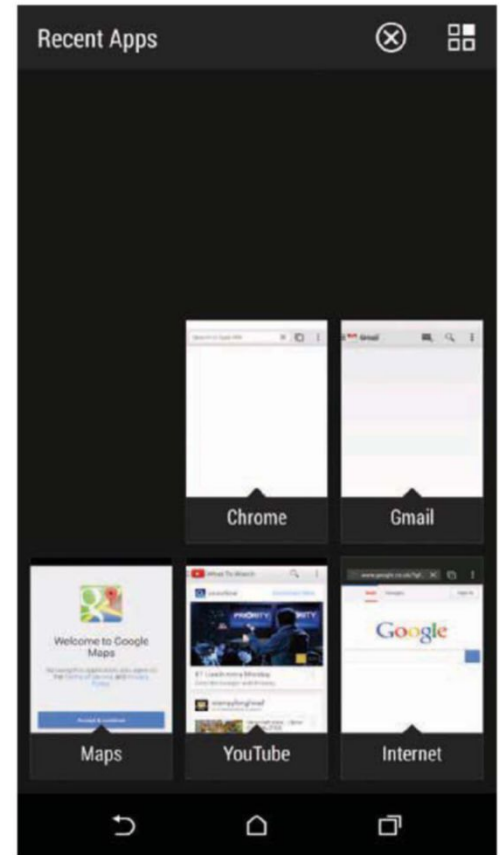
HTC remains one of the most aggressive tinkerers with Google's open-source operating system meanwhile, for better and worse: its Sense 6 home screen launcher looks completely different, but isn't exactly any more tricky to use. Its default keyboard, on the other hand, is awful, and if you prefer to get your news from specific sites or RSS readers, you're probably going to hate its BlinkFeed homescreen widget, which pulls in blog posts



KitKat 4.4 – HTC’s software is easy enough to remove, unlike some other devices



In a blink – HTC’s Blinkfeed is still a welcome presence on the device’s homescreen



Back up – HTC has left a softkey dedicated to recent apps, which is handy

it thinks you’ll like along with the latest from your social feeds.

Android being Android of course, you can replace and remove all of these blights if you don’t like them - it’s a truly customisable OS. Android being Android, it’s also fragmented, and the Desire Eye runs Android 4.4 KitKat rather than the newer, slicker 5.0 Lollipop update - an upgrade is on the cards however.

ANGLES

Which brings us to the cameras, two almost identical snappers (the front has a slightly wider angle f2.2 22mm lens). This is a better solution than the twisting individual camera on the Oppo N1 which can rotate to the front,

since it’s less messy, and lets you toggle between views as you please. There’s no faff, and they’re both pretty good - as you’d expect from a mid-range mobile. It’s amazing how much dual-tone LED flash and accurate face detection can improve your selfies taken of an evening, while the rear camera’s stills come out crisp and respectably noise free, even during bleary British winter.

Really though, it’s HTC’s camera software that impresses most. Toggling between sensors is easy (you can even shoot with both at once in a splitscreen view), and every shooting and editing option, from HDR to slow-mo video, red eye remover and a whole host of Instagram-esque filters, is available

to both. You can even launch the camera just by picking up your phone in standby and pressing the volume button, a real time saver for impulsive photographers.

MID RANGE

All that said, the Desire Eye is still a mid-range phone, and slightly overpriced: the HTC One M8 is approaching a year old now, but in many ways still better specced (faster, better looking, sports an Infrared sensor), and can be had for the same price off contract. So while we love the concept, in practice, we can’t help but wonder what might have been if an HTC One - or the HTC-made Nexus 9 tablet - offered this tech instead.

VERDICT

Having a camera as powerful on the front as the back is a boon not just for the vain, but for all Instagram types and those who like to experiment with photography. We’d love to see this feature appear on more top end smartphones and tablets, however the Desire Eye’s build quality and price make it a tougher sell otherwise.

- + Excellent front camera
- + Great display
- + Water resistant
- Expensive
- No Android 5.0
- Feels cheap compared to One M8

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Kazam Tornado 348

Making a phone thinner than a CD case requires a few compromises

Price: £247 Reviewer: Ian White

Kazam is a relatively new handset company set up two years ago by two HTC executives. They took the view that there was a gap in the market for a middle-price range of smartphones that could offer extra features and services that the big manufacturers were not covering.

Which means that, if you buy a Kazam handset you get a couple of interesting service and support benefits.

One of these is 'Rescue Operation', a diagnostics app that lets a Kazam engineer access your phone remotely and fix any software bugs or glitches while it is still in your pocket. Another of these benefits is a free screen replacement service.

There are terms and conditions, but if your Kazam screen cracks or breaks during normal use Kazam will replace it free. Naturally you'll have to send it off to their service centre for a week.

SKINNY DIPPER

Which brings us to the Kazam Tornado 348. This is a 3G-only Android smartphone whose main claim to fame is that it is only 5.1mm thick. We're not sure why thinness seems to be the Holy Grail of so many smartphone designers. To those who



remember the fat brick phones of the 1990's the Tornado is a miracle of micro-engineering. We're more relaxed with a thicker phone that can pack a bigger battery and a strong chassis.

Kazam says the Tornado 348 definitely IS the world's thinnest phone. But a thinner one is probably being produced in China by someone else as we write this – so we'll go with POSSIBLY the world's thinnest phone.

Which is great news if you like a mobile phone that is thinner than a CD case.

The Tornado certainly impresses with its thinness. But thinness for its own sake is not necessarily a virtue. For starters the Tornado feels quite fragile even though it has a front and back or touch Corning Gorilla 3 glass that should be impervious to routine use.

The second compromise is the thinner the handset the thinner the battery. When a modern smartphone such as the Tornado sports an energy-sucking 4.8-inch AMOLED display the value of being skinny is cancelled out by the shorter battery life from a thinner battery.

LOSS OF MEMORY

But there is another reason why, in the Tornado's case (pun intended) a wafer-thin chassis is not good news. The case is too thin to support having a micro-SD memory card slot. Which is a problem on a handset that only has 16GB of internal storage.

Once upon a time 16GB was deemed more than anyone in the world could possibly use. But that was in the days before phones doubled up as MP3 players and movie players. These days anything under 32GB is regarded as impractical.

Of course 16GB is more than enough if all you want to do is save pictures and save all your content to the Cloud (eg Google Drive). But start saving a few 720HD videos, a hundred or so CDs worth of music and loading up a film or two and that 16GB will soon seem sparse. In fairness to Kazam it could be argued that anyone buying a £250 3G handset is not going to use it as their main computing device.

If you've got a tablet as your media hub, then the Tornado's meagre 16GB will probably not worry you. And in double fairness to Kazam they have kept the Tornado free of bloatware. Apart from the memory required by the Android Kit-Kat operating system, the rest of the storage is all yours.

DESIGN




Kazam has done an excellent job with the design of the Tornado. Front and back are perfectly flush. The sides of the screen extend almost to the edges of the 1.8mm bezel and the thin brushed aluminium band around the case looks classy with a premium feel. As stated the case is covered by Corning 3 Gorilla Glass which offers thinness, lightness, with high resistance to

SPEC SHEET

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 1.7Ghz Octa-core
Screen 4.8 inches
Resolution 1280x720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? No

Rear camera 8MP
Front camera 5MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm
Weight 95.5g
Battery 2,050 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
4 ₅	3 ₅	2 ₅



Not-so-sharp shooter – Tornado 8MP camera sensor can't match the iPhone 6 Plus - not surprising as there is a £400 price difference



Skinny dipping:– The Tornado trumps the iPhone for thinness



Skinned alive – Tornado comes with stock Android KitKat 4.4 devoid of bloatware

scratch and shock damage in normal use. If you like to carry and hold mobile phones that weigh next to nothing the Tornado will delight.

KIT-KAT

The Tornado comes with stock Android KitKat 4.4 mercifully free of any manufacturer customisation. So you'll be able to customise it as Google intended. More expensive smartphones are now shipping with the latest "lollipop" version of Android. But KitKat is perfectly serviceable for a mid-range 3G device such as the Tornado.

PROCESSOR

This Tornado gets its horsepower from an ARM Mali OctaCore chip processor. So this is the chip that was powering last year's top £500-plus smartphones. ARM chips are also used in iPhones. The OctaCore chip makes the Tornado very quick and responsive.

SCREEN

Just a few years ago it would have been inconceivable that a screen of this quality could fit into a device the thickness of a few sheets of

paper. But such is the pace of screen technology that Kazam has equipped the Tornado with a vibrant AMOLED screen that pops with colour. Contrast levels don't degrade with side viewing angles. The downside is that these screens are gluttons for power. So brightness has to be turned down most of the time to conserve battery power. This is not a problem indoors. Outdoors you'll want to keep the brightness ramped up. Which brings us back to our bugbear – why have a thin phone and ace screen at the expense of not being able to fit an unremovable battery fat enough to keep it going at full brightness for 16 hours

CAMERA

The 8MP rear camera is fine for social networking duties while the front 5MP snapper does great work for selfie addicts. Just don't expect DSLR quality. Outdoor pictures resulted in a washed out sky and foreground. The camera can't hold a candle to an iPhone 6 Plus but at least the controls are simple. Move the touch autofocus and auto-exposure viewfinder frames to the scene you want to capture and snap away, There are no picture editing features but Google Play has plenty of photo-editing apps.

VERDICT

Standout design and performance at an attractive price. Lack of 4G connectivity and storage makes the Tornado 348 a non-starter for power smartphone users, though. But casual users and fashionistas content with social networking who are unconcerned with consuming gigabytes of data will find this a good deal for their £247.

- + No bloatware
- + Remote diagnostics and free screen replacement
- + Vibrant AMOLED screen
- No 4G connectivity
- Battery life constrained by thin battery
- Only 16GB of storage

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Nokia Lumia 830

Nice build quality, but a shame about the reduced spec on Nokia's last ever phone

Price: £267 Reviewer: Philip Brown



Excellent power-saving mode

HD screen inferior to cheaper rivals

Similar to Motor G which is £100 less

There's a dirty secret in the mobile business: mid-range smartphones. They're not quite a sham, but they're almost always underpowered and overpriced, especially compared to the top end phones of the last year, which are usually greatly reduced in price as

networks and retailers rush to get rid of their inventory. Meanwhile, truly low end smartphones continue to chip away from underneath with better and better specs and plummeting price tags.

Which is why the Nokia Lumia 830, the last smartphone to bear the Finnish company's

name after Microsoft's acquisition of its hardware business, is such a disappointment. If you were hoping for an elegant encore, a reminder of why people loved and love Nokia for all these years, it's not this. This is just another mid-range phone.

Granted, Nokia's legendary build quality

SPEC SHEET

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Rear camera 10MP
Front camera 0.9MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5 mm
Weight 150g
Battery 2,200 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3[⁄]5

Camera



3[⁄]5

Battery



4[⁄]5

The best smartphones of yesteryear on a budget

There's almost no point in buying a new mid-range phone. Last year's models are often just as cheap, with better screens and better performance. Here's a few flagship models we'd pick over the Lumia 830.

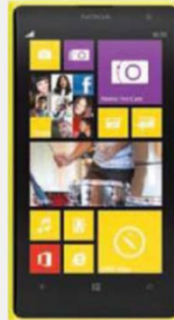
GALAXY S4 **£289 UNLOCKED**

2013's best phone is still powerful by today's standards, with a 1080p display and 4G - it's even getting an Android 5.0 update sometime soon.



LUMIA 1020 **£270 UNLOCKED**

The best camera phone ever made, bar none. The 41 megapixel monster has also been updated to Windows Phone 8.1 already, putting it on a par with the Lumia 830.



LG G2 **£229 UNLOCKED**

18 months on, the G2 still dazzles: its full HD screen takes up almost all of the front face. Better still, it's reportedly scheduled to get a Lollipop upgrade too.



shines through in the Lumia 830. This has the metal band and colour back of the flagship Lumia Icon phones (which you can pop off to insert an SD card). It's durable, striking, and anything but a dull black slab, though the rear speaker quality leaves something to be desired compared to newer phones with front facing stereos.

SCREEN

The screen however is where the problems begin. While the 5-inch 720p HD display is large enough to watch long videos on or even read books on via the Kindle app (though you can make out the pixels), it's also strikingly similar to the panel on the second generation Motorola Moto G Android phone, which costs more than £100 less.

Aside from the efficient 10 megapixel camera and 4G connectivity, it offers little in way of performance benefits over it either. In fact, with its meagre 1GB of RAM on board, the Lumia 830 runs 3D games from the Windows Phone store terribly - you'll just have to stick to Candy Crush. Battery life isn't bad - we found you can get a day and a half of use from it if you're careful. But that still means charging every night, and Motorola's excellent power saving mode puts the G in the same territory.

“Unless you are truly tied into Microsoft Office and Outlook we'd pick Android and iOS over Windows Phone any day”

Of course, the comparison with Motorola's phenomenal budget offering isn't entirely fair: it run an entirely different OS, Android, which has many more apps and customisation options, but has something of a Wild West reputation, unlike headache free and sanitised Windows Phone. Which brings us to the software on the 830, Windows Phone 8.1, a deceptively big update to Microsoft's mobile OS.

CORTANA

Apps have been rejigged, you can add your own photo to the tile Start screen, you can even swipe to type with the touchscreen keyboard, a useful option for one handed use. Then there's voice assistant Cortana, named after the Halo video game character. Cortana is good fun, and certainly seems to be every bit as capable as Siri on iOS, letting you ask questions casually or dictate messages, and coping comfortably with a London accent at least.

That said, much of what's new in 8.1 feels like Microsoft playing catch up - even Cortana. Windows Phone is still a platform neglected by software developers and services. Case in point: Dropbox, which has just launched an app for the platform, five whole years after its Android version was released. Five.

FAREWELL

Pleasant as the Windows Phone UI is to use, this sort of problem will remain for some time to come. Unless you're truly tied into Microsoft Office and Outlook, we'd pick Android and iOS over Windows Phone any day (even though there are no budget iPhones)/.

All in all, this isn't a fond farewell to the Nokia name. More an awkward handshake before bumping into it again on the stairs on the way out.

Goodbye old friend. We'd prefer to remember you for Snake and unbreakable mobiles than your smartphones: we hope you understand.

VERDICT

The Nokia Lumia 830 isn't quite the swan song we were hoping for. It's not hugely affordable, and nor does the phone's hardware make full use of that 4G connectivity. Mid-range mobiles seldom convince us of their reason to exist, and this final Nokia phone is no exception. Do yourself a solid and pick up a Motorola Moto G, or one of last year's flagship Android phones instead.

- + 4G
- + Pleasant design
- + Cortana impresses
- Overpriced compared to Moto G
- Windows Phone still lacks apps
- Performance is mediocre

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE



USABILITY



DESIGN



FEATURES





HOW TO ROOT YOUR ANDROID

An advantage of Android compared with Apple's iOS is that it can be customised to your own requirements. **Callum Tennent** reveals how to make your device obey your every whim.

A huge factor in the recent explosion in the popularity of Android devices is how open the platform is. Many tech fans feel Apple's iOS, whilst polished, is far too restrictive in terms of what the user is allowed to do. Android, on the other hand, is almost completely customisable. We say 'almost' because despite its comparatively open nature some things are still off-limits to all but developers.

That's where what's known as 'rooting' comes in. Rooting allows you 'root access' to your Android device, which permits you to muck around with just about everything that would normally be inaccessible. Everything from changing the colour of your battery indicator to the vibration pattern of your SMS alert to the animation that plays on startup is fully at your discretion.

GET RID OF THAT BLOATWARE

Rooting also allows you to 'sideload' apps. Sideload is the act of running or installing an app which hasn't been downloaded from an official source (like the Google Play Store). This means you can try all sorts of experimental, home-made apps for even greater variety and control. It also lets you remove otherwise-uninstallable bloatware packed onto your phone by the manufacturer.

If this sounds complicated then you needn't worry - there's two

reasons why it couldn't be easier: firstly a whole community of unbelievably technically gifted people have done all the tricky stuff already, and secondly - we're going to show you how to do it, step by step, right now.

Before we begin though, it should be noted that whilst the vast majority of popular Android devices are easily rootable, there are a handful for which this won't work. Sorry about that.

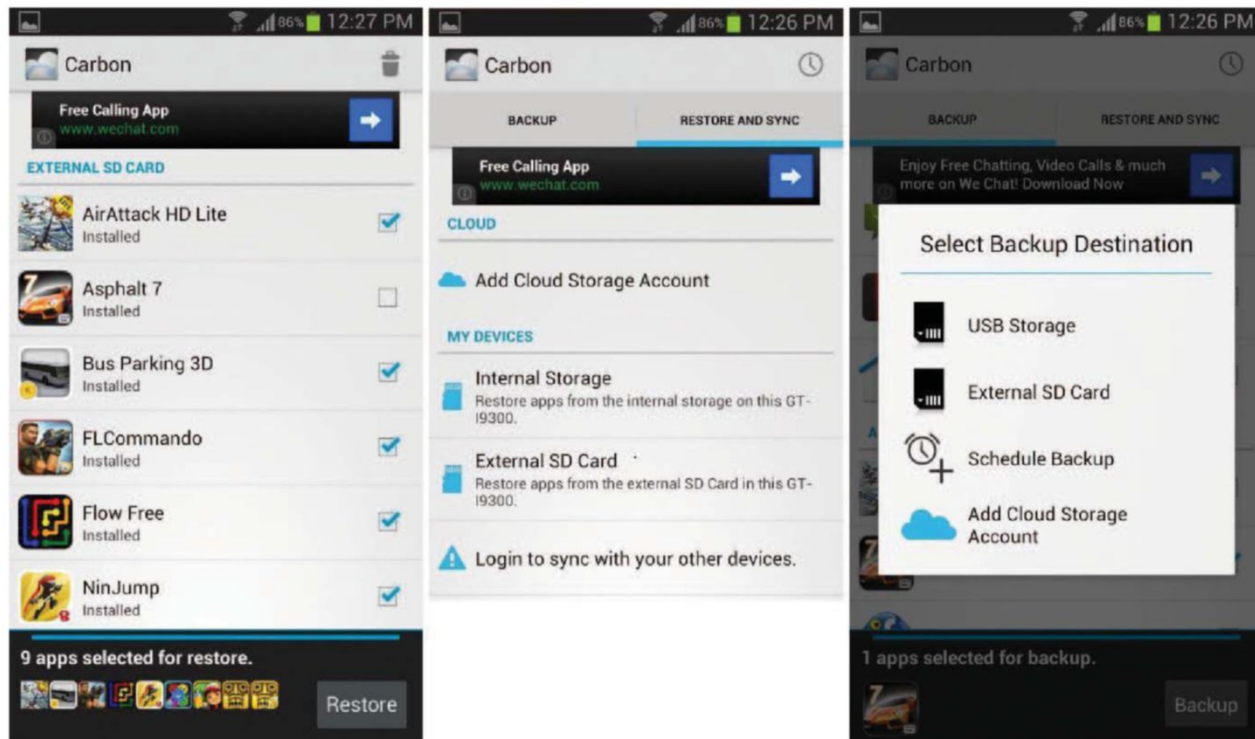


The world is your oyster with a rooted device

1 BACK UP YOUR PHONE AND ENSURE IT IS FULLY CHARGED

This is boring, but important. If something goes wrong along the way you're going to want to be able to restore your phone to how it was the last time it worked. There are numerous programs you can use to back up, like Helium and MyBackup.

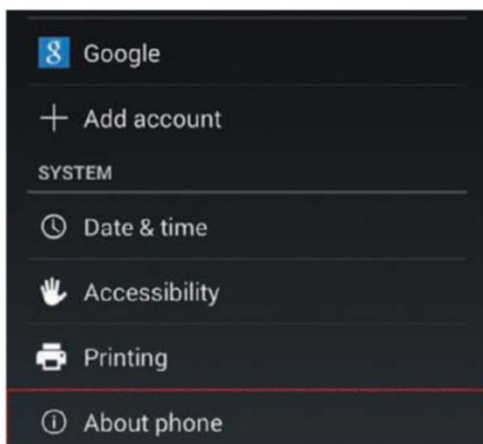
You'll also want to make sure your phone is fully charged, because if it runs out of battery half way through you it could scupper the whole process.



2 TURN ON USB DEBUGGING AND DEVELOPER OPTIONS

This is important as it allows your computer to unrestrictedly communicate with your device when you connect the two. Go to Settings > About Phone > Developer Options and then check the box labelled 'USB debugging'.

If your phone does not show 'Developer Options' by default don't worry, the solution is simple enough. Head to Settings and tap the option which says something like 'About Phone' or 'About Device' (it varies by manufacturer). Now, when you see the option that says 'Build Number' tap it seven times. Don't worry if nothing happens at first - on the seventh tap 'Developer Options' will reveal itself to you.



3 UNLOCK YOUR BOOTLOADER

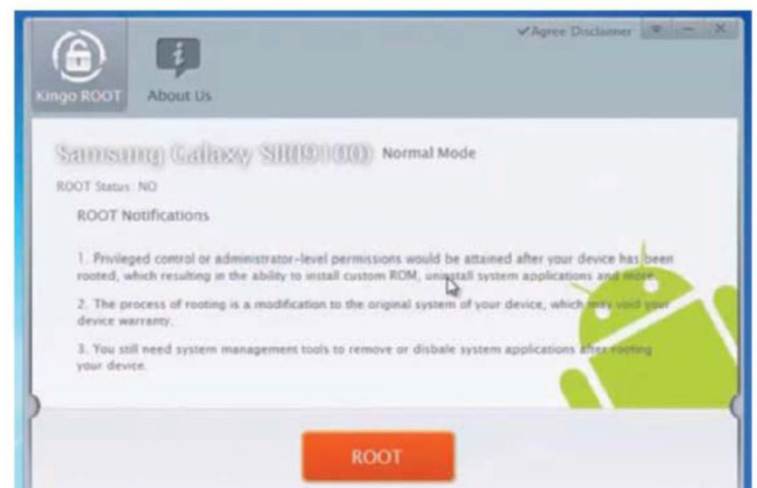
In layman's terms a bootloader is the program within your smartphone which tells the device how it should start running the Android operating system. Therefore if you can unlock that bootloader you can choose just what permissions you have once Android is up and running. This is what rooting does. Ordinarily it's locked to stop people who don't know any better fiddling with something they shouldn't and breaking their phone - which is what this guide is hopefully going to stop you from doing.

HTC, Motorola and Google all have the necessary bootloaders available from their official websites which is very considerate of them, whereas with other manufacturers you may have to do a bit of Googling. Dedicated Android rooting forum xda-developers.com is an excellent

resource to start with.

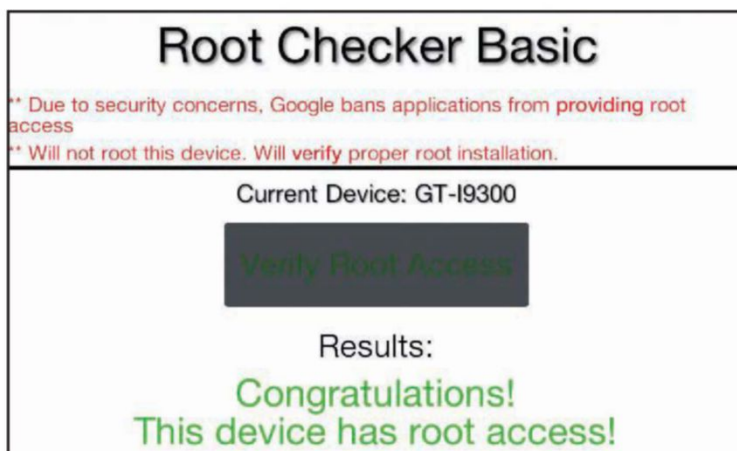
You will then be walked through, step-by-step, what exactly you need to do. It varies from device to device but usually involves rebooting your phone in a special manner, connecting it to your computer via USB and installing a few files. It's nothing too scary, honest.

Alternatively, you can use a third-party program designed to work with a huge variety of Android devices. Kingo Root is a particularly popular one, and will do all the hard work for you. Just plug your phone in to your computer, download and run the program, and with one touch your phone is rooted.

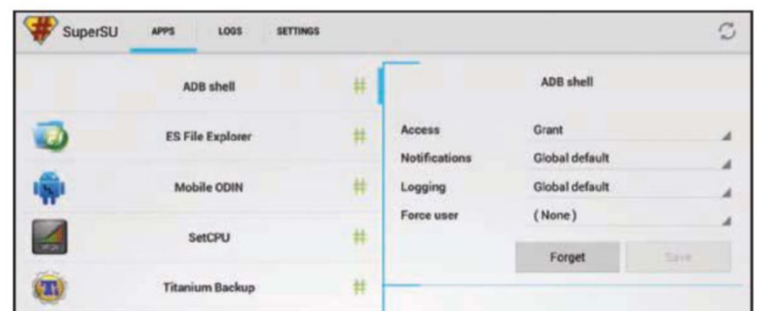


4 CHECK THAT YOUR ROOTING WAS SUCCESSFUL

We have faith in you and your technical prowess, but it still couldn't hurt to check that you've done all this correctly. You know, just in case. There are plenty of apps you can download to verify whether or not your phone is correctly rooted - we like Root Checker, free on the Google Play Store. Download and run it and it will tell you if you now have complete permissions.



5 PROTECT YOURSELF WITH A ROOT MANAGER



Now that your phone is super accessible to you it's also super accessible to everything else. It will still operate like normal, asking for permissions where you'd normally see them, but with you now visiting and using third-party sites and apps you'll want something to keep you extra safe. Apps like SuperSU (also available free on the Google Play Store) will act as an extra buffer against things trying to get into your phone at a root level. It lets you know where, when, how and what apps try to access your device, and allows you to address it manually. Don't worry, it's not as scary as it sounds, but you'd be foolish not to protect yourself as best you can.

10 APPS TO DOWNLOAD TO YOUR LIBERATED ANDROID

Now that your device is properly rooted you're ready to explore some new possibilities. Here are ten apps that we think most aspiring Android power users will be itching to try out, but of course there are hundreds more for you to find and explore on your own. There's no special browsing or downloading needed - you'll be able to find all of these on the Google Play Store.

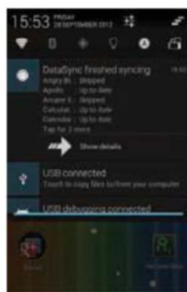
Screen Standby

Chances are your device has a screen timeout set on it by default, meaning that if you leave it untouched for a predetermined amount of time it will kill the display and lock itself. This can result in a lost connection - particularly annoying if you're streaming or downloading. This app allows your device to still power down the screen after a period of inactivity, but without terminating any of those valuable connections.



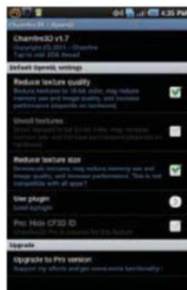
DataSync

It's not uncommon to own multiple Android devices - users with a personal phone, work phone, various tablets and the like make up 40% of the UK tech market. DataSync makes it a doddle to synchronise all your data between your devices. It also offers you the choice of doing it via Dropbox, Wi-Fi or FTP.



Chainfire 3D

Some older devices have the technical ability to run new games, but cannot do so because they never received an Android update beyond 2.2 Froyo or 2.3 Gingerbread and therefore are stuck on ancient operating systems. Chainfire 3D corrects that by providing a middle-man between the game and the device and allowing you to play a range of exciting new games on your old device.



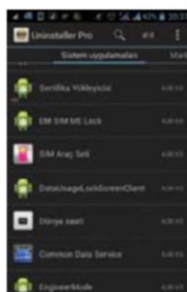
LBE Privacy Guard

It's a firewall for your smartphone, in essence. LBE Privacy Guard scans all apps on your phone (even standard apps that don't require rooting) and lists all the permissions that they require. From there you can choose exactly how much data they can access and create your own specific lists.



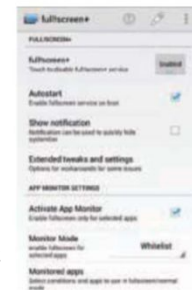
Root Uninstaller

Here's one sure to be popular with non-Nexus users. Root Uninstaller allows you to uninstall any app from your phone. That means all that previously untouchable OEM bloatware can be manually removed - no more terrible web browsers or unsightly SMS messengers! Just make sure that you don't remove any apps that are critical to the operation of your device.



Full!Screen

One of the much-needed changes that came along with Android 4.4 KitKat was that some apps and games were now able to run in true full-screen on devices with a virtual navigation bar. Unfortunately, not all apps do that - unless you've installed Full!Screen, that is. You can now force apps to run in true full screen, with the option to take them out of it with a simple command.



Market Helper

In some instances an app or game will only be able on phone or tablet, not both. Market Helper allows you to bypass this restriction and install any app to whichever platform you're using. Of course an app optimised for tablets may not look as nice on your phone, but that's probably why it wasn't available to you in the first place.



GMD GestureControl Lite

Handsets like the LG G3 and HTC One M8 have shown just how useful gesture commands can be. This app brings that functionality to any rooted handset - and a whole lot more. You can choose from a huge number of gestures and assign them to just about any function you can imagine or even create your own.



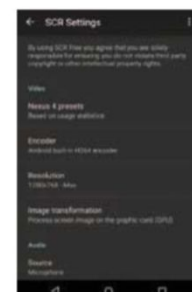
Font Installer

Font Installer does exactly what it says on the tin: it's your one-stop shop for all your font-related needs. It's got hundreds of stock and custom fonts for you to install onto your device at the touch of a button. They can then be used as your device's default system font.



SCR Screen Recorder

Whilst you can take a screenshot on any Android device, you can't screencast. This app allows you to record contents of your screen and save it for later use. You can choose the framerate, resolution and encoding it records in, too.



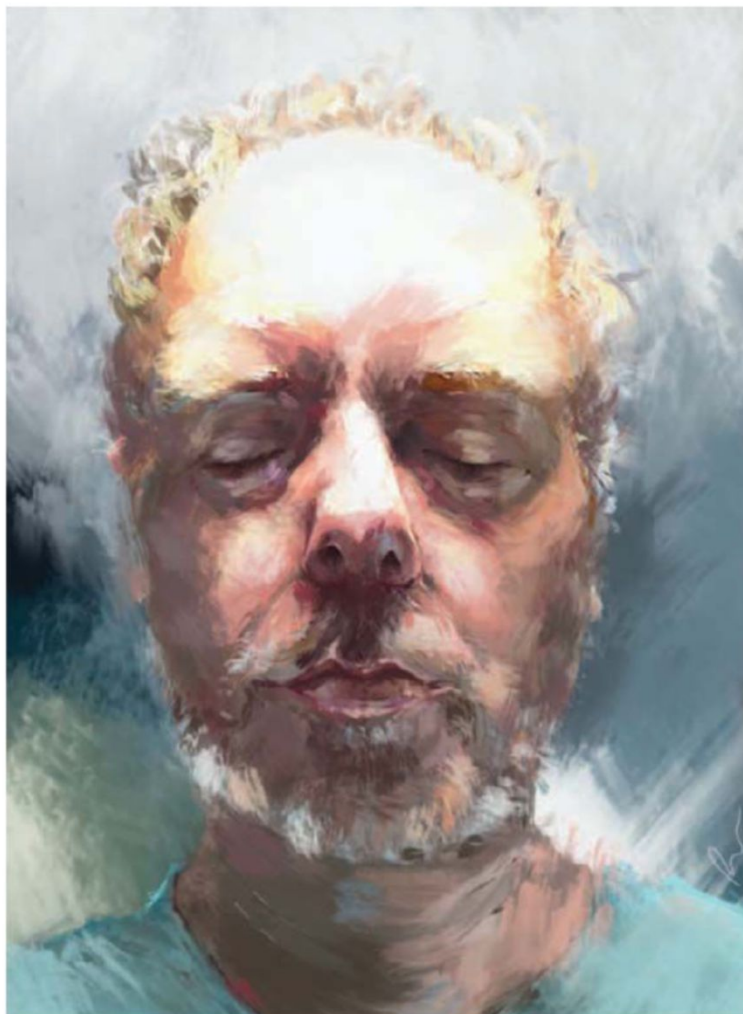
Finger painting in the digital age

2014 was the year that smartphones and tablets truly broke into the mainstream. Smartphones overtook dumbphones in popularity for the first time ever, and over 40% of UK households owned a tablet, too.

With that we also saw a sharp correlation on the number of smartphone and tablet artists. Everything else is digital nowadays, so

why not art? We're delighted to present to you ten new artists to check out in 2015, all of whom have created some truly remarkable works.

Just a reminder - everything you see here has been created solely on Apple or Samsung smartphones or tablets, using apps like Layers, Sketchbook Pro, Paper, Procreate and Brushes.



Rabe
by Roz Hall



Untitled
by Noriko Sasaki



The Suspect Found a Warm, Dark Place to Hide
by Dave Hall



Dream House
by José António Fundo



Evening Street 01
by Nikolai Lockertsen



Mi Paraíso
by Pilar Humada



Christopher Walken
by Mr Atrocity



Untitled
by Susan Murtaugh



El Paso Train by Joel Wittlif

Attack of the clones

Tired of Tinder? Irked with iTunes? Upset with Uber? We've got just the thing...

Reviewer: Callum Tennent – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Fuzel Collage

Free (Android, iOS)

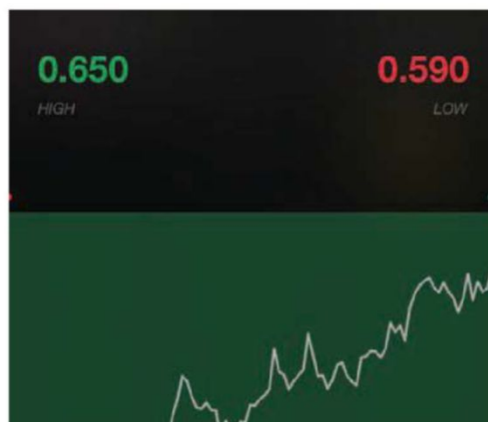
Fuzel Collage is one of the most comprehensive, complete, polished collage apps we've ever come across. Astonishingly it's also free on iOS and Android. You can take any number of photos from numerous sources (like Flickr and Twitter) and add them to create a fully customisable collage. There's a massive number of layouts, borders, overlays and the like to choose from, even more of which can be acquired via in-app purchase. You can then send your carefully crafted creation directly to the social media account of your choosing.



Stacks 2

£2.49 (iOS)

Currency converters are nothing new, but what is new is just how Stacks 2 manages to implement its conversion. Of course it can function like a regular app and provide you with up-to-date, instant translation of any of over 160 world currencies. It also offers a widget, which means you can access it on the fly by simply pulling down your iPhone's notifications hood. But what's really impressive, is that it also provides a Safari browser extension. If the web page you're viewing in Safari mentions



1Writer

£2.29 (iOS)

Text editing on iOS undeniably leaves something to be desired. Fortunately, 1Writer is here, and it offers just about everything you'd need that is missing from limited, basic apps like Notes. Within it you can apply almost any formatting you can imagine - with special emphasis on HTML formatting so that your text can be taken and immediately put online. It's compatible with a variety of third party apps so you can create posts within the app and export them with one touch.



Workflow

£2.49 (iOS)

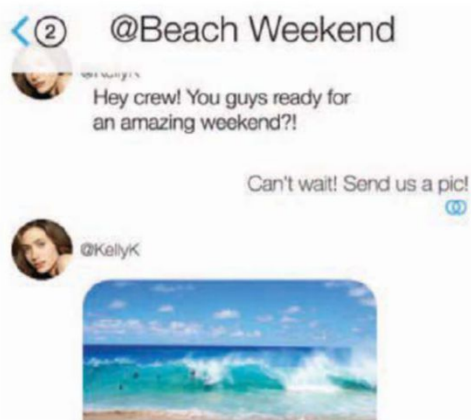
Workflow has the potential to be one of the most valuable apps you'll ever purchase. If you're the sort of person who enjoys doing things as efficiently and swiftly as possible, and is willing to put in the effort to do so, then it's conceivable you'll use the app every single day. As its name suggests, the app creates workflows, meaning you can create one tap shortcuts for anything - from getting directions to your nearest coffee shop to texting your spouse how long until you'll be home.



Inbox Messenger

Free (Android, iOS)

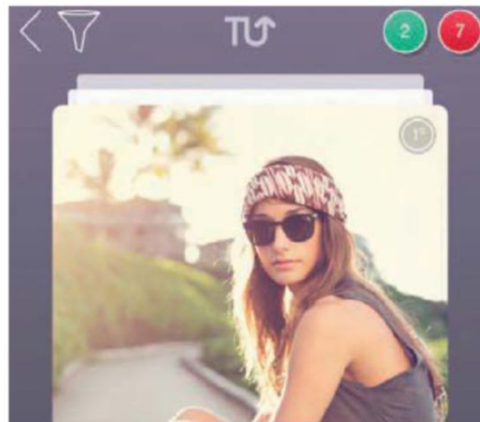
Is there really room for another instant messaging service in the mobile market? WhatsApp, BBM, Facebook Messenger and their ilk are all so popular you'd be forgiven for thinking we were far too stuck in our ways to embrace anything new at this point. Inbox Messenger may change your mind though. It's packed full of neat, distinguishing features to set it apart from the established elite. Delete sent messages. Send drawings. Shake your phone to



TurnUpp

Free (Android, iOS)

Whilst Tinder's remarkable rise to fame may have been entirely unpredicted, what's surely much more predictable is the number of 'Tinder-inspired' apps that have followed. The latest is TurnUpp, which operates on a similar premise. The hook is that you are only put in touch with first, second, or third-degree friends and acquaintances. Your friends can also give you 'stickers', recommending you in certain social categories (like someone who can



iGames

Free (iOS)

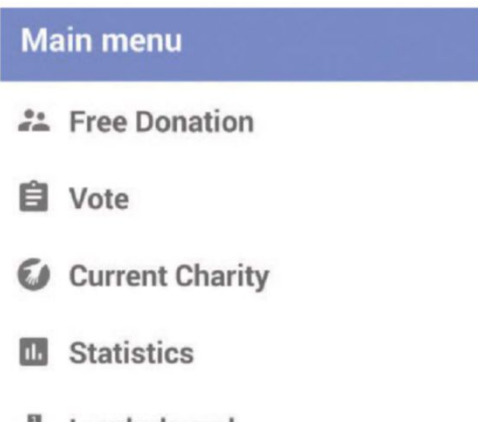
iGames is an interesting cross between a videogame encyclopedia and videogame social feed. Whatever it is, it's 100% dedicated to gaming, and is something that serious gamers will no doubt find interest in. The encyclopedia side of things holds a remarkable amount of knowledge, including information on just about every game ever released on every platform from the Atari to the ZX Spectrum. This bank of knowledge is constantly



People Helping People

Free (Android)

One of the most interesting apps we've ever come across, People Helping People is a charity app with a difference - you don't actually have to donate any money. You don't have to do anything, really. The way the app works is that it presents you with a variety of options for viewing adverts, which then generates money from impressions. The more you watch or click on the more money is raised. If you're cynical, the app's developers assure that a substantial 95% of all money generated goes



Minicabster

Free (Android, iOS, Windows Phone)

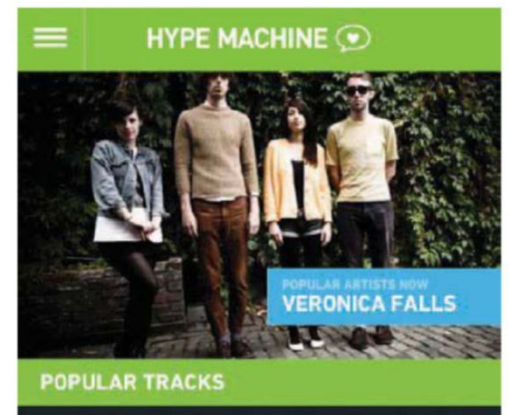
Like Uber but not such a big fan of the monopoly the company holds on the dial-a-ride industry? Or perhaps you live in a city without Uber service? Minicabster could be the app for you. Now operating in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds and Nottingham, Minicabster allows you to compare live rates from competing cab companies. Not only that, but you can also choose whether you pay by cash or card, and can choose your destination from a smart and



Hype Machine

£2.99 (iOS), £2.50 (Android)

It can be hard work being a music nerd. There's countless online blogs putting out insightful content, not to mention top quality work being done by established names, on the never ending supply of new music hitting the web every single day. Hype Machine tries to take some of the admin work out of things by providing you with a tailored, well-vetted stream of quality content on the hottest new music. Of course you'll also be presented with streams of the music being discussed, as well as



Bloody Marvel-ous

Spiderman, Boggle and a rampaging giraffe - March's games really have it all

Reviewer: Callum Tennent – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Marvel Contest of Champions

Free (Android, iOS)

Believe it or not there was a time when just about every superhero tie-in videogame was at best a cynical cash-grab and at worst an outright abomination. Fortunately that time has long since past, and we now live in an era where you can actually trust games with names like Marvel attached to them. Contest of Champions is a beat 'em up in the Injustice mould, only using characters from Stan Lee's legendary comic book house. There's countless superheroes to unlock, quests to complete and levels to be upped. Yes, it's rife with



Platform Panic

Free (Android, iOS)

We like endless runners. We like platformers. We like games with heavy retro-aesthetics and influence. So it was inevitable that we'd like Platform Panic. A genuinely outstanding and impossibly addictive game, rather than endlessly run from side to side (like Flappy Bird) or forwards (like Temple Run) you instead have to move your 8-bit avatar both up, down and side to side, with the aim being to escape one room and enter the next. Only you do this forever - it is genuinely endless.



Buff Knight

Free (Android, iOS)

Who doesn't love a good physics-based puzzler? As you may have inferred, Briquid Mini's nucleus is the relationship between bricks and liquid. The aim of each level is to shift any number of bodies of blue liquid from one set of brick enclosures to another by destroying and building these enclosures. It's surprising how easy it is to forget how gravity and Archimedes theory of displacement behave in real life, and you get a limited number of bricks to break and build per level.



Bean Dreams

£1.99 (iOS)

One genre that will probably never, ever die is the platformer. And who would want it to when games like Bean Dreams exist? A wonderfully upbeat, gorgeously colourful title, the twist is that your character is perpetually bouncing. The bouncing is uncontrollable but consistent, meaning you have to coordinate with Bean to traverse each of the game's many levels. The game also tracks each bounce you take and sets you near-impossible goals to complete stages within.



Highrise Heroes

Free (iOS)

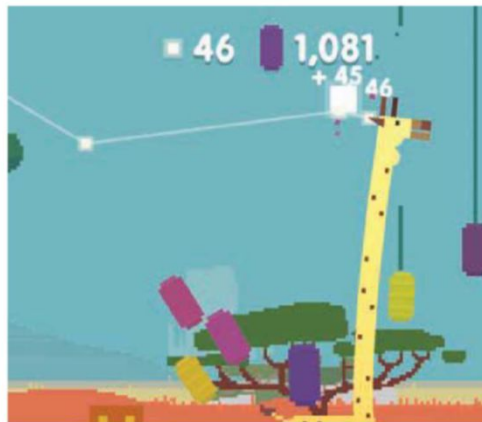
If Bejeweled, Horde of Heroes and Boggle had some sort of unspeakable three-way tryste, nine months later Highrise Heroes would be the result. The key concept is to create words, the longer the better, by tracing your finger across adjacent letters on the game's main grid. Things get made more interesting when exploding tiles are introduced. There's also a surprisingly entertaining storyline to tie things together.



Oh My Giraffe

£1.27 (Android), £1.49 (iOS)

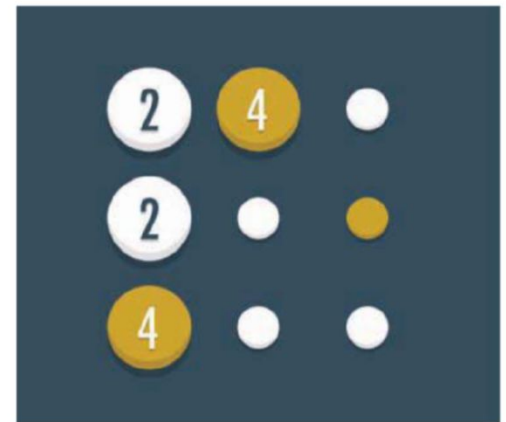
Swiftly returning to endless runners, Oh My Giraffe is one of the most adorable we've ever seen. In it you take control of a darling pixel art giraffe with a hilariously elasticated neck. As you run through the Serengeti you have to position your giraffe's neck to munch on low-hanging fruit and build your score. It's simple, silly arcade fun, and it's hugely enjoyable.



Noda

£0.69 (Android, iOS)

Noda is the new 'Threes!'. The concept is simple enough: bubbles containing numbers appear on a grid. Swiping a bubble into a vacant adjacent space splits the number, and swiping it into an occupied space combines the numbers. The number may never equal more than nine. Your goal is to create the required numbers (for example three fours) in a certain number of swipes. Simple, addictive, mentally challenging... you know the drill.



Shadowrun: Dragonfall

£4.99 (iOS), £4.45 (Android)

One of the most critically acclaimed indie successes of 2014, Shadowrun: Dragonfall proved a breakout success with PC gaming strategy fans. Now it's on mobile, and nothing has been lost in translation. The engrossing cyberpunk setting, oxymoronic combination of high-fantasy magic and Matrix-style gunplay, and tight turn-based strategy gameplay are all intact. If you enjoyed XCOM: Enemy Unknown then this game is a must-purchase. In fact, it's a must-purchase for everyone else too.



Darkness Reborn

Free (Android)

It can be hard to find a truly enjoyable hack n' slash ARPG on mobile. There's so much pay-to-win guff out there, how are you supposed to know which is worth your time? Allow us to help: Darkness Reborn is worth your time. Intuitive, addictive and jam-packed with loot, it's a game very much in the Diablo/God of War mould which any ARPG fan will be instantly at home with. It looks gorgeous too, but you'll definitely need a relatively new device to get the most out of it.



Two Dots

Free (Android, iOS, Windows Phone)

Two Dots offers one of the latest takes on the Bejewelled-style match-three formula - and does a wonderful job of it. With a smooth, appealing aesthetic as big a part of its charms as the gameplay itself. Presented with a grid of yellow, blue, green, red and purple dots you have to clear a set number of each by connecting them via horizontal or vertical line. When they vanish, new ones fall into their place. A minute to learn, a lifetime to master and all that.



Nintendo 3DS

Majora's Mask is now on 3DS. We repeat, Majora's Mask is now on 3DS. This is not a drill.

Reviewer: Callum Tennent – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net



Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

£34.99

Nintendo may take a bit of a bashing for being something of a one-trick pony when it comes to recycling its beloved franchises, and perhaps rightly so. But then every once in a while a re-release of a classic title comes along and our cynicism melts away. This is one of those releases.

Majora's Mask had the seemingly impossible task of following *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, a game widely regarded as one of the greatest of all time. Somehow, though, Majora's Mask actually managed to live up to expectations. In fact if it wasn't for *Ocarina of Time* being so impossibly groundbreaking upon its release, Majora's Mask may well have been regarded as the better title.

You'll understand our excitement then that a 3DS rerelease is now upon us. In fact it's more than just a rerelease - it's a total remastering. Resolutions have been increased and character models have been redone,

stereoscopic 3D for the 3DS has been added and there's even been tweaks to gameplay. Previously frustrating or boring boss battles have been rethought to make them more challenging and engaging. In classic Nintendo fashion, whilst this may be a repackaged product it's far from a cash-grab.

The rest of the original game and what made it so superb remains untouched, though. Once again you take control of Link who is tasked with using the time-travelling abilities of his magical ocarina to save the realm from destruction via a head-on collision with the moon (obviously). The series' iconic action-adventure gameplay is timeless, and as sharp as ever. A little sharper than previously, if anything, thanks to the infinitely more intuitive controls of the Nintendo 3DS versus the now bewilderingly malformed Nintendo 64 controller.

Monster Hunter 4 Ultimate

£32.99

Since its debut ten years ago the Monster Hunter franchise has sold more than 25 million copies in Japan alone - that's more than the Halo series in North America. Monster Hunter is a big deal. Unfortunately for us, that Japanese success has never translated to the Western market. In fact publisher Capcom has been reluctant to even try the series out over here, with only a fraction of the franchise's games seeing a Western release at all.

More than a year after the release of Monster Hunter 4 in Japan, we're finally being graced with Monster Hunter 4 Ultimate - a slightly tweaked and improved version for the Western market, and one of the series' best yet. Solely available on Nintendo 2DS and 3DS Monster Hunter 4 Ultimate, whilst being undeniably a larger game than its predecessor, is a much deeper game.

Emphasis has been shifted towards a full 360-degree range of movement with scalable terrain, aerial attacks, and monsters which use the landscape to their advantage all featuring for the first time. It is now also possible to grapple and mount monsters for more diverse and challenging combat.

In all honesty though, Capcom isn't reinventing the wheel here. And why would it want to? Monster Hunter's formula is as wildly addictive as it is unendingly fun, and fans will no doubt love what's on offer here. Perhaps the most notable addition present in Monster Hunter 4 Ultimate is the premiere of true online multiplayer. Previous Nintendo 3DS (and PS Vita) editions enabled local online play, but here you have full, worldwide online multiplayer - something which has become more and more popular within the Monster Hunter series.



PlayStation Vita

The Duke is back, as is Britain's *other* ball sport. But are they any good?

Reviewer: Callum Tennent – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Teslagrad

£8.99

The indie platformer marketplace is already somewhat saturated, but if the quality is right then there's always room for more. There is room for *Teslagrad*. A platform/action/puzzler in a similar mould to the likes of *Bastion* and *Trine*, *Teslagrad* offers up just enough challenging gameplay and quirky narrative to keep even the most jaded of players interested.

The 2.5D backgrounds and hand-drawn art style obviously catch the eye, but it's the way the story is told which is the most charming of all. There's no words used throughout the whole of *Teslagrad*, with the plot instead unfolding through a series of clips of puppet shows. It's handled excellently, and does a remarkably sound job of conveying the surprisingly interesting story without verbal communication.

The gameplay features some interesting gadgets and powers, but the central theme revolves around the notion of opposing colours. Not exactly novel, granted, but it has an interesting twist - same coloured enemies, objects and environments repel one another whilst opposite coloured ones attract.

The combat and puzzling is actually remarkably difficult, a far cry from the recent trend in indie titles of holding the player's hand for the sake of ensuring they get to bear witness to everything the game has to offer. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it's still an excellent indie effort which has so far managed to fly under the radar.



Duke Nukem 3D: Megaton Edition

£7

You know what you're getting with Duke Nukem. One of the most iconic videogame franchises of all time as well as one of the most controversial and most talked about series of the '90s, the Duke is now available on the PS Vita for the first time.

Aside from sharper visuals and Vita optimised controls this is the exact same title you would have experienced all the way back in 1997. With that comes with all of the charms of the series, as well as all of the flaws.



The level design has held up fantastically well and encapsulates perfectly how shooters like Doom, Quake and Duke Nukem achieved such enormous success. The action is scatty and fast paced and the low-brow humour is as over the top as the bloodshed. Naturally those of the generation spoiled by more polished titles like Call of Duty and Far Cry may find the whole affair somewhat dated, but really that's the point. This is one of videogaming's classic works brought back untouched into the modern era. There's even online multiplayer, too.

Rugby 15

£25

It's been many a year since EA Sports last released a Rugby title. With the sport taking a considerable backseat to association football (and several others) in the global scheme of things the series simply never managed to gather enough traction and its small but loyal fan base was left wanting.

The series has made a rather low-key return this year, but one which is sure to excite rugby fans nonetheless. It features fully licensed clubs from the



Aviva Premiership, Top 14, Pro D2, Pro 12 and Super Rugby, as well as 20 top international sides.

There's numerous modes, dynamic weather effects, and whilst the game isn't as polished (by quite a distance) as bigger EA Sports titles like Madden and FIFA, it should be enough to tide over egg-chasing fans for the season. Fingers-crossed for a sequel.



WHAT MOBILE

BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying a new device can be a difficult decision. Our comprehensive buyer's guide is here to help you.



55 Phone reviews

85 Tablet reviews

94 Wearables reviews



Acer Liquid E2

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £189.99
<http://www.acer.co.uk>

Stacked up against recent entries in the budget market, the Acer Liquid E2 is simply outdated. It's a functional Android handset but the clunky, thick design makes it feel like you're holding a toy and the software doesn't have any standout features. Acer will have to seriously raise its game if it's to be a contender in the phone market.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Quad-core 1.2 GHz
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 131 x 68 x 9.9mm
Weight 140g
Battery 2000 mAh

VERDICT: A dated, bulky phone saved by its reasonable price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Acer Liquid Z3

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £99
<http://www.acer.co.uk>

While the Z3's tiny size has immediate benefits, you'll soon tire of cramping your thumbs on too small a screen. Everywhere else its simply an overwhelming phone, even with the sub-£100 price tag. Even with the customisation options for different audiences, we'd recommend opting for a normal-sized phone over this fidgety gadget.

OS Android v4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Dual-core 1GHz
Screen 3.5 inches
Resolution 320 x 480 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 3 MP rear-facing
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 109 x 60 x 10.4mm
Weight 120g
Battery Li-Ion 1500 mAh

VERDICT: It's far too small to be used for most apps and is uncomfortable to hold.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Pop S3

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £80
www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

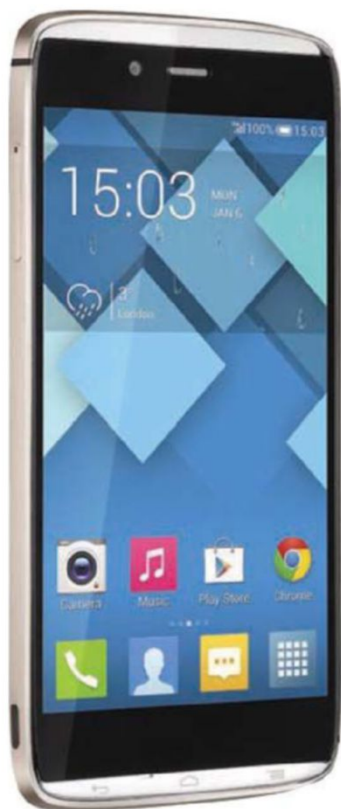
The Alcatel One Touch POP S3 has its merits, especially taking into account the sub-£100 price of the device. The problem here is that by making room for 4G capability Alcatel has been forced to make cutbacks in crucial areas. However, if you are simply after the option to access faster web browsing and app speeds on the go, then the POP S3 offers you that at the cheapest price possible.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123 x 64.4 x 9.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, sure, but its poor quality renders its 4G capability near pointless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Alcatel One Touch Idol Alpha

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319
www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

While it's good to see manufacturers branching out from the traditional black slab design, the Idol Alpha is a reminder of why the slab works. There are just too many compromises here, and the hardware does not make amends for them. Aside from the fact that Android itself is a powerful operating system that you can tailor to your heart's content, there's very little to redeem this phone.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1 GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 138 x 66.6 x 7.5 mm
Weight 117.4 g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A decent camera is the only redeeming feature on this overpriced handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Idol X+

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £TBC
www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

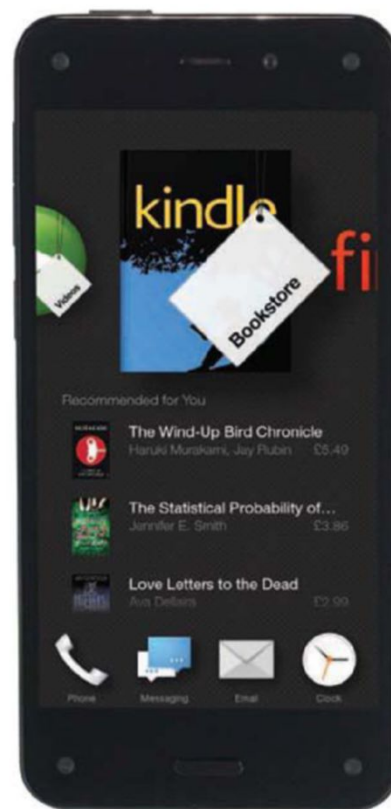
We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to envisage anyone patient enough to waste their time with it.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Octa-core 2GHz
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.4 x 69.1 x 7.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,500mAh

VERDICT: With such great competition the One Touch Idol X+ simply looks irrelevant.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Amazon Fire Phone

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £400

When we first learned of the 3D capabilities of the Amazon Fire Phone we thought it might be a gimmick. Instead, it turned out to be the feature we love the most. Its other interface aspects are riddled with hiccups which can add to some severe usability issues. Its design has some questionable choices, too. It has a lot of potential though, and we're eagerly looking forward to a sequel.

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
microSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 13MP front-facing,

2.1MP rear-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.2 x 66.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,400mAh

VERDICT: A promising yet flawed debut effort, recommendable only to the curious.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 5c

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £469 (16GB) £549 (32GB)

If you need a splash of colour in your life and you're already a massive fan of the iOS operating system, then the iPhone 5c is much the same as the previous iPhone 5. There's a slightly upgraded front-facing camera and 4G will work on any UK network, but other than that you're getting the exact same thing. The iPhone 5c is simply around for those of you who love great design without breaking the bank.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 640 x 1136 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing
Video 1080

Connectivity 4G
Size 12.4 x 59.2 x 9 mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,510 mAh

VERDICT: It's the most colourful iPhone to date, but it's identical to the iPhone 5.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 5s

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £549 (16GB) £629 (32GB) £709 (64GB)

With fingerprint identity, 64-bit A7 64-bit chip delivers up to twice the performance of the iPhone 4 and 5c, many people will opt to pay the extra £80 or so over the 5c. They'll also get an improved camera with 15 per cent larger sensor and improved low-light capabilities. The True Tone flash incorporates two flashes each matched to different light temperatures so flesh tones are more natural with flash pictures.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz ARM V8
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1136 x 640 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB, 32GB or 64GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123.8 x 58.6 x 7.6mm
Weight 112g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: The gold standard in user-friendly smartphones, with a ton of power to boot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 6

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £539

Calling it 'the best iPhone ever' almost seems a little redundant. Of course it's better - it's more powerful, has a better camera, and NFC could soon become a huge deal. We're not quite as keen on the aesthetics of it versus older iPhone designs, but it's still got a wonderful premium build and a beautifully sharp display. The option for greatly expanded storage sizes shouldn't be undervalued, either.

OS iOS 8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/64GB/128GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 8 MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138.1 x 67 x 6.9 mm
Weight 129g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: Bigger and better than ever, just as you'd expect. The definitive iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 6 Plus

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £619

It's the iPhone 6, but bigger. That's the only difference, and it comes with all of the ups and downs that you would expect from a phablet. You'll either love or hate the larger screen which, whilst still beautiful, is slightly less sharp than its little brother's. Similarly it might be tough for smaller hands to hold. But then you do get to see more things on screen at once. It's still a remarkable phone though, make no mistake.

OS iOS8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/64GB/128GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 8 MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 158.1 x 77.8 x 7.1 mm
Weight 172g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: A bigger iPhone 6 - it's really that simple. Prefer it or not, it's great regardless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 50 Helium

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £199

archos.com

If the Moto G and Moto E are the gold standard of entry-level and low-cost smartphones, then the 50 Helium is certainly worthy of silver. It's got a nice big screen as well as invaluable 4G capability. It won't set the world alight, but it's a standout in a market awash with cheap, limited handsets.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE

Dimensions 145 x 71.5 x 8.95mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: A capable alternative to the market-leading Moto G.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Asus PadFone 2

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £500

www.asus.com/uk

The PadFone 2 offers two devices for around the price of one but you won't be able to use the tablet independently of the phone. An ideal situation in which to use the PadFone 2 is if you want to use the same data allowance for both devices, and not shell out for a more expensive 3G-enabled tablet. This could almost be perfect if it had a better screen.

OS Android v4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
Processor 1.5GHz quad-core
Screen 720 x 1280 pixels, 4.7 inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16, 32 or 64GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 1.3 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 137.9 x 68.9 x 9mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,140 mAh

VERDICT: An almost perfect two-for-one device – if only it had a better screen.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





BlackBerry Passport

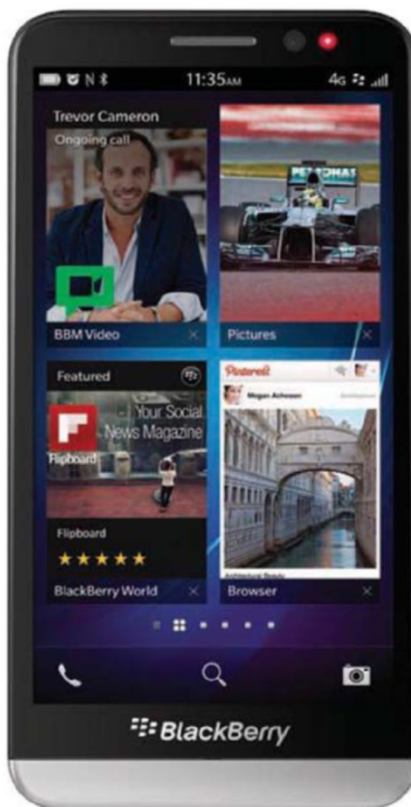
Reviewed: November 2014, price: £530
uk.blackberry.com

A premium device by anyone's standards - if you can look past the thoroughly odd design. Undeniably BlackBerry's most advanced device ever, it's still clearly angled towards the business crowd with a focus on productivity. The same old BlackBerry problems persist though, with an inferior OS and app store. It's just too impractical and limited for personal use.

OS BlackBerry 10.3
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1,440 x 1,440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing,
 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 128 x 90.3 x 9.3mm
Weight 194g
Battery 3,450mAh

VERDICT: Premium build and top specs are betrayed by off-putting, strange design.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BlackBerry Z30

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £500
uk.blackberry.com

Perhaps if BlackBerry had focused on its efforts on making a phone like this five years ago we would be looking at a very different picture now. As it stands, a barren app store, odd features and a monster price tag may kill what could have been a competitive device. It's still surprisingly easy on the eyes though, and its display doesn't look too bad either.

OS BlackBerry 10
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 140.7 x 72 x 9.4
Weight 170g
Battery 2,880 mAh

VERDICT: Possibly the best BlackBerry yet, but that's not saying an awful lot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BWC Stealth V2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £300
www.bwcdevices.com

With good specs available at low prices there's never been a better time to pick up a rugged smartphone (if that's what you need). The Stealth V2 lives up to both the 'rugged' and 'smart' tags, with surprisingly capable insides. It also passed all of our stress tests, with countless drops, bashes and drownings failing to leave so much as a mark.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 1GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 133 x 69 x 20mm
Weight 230g
Battery 2,800mAh

VERDICT: As smart and tough as it promises.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





CAT B100

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380
www.catphones.com

The CAT B100 withstands harsh conditions and jarring blows with a tough outer shell that absorbs the impact of falls, and impressive waterproofing. Beyond that, the phone lacks features games and apps - but chances are that's not why you're buying this phone. If you need a rugged handset to take adventuring, though, it's more than tough enough.

OS Nucleus 2.1
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 2.2 inches
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 50MB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 3 MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing
Video QVGA

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 122.94 x 55.88 x 7.6mm
Weight 136g
Battery 1,150 mAh

VERDICT: Tough enough to take into a warzone, if a little light on actual function.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



CAT B15

Reviewed: June 2013, price: £299
www.catphones.com

While it will never be a mass market phone, the B15 most certainly has a place in the market for anyone who wants a device they can rely on, whatever the environment; aimed at builders and construction workers, this phone stood up to our strength and durability tests and has decent specs to boot. Its let downs include a cumbersome size and a weak camera and video capabilities.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Size 125 x 69.5 x 14.95mm
Weight 170g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A rugged phone for those who need to rely on it in any environment.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Doro Liberto 810

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £145
www.doro.co.uk

The Liberto 810 has a comfortable design and a user interface that's ideal for first-time smartphone users and impaired customers. From there, things start to slip. The screen is buried into the handset, making it hard to accurately press smaller buttons, the camera software has some strange issues and we ran into a few bugs. It's a starting point for Doro, but it's hard to recommend it.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1GHz
Screen 3.9 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 500MB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP
Video 480p
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 126 x 66 x 12.5mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: Seniors may be demanding a tailored smartphone, but this isn't it.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Doro Liberto 820

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £186

www.doro.co.uk

It's easy to dismiss Doro phones as obsolete. This is to ignore that Doro isn't interested in attracting phone geeks and techno-fashionistas. These phones are for those value simplicity above processing power. Doro targets the 'senior' market. But with its SOS button and useful short cuts the Liberto 820 will appeal to those are not slaves to trends in consumer electronics.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat with Doro Wizard
Processor 1.3Ghz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 940 x 560
Memory 1GB
Storage 4GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 13mm x 71mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,900 mAh

VERDICT: A surprisingly well-featured phone for the more tech-savvy of seniors.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Doro PhoneEasy 624

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £100

www.doro.co.uk

The PhoneEasy 624 is Doro's best feature phone offering for those who want to keep things as simple, while making sure important contacts are only a button push away. It's got a 3G antenna, lengthy battery life, but a needlessly dire camera.

OS Custom
Processor N/A
Screen 2.4 inches
Resolution 320 x 240 pixels
Memory N/A
Storage N/A
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 2MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 102 x 52 x 19 mm
Weight 104g
Battery 800 mAh

VERDICT: A well featured phone for the price if you're in the market for that sort of thing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



EE Kestrel

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £99

www.doro.co.uk

The EE Kestrel is the best entry-level 4G handset on the market and this is in no small part due to Huawei. The manufacturer has built a solid handset that consumers will use beyond its 4G-LTE capability. Although, its weak resolution is a major flaw, it has plenty of other positive attributes including a smooth UI, the ability to handle a vast range of games and decent web and app browsing speeds.

OS Android 4.3 (Jelly Bean)
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G, 3G
Dimensions 131 x 65.3 x 7.85mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: A reliable handset that boasts good usability, if underwhelming specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Google Nexus 4

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £239
www.google.com/nexus/4/

It looks a bit dull and devoid of personality, plus storage is limited to 4GB... but that's hardly the point. The Nexus 4 is a tight bit of kit designed to show off Google's latest version of Android. With a terrific quad-core 1.5Ghz processor and 2GB of RAM - there is nothing out there that will stump this smartphone. The lack of 4G is a disappointment, but the phone is an absolute steal at just £239. One of the best Android handsets available.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.5Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inch
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 107 x 61 x 12mm
Weight 100g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: Dull and devoid of personality, but high powered and super, super cheap.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 500

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199.99
www.htc.com/uk

The HTC Desire 500 is a respectable budget offering from the Taiwanese manufacturer but it's been undercut by cheaper phones with better specifications. You'll struggle with limited storage space but it earns points for a unique design.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 1.6 MP front-facing
Video 720

Dimensions 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9mm
Weight 123g
Battery 1,800 mAh

VERDICT: A solid phone with a price tag on the wrong side of that of the Moto G.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 601

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £244
www.htc.com/uk

4G at an affordable price is the Desire 601's big claim (if you regard £240 as affordable). That's not enough of a reason alone to buy it, though. 4G is currently not worth the premium, nor the price hike over a similarly specced 3G handset. The trademark HTC Beats audio still sounds great though, and its on-board photo editor is handy - if you can put up with the low-resolution screen.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.4Ghz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, 0.3 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 134.5 x 66.7 x 9.88mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A decent phone, but the extra £100 is not justified by 4G capability alone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC Desire 816

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £300

www.htc.com/uk

In a market lacking a viable midrange phablet the HTC Desire 816 stands out. It might have its flaws, but for the price you can certainly look past them. If you can't, then a midrange device probably isn't for you. For the rest of us, there's no better option for getting your hands on a jumbo screen on the cheap.

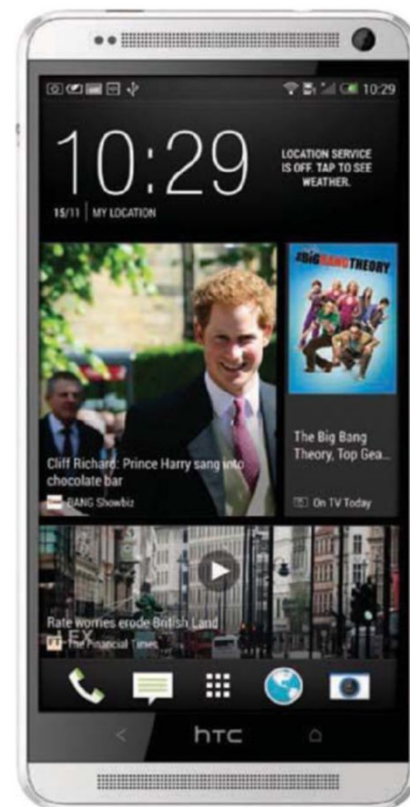


HTC One M8

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £530

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One M8 is, in all probability, the best smartphone ever made. It both looks and performs better than almost everything else out there. Features like Blinkfeed and knock-to-wake are a joy to use. If Apple, Sony and Samsung weren't paying attention before, they certainly are now.



HTC One Max

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £599

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One Max piggybacks the reputation of the HTC One, although nothing much has improved. The high-quality display is present but HTC has failed to add processing power and the fingerprint sensor implementation is very disappointing.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.6GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1.5GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 156.6 x 78.7 x 7.9mm
Weight 165g
Battery 2,600mAh

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.36 x 70.6 x 9.35 mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,600 mAh

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.7GHz quad-core
Screen 5.9 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 164.5 x 82.5 x 10.3mm
Weight 217g
Battery 3,300mAh

VERDICT: A triumphant, large addition to a fantastic 2014 product line for HTC.

VERDICT: If you can afford it, buy it. There's no better Android handset on the market.

VERDICT: The HTC One's design is still a standout but there's nothing new here.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC One Mini

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £300
www.htc.com/uk

The lite version of HTC's flagship phone proves to be a big deal, with a high quality camera, great audio, fast processing speeds and a unique, refreshing take on Android 4.2. It's only let down by its lack of internal memory and short battery life.

OS Android OS 4.2, Jelly Bean
Processor 1.4 GHz dual-core
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1 GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 1.6 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 132 x 63.2 x 9.3 mm
Weight 122 g
Battery 1,800 mAh

VERDICT: A worthwhile alternative to the bigger model.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC One Mini 2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £360
www.htc.com/uk

Your opinion of the One Mini 2 will come down to what you mostly use your phone for. If you don't put too much strain on its struggling processor then you should be fine. It's got a magnificent pair of cameras, and that trademark HTC metal unibody build can't be beat. Day-to-day users will be more than satisfied - hardcore tech-heads should stick with the One M8.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 137.4 x 64 x 10.6mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,110mAh

VERDICT: Powered to match its stature, but still a very polished, attractive device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Windows 8S

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £239
www.htc.com/uk

The odd thing about this phone is that we actually rate it higher than its big brother, the 8X. It is a bit lighter, has a nicer body and fits much easier in the hand. It still has enough grunt under the hood to get all the same tasks done (although has a lower res screen), and its £160 quid cheaper. It doesn't have a front facing camera (so no proper Skype-ing) and the App store remains limited...

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Cameras 5 MP rear-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 120.5 x 63 x 10.3 mm
Weight 113 g
Battery 1,700mAh

VERDICT: The Windows Phone 8S may well be better than the 8X flagship model.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Huawei Ascend G510

Reviewed: June 2013, price: £130
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

A somewhat sludgier Samsung Galaxy S2 for half the price and with a bigger screen, the Ascend G510 was the phone of 2011. More than enough for those who don't have to have the latest thing, the Ascend will handle your casual web browsing, the odd game and photos well. It can feel a little slow however and doesn't look like much; there are also cheaper phones out there which do much the same.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5-inch
Resolution 480 x 854 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 134 x 67 x 9.9 mm
Weight 150g
Battery 1,750mAh

VERDICT: A large budget smartphone which can run slow and doesn't look like much.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend P2

Reviewed: September 2013, price: £340
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

Huawei has delivered a reasonably cheap device given you're receiving blazing fast 4G speeds when web browsing. There's no microSD card slot and the processor had a little trouble whilst gaming and opening apps, but the camera optics were outstanding. The P2 is capable of recording video at a resolution of 1080p. For a phone of this price, that is incredibly impressive. All-in-all a great budget - mid-range device.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.5 GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 1.3 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 136.2 x 66.7 x 8.4mm
Weight 122g
Battery 2,420 mAh

VERDICT: The price speaks for itself, giving you one of the cheapest 4G devices today.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend P6

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £309.95
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

It suffers from poor software implementation and a slow-charging battery, but at least the P6 looks the part, with a slim design that makes it more attractive than many of its rivals. Elsewhere this is a capable mid-to-high-tier handset for anyone looking.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.5 GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 132.7 x 65.5 x 6.2 mm
Weight 120g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: It trips up on software and battery but the slim look is appealing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Huawei Ascend P7

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £3695
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

The Ascend P7 feels like a missed opportunity. Huawei should have put their full weight into creating a top-level flagship handset. However, its underpowered processor is its only real flaw. It looks premium, and its front-facing camera is the best on the market. Its price could be a sticking point, but it's by no means a bad device.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.8GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1980 x 1020 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.8 x 68.8 x 6.5mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,500mAh

VERDICT: It's not quite a market-leading flagship, but at least it looks the part.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend Y300

Reviewed: September 2013, price: £119
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

The Y300 isn't going to blow you away when looking at the spec sheet, but if you're considering dipping your toes into the smartphone world it could be the perfect purchase. At less than £70 on pay-as-you-go you're getting a pretty fast and fluid device, which should be able to cope with most of the things you throw at it. The feature set is very basic and the camera's low-light performance is dismal though.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1 GHz dual-core
Screen 4.0 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 480p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 124.5 x 63.8 x 11.2 mm
Weight 130g
Battery 1,730 mAh

VERDICT: If you're dipping your toes into the smartphone world, this could be perfect.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Kazam Thunder Q4.5

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £TBC
www.kazam.mobi

The Thunder Q4.5 is a sure case of style over substance, but in the lower-cost end of the market you'd usually be lucky to get either. While the phone lacks standout features it won't let you down when it comes to everyday smartphone functionality. If you're in the market and want to try something new, you could certainly do an awful lot worse.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 1.74GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 136 x 64.6 x 8.9 mm
Weight 137g
Battery 1,800 mAh

VERDICT: It may be flawed, but at this price point you'd be hard pushed to beat it.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





LG G2

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £500
www.lg.com/uk

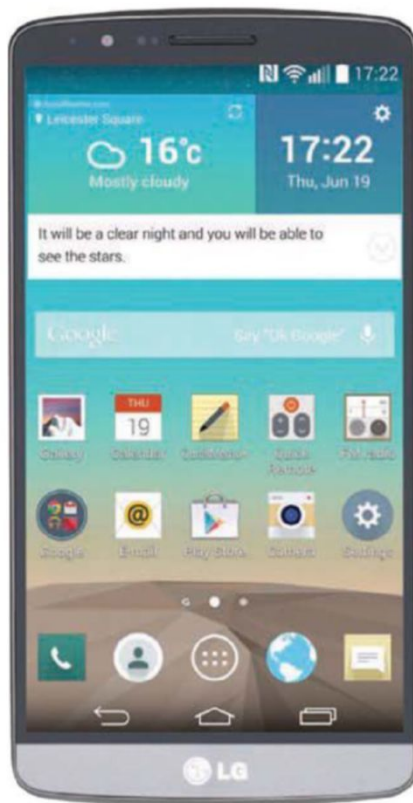
Despite its impressive performance, long-lasting battery and excellent screen, the G2 doesn't quite hold up next to its competition. It doesn't lag behind in any one area, but it doesn't truly excel anywhere else either. It won't give you any hassle aside from its heating issues but this isn't a best-in-class phone, and that's what a flagship from a company like this really should be.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138.5 x 70.9 x 8.9 mm
Weight 143g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: The G2 is a powerhouse with a great screen and impressive battery life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G3

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £499
www.lg.com/uk

Only minor detractions stop the LG G3 from being the perfect smartphone. That said, there's no such thing as the perfect smartphone just yet, so the G3 is still a wonderful piece of kit. It has outstanding features, hardware, and form to boot. The best display around, a monstrous processor and a variety of little touches all make the G3 a special smartphone.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 2160p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.3 x 74.6 x 8.9mm
Weight 149g
Battery 3,000mAh

VERDICT: Want the best? The G3 is absolutely deserving of your consideration.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G Flex

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £570
www.lg.com/uk

The curved display may add very little, but with a state-of-the-art spec sheet and a fantastic display, the LG G Flex nails the basics of a high-end smartphone. However the £570 price and so-so camera make it difficult to recommend - at least when compared to its cheaper, better rivals. The Flex just isn't the innovation LG believe it to be.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 160.5 x 81.6 x 7.9 mm
Weight 177g
Battery 3,500 mAh

VERDICT: A powerful phone held back by a steep price for an unnecessary gimmick.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto G

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £135
www.motorola.co.uk

The Moto G is a budget smartphone done right. It makes smart and sensible sacrifices to slash its price to a point that puts its rivals to shame. For people who don't demand the highest specs and best camera from a phone, the Moto G's easy-to-use system and fast speeds make it an ideal choice.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 129.9 x 65.9 x 11.6mm
Weight 143g
Battery 2,070 mAh

VERDICT: The best option for customers on a budget.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G (2014)

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £150
www.motorola.co.uk

It's an updated version of the Moto G - nothing more, nothing less. The lack of 4G is extremely disappointing, and a processor upgrade would have been nice. Still, a bigger screen, a better camera and microSD compatibility is extremely welcome. When it comes to affordable phones that can actually perform, the Moto G is still untouchable.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 149g
Battery 2,070mAh

VERDICT: A solid improvement on the best, but no 4G gives it a limited shelf life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto X

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380
www.motorola.co.uk

The Moto X is a rock-solid handset with unique, helpful features. This is the best place to experience Google Now, making voice operation genuinely useful. MIX in a sleek design, great camera and long battery life and the £380 price tag is justified. If you can afford the extra £150 then it makes for a sterling upper-mid tier upgrade to the Motorola Moto G.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129.3 x 65.3 x 10.4mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: For those looking to step up from the budget tier: your search is over.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto X (2014)

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £420
www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola's original Moto X was a nice idea executed a little too late, especially in the UK. Competition from superior phones from manufacturers with a stronger recent track record was too great to overcome. But this latest version of the Moto X makes a much stronger case for your cash. It's got some excellent features and will surely be beloved by hardcore fans of stock Android.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 2160p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 140.8 x 72.4 x 10mm
Weight 144g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: The best Motorola ever, and arguably the best Android handset of 2014.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola RAZR HD

Reviewed: April 2013, price: £399
www.motorola.co.uk

Starting to show signs of its Google led revival, the Motorola Razr HD has a stunning industrial design and 4G support, but is a victim of its delayed UK release (it came out in the US in September) meaning its specs are out of date, its screen is low resolution and its camera is poor. It doesn't help that Motorola have priced it so high - otherwise this would be an excellent mid-range phone.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 131.9 x 67.9 x 8.4 mm, 146g
Weight 146g
Battery 2,530 mAh

VERDICT: A lovely design, but the internals are six months out of date.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Asha 205

Reviewed: April 2013, price: £65
www.nokia.com

An interesting enough device that blurs the lines between a feature phone and a low end smartphone, the Asha 205 is let down by its very small on board memory and lack of connectivity options. It remains functional for a low end device, but definitely should not be considered a full blown replacement for a smartphone. Probably destined for third world and budget users.

OS Nokia Series 40
Processor N/A
Screen 2.4 inches
Resolution 320 x 240 pixels
Memory 16MB RAM
Storage 10MB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 2MP rear-facing
Video VGA
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 116 x 61 x 14mm
Weight 105g
Battery 1,020 mAh

VERDICT: A pretty basic, functional feature phone with a few extra goodies.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Asha 302

Reviewed: November 2012, price: £95
www.nokia.com

While the Nokia Asha 302 won't win any awards for originality or features, its great build quality, battery life and usability make it ideal for social networking. If you're looking for a decent feature-phone for easy all-day typing, the Asha 302 could be right for you. And while you can pick up a good smartphone for around this price, the handy QWERTY keyboard is ideal if you're frequently typing texts and emails.

OS Nokia Series 40	Dimensions 117 x 56 x 14mm
Processor 1GHz single-core	Weight 99g
Screen 2.4 inches	Battery 1,430 mAh
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels	
Memory 128MB RAM	
Storage 100MB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 3.2MP rear-facing	
Video 480p	
Connectivity 3G	

VERDICT: Great QWERTY usability and an impressive battery life at a decent price.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Nokia Asha 503

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £70
www.nokia.com

Nokia's Asha 503 is a brilliantly tiny handset that stays usable despite the smaller screen. If you want a dirt-cheap phone then you might be better off with a sub-£50 handset and its design is a little spiky. But anyone looking for a phone to keep them busy for five minutes on a bus will find plenty to love here.

OS Nokia Asha platform 1.2	Dimensions 102.6 x 60.6 x 12.7mm
Processor N/A	Weight 110.2g
Screen 3 inches	Battery 1,200 mAh
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels	
Memory 128MB RAM	
Storage 4GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 5 MP rear-facing	
Video QVGA	
Connectivity 3G	

VERDICT: A good entry into the budget market that offers more than the basics.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 520

Reviewed: June 2013, price: £99.95
www.nokia.com

A good budget offering from Nokia which is let down by its struggles to handle the tasks required of it. Cheaper than the 620 which nevertheless had less performance issues. The 520 packs a good camera and battery life, however there are both cheaper phones which perform better and more expensive phones which don't.

OS Windows Phone 8	Dimensions 119.9 x 64 x 9.9mm
Processor 1GHz dual-core	Weight 124g
Screen 4 inches	Battery 1,430 mAh
Resolution 800 x 480	
Memory 512MB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Cameras 5 MP	
Video 720p	
Connectivity 3G	

VERDICT: A good camera, battery and price but the phone can struggle with tasks.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 625

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £180

www.nokia.com

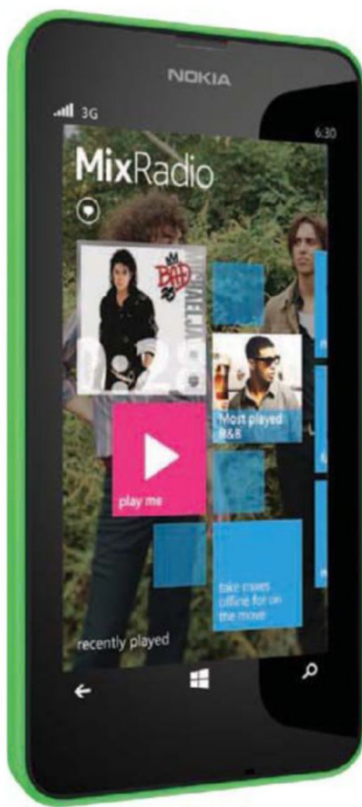
The sizeable 4.7-inch screen saves the 625 from its disappointingly short battery life and lack of HD viewing. It's plagued further by the Lumia range's other issues like a limited app store, but fights back with a decent camera. As a result it stands as a viable budget-range phone.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512 MB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 133.3 x 72.3 x 9.2 mm
Weight 159g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: A decent budget smartphone with its fair share of shortcomings.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 630

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £110

www.nokia.com

The Lumia 630 offers many positives. Its bright, smooth interface is eye-catching and capable, and it can perform most tasks well. It even beats its rival, the Moto E, in terms of apps browsing, gaming and photography. It is let down by some shortcomings though, such as a narrow selection of apps and unnecessary bloatware.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 480 x 854 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 129.5 x 66.7 x 9.2mm
Weight 134g
Battery 1,830mAh

VERDICT: Looks good and performs well enough to beat out some of its budget rivals

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 720

Reviewed: July 2013, price: £299

www.nokia.com

A fairly solid mid-tier offering which suffered some setbacks at start up, the 720 features a Carl Zeiss lens and a slightly better looking screen and performing processor. Aside from this, the Lumia 720 isn't wonderfully different from its lower priced siblings and showed signs of wear and tear after a week, although its camera lives up to the Lumia name. Microsoft's app store is still fairly limited, however.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Cameras 6.7MP front-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 127.9 x 67.5 x 9mm
Weight 128g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: A fairly solid mid-tier device but not too different from lower priced siblings.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 735

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £299
www.nokia.com

Microsoft has produced a genuine rival to the bestselling Motorola Moto G in the form of the Lumia 735. With the introduction of an HD display and 4G LTE this is much more than just another selfie phone. But if selfies are what you're after the Lumia 735 offers plenty of fun ways to snap images of you and your friends with its 5-megapixel front camera.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 6.7MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 134.7 x 68.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 134g
Battery 2,200mAh

VERDICT: A Windows Phone to match the Moto G, the 735 is a selfie star.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 820

Reviewed: March 2013, price: £380
www.nokia.com

The 920's pragmatic little brother, the 820 runs the same processor and RAM. It lacks some of the high end photography options but still takes good quality pictures and also runs Windows Phone 8. It has the full complement of Nokia apps like Music and Maps (although the Windows Store still struggles for quality in the app department). Battery can be disappointing, however, and some apps only work with WP8 devices.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 800 x 480 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera: 8.0MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video: 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 123.8 x 68.5 x 9.9mm
Weight: 160g
Battery: 1,650 mAh

VERDICT: Arguably superior to the 920, a few niggles hold it back from greatness.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 920

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £369/m
www.nokia.com

A fantastic looking phone with a great interface, grunt under the hood and the best camera phone in the business. A bit heavy and bulky, but outstanding design - a real eye catcher. Like all WP8 devices, the app store is a problem, but this deserves to do well.

OS: Windows Phone 8.0
Processor: 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen: 4.5 inches
Resolution: 1280 x 768
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8.7MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video: 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions: 130 x 70.8 x 10.7mm
Weight: 185g
Battery: 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: An fantastic device technically, its success relies on Microsoft's app store.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 925

Reviewed: August 2013, price: £479
www.nokia.com

With the Lumia 925 Nokia haven't set out to reinvent the wheel, they've just built on their past achievements to put together a brilliant phone. A gorgeous slimmed-down design, high performance camera and responsive user interface all set this handset apart from the rest of the Lumia range and make it a top level device in the high-end smartphone market. One of the best out there.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution: 1280 x 760
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video: 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129 x 70.6 x 8.5 mm
Weight: 139g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A fantastic camera, slick design and great user interface make this top dog.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 930

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £420
www.nokia.com

The plus side for those looking for something different is that Windows Phone has come along enough now that its mere presence on a handset isn't enough to relegate it completely. The Lumia 930 is the flagship that the range has been crying out for for far too long now, and if you don't mind having a relatively restricted ecosystem then you should have very few issues with it.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 137 x 71 x 9.8mm
Weight 167g
Battery 2,420mAh

VERDICT: The closest to rivalling Android and iOS that Windows Phone has ever come.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 1020

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £639.99
www.nokia.com

The Lumia 1020 is an ideal smartphone for those of you who don't care about apps and it's perfect if you love to take great pictures. It might not be the slimmest device you can get your hands on but the 1020's powerful camera is well worth the extra bulk.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution: 1280 x 760
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 41MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video: 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 130.4 x 71.4 x 10.4 mm
Weight: 158g
Battery 2,000 mAh battery

VERDICT: A top smartphone with an astounding camera – one of the best.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 1320

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £280
www.nokia.com

The Lumia 925 and 1020 were large enough, and the lack of software taking advantage of the big display, unlike with the Samsung Galaxy Note, means those extra inches just leave you looking faintly ridiculous when answering a call. You're better off spending your money on an Android phablet or Google's Nexus 5.



Nokia Lumia 1520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £550
www.nokia.com

Although the Nokia Lumia 1520 weighs in at a whopping £550 (SIM-free), it could cost you considerably more to purchase a standalone camera, camcorder, satnav, tablet and a laptop computer that can run Microsoft Office.



Prestigio MultiPhone 5430

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £190
www.prestigio.com

The Prestigio MultiPhone 5430 is a bland piece of kit that lacks any real highlights, but is undoubtedly a capable and efficient smartphone. Perhaps its best feature is that it gets the core experience right, if not groundbreakingly so. The very basics of what you expect from a smartphone in 2013 are here but there isn't much else.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 164.2 x 85.9 x 9.8mm
Weight 220g
Battery 3,400 mAh

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 162.8 x 85.4 x 8.7mm
Weight 209g
Battery 3,200 mAh

OS Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
Processor Intel Atom 1.2GHz
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64.7 x 10mm
Weight 140g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A good phone, but the Nexus 5 simply undercuts the competition too well.

VERDICT: A great all-in-one device that mashes the best of Nokia together.

VERDICT: Perfectly ordinary – but it's positioned as an everyday smartphone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Prestigio 4500 DUO

Reviewed: June 2013, price: £179
www.prestigio.com

The Prestigio fails to dazzle, offering nothing fresh, but it is a user friendly, well featured and well priced device that ticks all the right boxes for a smartphone. It offers a smooth Android experience in a classic design with a competitive price tag and could go up against the likes of Huawei or HTC's budget brands. A solid offering from a lesser known brand.

OS Android 2.3 Gingerbread
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 3.5 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 480p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 117 x 59 x 11mm
Weight 120g
Battery 1,850 mAh

VERDICT: Nothing new but this is a user friendly, well priced well featured device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Ativ S

Reviewed: March 2013, price: £439.99
www.samsung.com/uk

Possibly the best looking Windows Phone 8 physically with a good display, and a very usable Windows Phone 8 device, the software is lazy, with a poor selection of apps and what apps there are, can appear less than appealing. However, the user interface is easy to use and the processor can handle whatever is required of it. The phone looks and feels good - it's just a pity there's not much to look at, app-wise.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.8-inch
Resolution 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Cameras 8.0MP rear-facing, 1.9MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 137 x 70.5 x 8.7 mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: Great WP8 hardware, but the lack of apps means Nokia and HTC still rule.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Ace 2

Reviewed: October 2012, price: £240
www.samsung.com/uk

In a year where Samsung crafted one of the world's best smartphones with the Galaxy S III, it has also created a fantastic mid-level device with its affordably-priced Galaxy Ace 2. Offering a stunning screen, great usability and a strong set of features it packs all that the average smartphone buyer will need. And while it's a shame that the latest version of Android isn't installed, you still get unbeatable value or money.

OS Android 2.3 Gingerbread
Processor 800MHz dual-core
Screen 3.8-inch
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 768MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Video 720p HD

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 118 x 62 x 11mm
Weight 119g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: In terms of sheer bang for your buck, this great phone is one of the best.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Ace 3

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £180
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Ace 3 is a good handset that's been made irrelevant by cheaper competition. Whilst it packs a vibrant display and solid specs, similar phones sit well below the £180 benchmark set here. Samsung will have to rethink its pricing. If it weren't for the Moto G's release this would be an emphatic recommendation - unfortunately Samsung will have to settle for the silver medal.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 121.2 x 62.7 x 9.8mm
Weight 115g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: Premium build quality and visuals at a good price - just not a great one.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy K Zoom

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £400
www.samsung.com/uk

We can see what Samsung set out to achieve with the Galaxy K zoom, and creating a solid Android smartphone with an optical zoom is no small feat. However, it looks like a dated digital camera at best - newer devices are much more compact. If you're after a smartphone with a solid snapper, we'd advise you to seek out the LG G3 or Sony Xperia Z2 instead.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)
Processor Hexa-core: 1.3GHz quad-core + 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 4.8 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 137.5 x 70.8 x 16.6mm
Weight 200g
Battery 2,430mAh

VERDICT: A decent smartphone and an excellent camera in a hideous body.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Mega

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £440
www.samsung.com/uk

With a 6.3-inch screen, the Galaxy Mega falls into phablet territory, but that doesn't change the fact that said screen is hypnotically vibrant. As such, it's a great video player and has room for a sizeable battery. Its resolution, however, is a minor issue and it doesn't have enough internal storage to meet our needs. It will stick out like a sore thumb but you might just fall in love with it.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.7GHz quad-core
Screen 6.3 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 1.9 MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 167.6 x 88 x 8 mm
Weight 199g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: For better or worse it's all about the big, vibrant screen with this handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Note 2

Reviewed: December 2012, price: £409
www.samsung.com/uk

The size of Samsung's Galaxy Note range is a hate it or love it prospect - is it too big to be a phone, or too small to be a tablet? Does a stylus have any place on a smartphone? Either way, it is a brilliant piece of technology, with a whopping great 16 hours of talk time. Its only main flaws are a dull screen and a poor camera - otherwise it comes down to personal preference. Definitely one to try out in store.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.6GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.9MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 151 x 81 x 9 mm
Weight 183g
Battery 1,300 mAh

VERDICT: The king of the big screen phone/tablets, you'll either love it or hate it.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note 3

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £649
www.samsung.com/uk

The Note 3 steps over the competition with its large, engulfing display and great battery life. But it's the stylus that's the star of the show here, with great integration that makes it an ideal Note-keeping device. This makes it ideal for business people on the move, although they'll have to make sure they keep an eye on the easy-to-lose pen at all times.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 13 MP front-facing, 2MP rear-facing
Video 4K

Dimensions 151.2 x 79.2 x 8.3 mm
Weight 168g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: A fantastic portable business device with helpful, unique features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note 4

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £498
www.samsung.com/uk

This year's effort ensures the Note remains top of the phablet pile, but unless you're particularly taken with the stylus and split-screen app combo, you shouldn't discount the latest flagship phones. The LG G3 and new Motorola Moto X are stunning devices, only slightly smaller in size and power. Unless you've got a thing for faux leather, that is, in which case the Note 4 is the best gadget ever made.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.7GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 3.7MP front-facing

Video 2160p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 153.5 x 78.6 x 8.5mm
Weight 176g
Battery 3,220mAh

VERDICT: Still king of the phablets, but not by such a distance this time around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





WHAT MOBILE EDITOR'S CHOICE ★★★★★

Samsung Galaxy S2

£330 SIM-free
www.samsung.com/uk

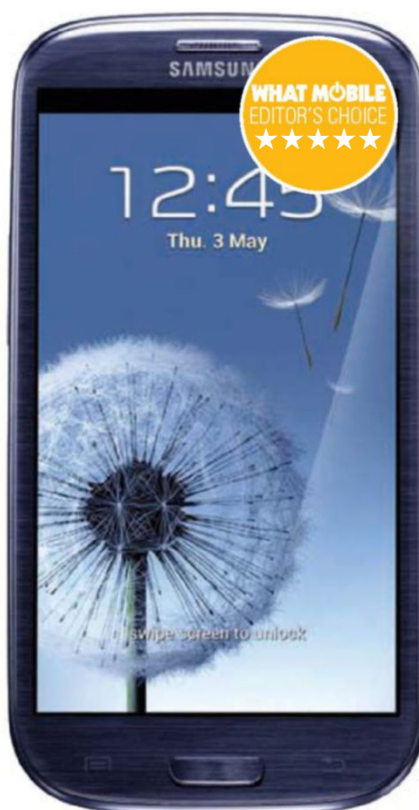
The Galaxy S II is one of Samsung's top-end smartphones and was your Phone of the Year 2011, according to reader votes for the What Mobile Awards. It offers blisteringly fast performance, a decent camera, strong battery life and a great screen. Alongside the newer Galaxy S III, it's the biggest threat Apple has seen since the iPhone launched, and with good reason. Few phones offer such a good user experience.

OS Android 2.3 Gingerbread
Processor 1.2GHz ARM Cortex-A9
Screen 4.3-inch+
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 125 x 66 x 9mm
Weight 116g
Battery 1,650 mAh

VERDICT: An award-winning Android phone that effortlessly impresses across the board.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



WHAT MOBILE EDITOR'S CHOICE ★★★★★

Samsung Galaxy S3

Reviewed: July 2012, price: £485
www.samsung.com/uk

Matching up to the mighty Galaxy S II was always going to be a tall order, but with the release of the Galaxy S III Samsung has clearly surpassed expectations. With its stunning design, amazing usability, high-powered performance and cutting-edge features, it measures up to the best of the competition and sets a new benchmark for its rivals. If you're looking for one of the best smartphones you can buy, this is it.

OS Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
Processor 1.4GHz ARM Cortex-A9
Screen 4.8 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing,

1.9MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Size 137 x 71 x 9mm
Weight 133g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A masterpiece of design and usability. This is the benchmark to beat.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S3 Mini

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £300
www.samsung.com/uk

Something of a misnomer, this is no relation to its bigger brother, the S III, despite the design similarities. The Mini is little more than a shrunk down Galaxy S II. If users want a budget Galaxy, they are better off pursuing that (former) flagship on a budget plan - this is extortionately expensive for what you get.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GHz RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions: 121.6 x 63 x 9.9 mm
Weight 111.5g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: A cheeky move by Samsung to pass this off as a premium device. It's not.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy S4

Reviewed: July 2012, price: £550
www.samsung.com/uk

An impressive hardware offering with intriguing new software and camera features but these need to be perfected and integrated into the device as a whole before the S4 can really be called a knock out. While the phone's processor seemed to struggle with games and the design is pretty similar to the S3, this is a solid offering from Samsung in the flagship race.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
CPU 1.6 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Cameras 13MP front-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 136.6 x 69.8 x 7.9 mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An impressive offering with interesting but not integrated new software.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S4 Active

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £400
www.samsung.com/uk

The Active S4 is ideal for people looking for a more protected smartphone, although it does make some sacrifices. Its design is too rugged for mainstream appeal and its display and camera aren't great. But it's a great hybrid for an underwater camera and is perfect for adventurous lifestyles.

OS Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.9 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.7 x 71.3 x 9.1 mm
Weight 151g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: It may not be quite as good as its big brother, but it certainly has its purpose.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £530
www.samsung.com/uk

The thing about Galaxy handsets is that their flaws are often matters of personal opinion. If you don't mind the samey design, plasticky build and irksome user interface, then the Galaxy S5 could be the best smartphone going. It's insanely powerful, has a blinding display and is even waterproof. If you care about substance over style then the Galaxy S5 is as good as it gets.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.1 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 142 mm x 72.5 mm x 8.1 mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,800mAh

VERDICT: Behind a cheap-looking build lies the beastliest smartphone around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Sony Xperia L

Reviewed: August 2013, price: £249
www.sonymobile.com

This device includes some higher end specs for a low cost handset as well as a snappy camera, a high quality screen and impressive battery life. However, the odd design choices are a distraction and the screen does suffer from lag issues. Lower cost devices like the Nokia 620 offer more at a cheaper price. Access to the Google Play store potentially gives it an edge over the 620, if that's what you're after.

Dimensions 128.7x 65 x 9.7mm, 137g
Display 4.3 inch, TFT capacitive touchscreen, 480x854 pixels, 228 ppi
OS Android 4.1
CPU Qualcomm MSM8230 Snapdragon dual core 1GHz
GPU Adreno 305

Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB, microSD up to 32GB
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n
Camera 8MP, autofocus, LED flash
Battery Up to 9 hours (3G) - accurate

VERDICT: Not a bad choice for gamers on a budget, but for others there are better handsets.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia J

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £149
www.sonymobile.com

The Xperia J is expensive for what you get - no small feat considering it costs £149. This is a severely stripped down version of its big brothers, the Xperia P, T and S. Its performance is poor, the camera and screen is poor. You'd do much better buying last gen's flagship phones on a contract, rather than buying this weak cut price performer. Avoid.

Dimensions 120.5 x 63 x 10.28 mm
OS Windows Phone 8
Screen 4.0-inch S-LCD
Resolution 480x800
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon S4 1GHz dual-core
GPU Adreno 305
RAM 512MB

Storage 4GB expandable via microSD
Cameras 5MP rear, LED flash / 720p HD video
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 3.1, a-GPS and GLONASS
Ports Micro USB, 3.5mm audio
Battery life 1,700mAh

VERDICT: A bit of a rip off for a low spec, poor performing phone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia SP

Reviewed: July 2013, price: £290
www.sonymobile.com

The Xperia SP has an excellent high definition screen, a fairly solid battery life and an interesting notification system involving a panel at the bottom of the phone which lights up with customisable colours when you get a message. However the phone's not as powerful as last year's flagships, is slightly bulky and there are rival phones to be had for less money, particularly if you're not fussed about 4G.

OS Android 4.1
Screen 4.6inch / 720x1280 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Camera 8MP, VGA front
Video Record / Playback
Audio Music player / Stereo Bluetooth / 3.5mm jack
Memory 8GB expandable via micro SD card

Battery 2370mAh

VERDICT: If 4G LTE isn't for you, the Xperia SP isn't quite the bargain it first seems.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Sony Xperia T3

Reviewed: July 2013, price: £290
www.sonymobile.com

If it weren't for the existence of the Sony Xperia T2 Ultra, released less than nine months prior, the T3 would be a solid recommendation. It's a highly satisfactory smartphone with a premium build - but without anybody who would really need to buy it.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 1.4GHz quad-core
Screen 5.3 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.1MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 150.7 x 77 x 7mm
Weight 148g
Battery 2,500mAh

VERDICT: A solid effort makes it a viable mid-range phablet choice.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z

Reviewed: April 2013, price: £499
www.sonymobile.com

Sony's smartphone is a powerhouse in every way, let down only by some unusual design decisions. Water, dust and shock resistant, it's giant screen size will come down to personal preference, as will its unusual design. Otherwise it has all of Sony's bells and whistles, including some clever use of NFC with NFCs stereos, TVs and laptops.

Dimensions 139 x 71 x 7.9 mm and 146g
OS Android 4.1.2 (Jelly Bean).
Screen 5 inch, Capacitive touchscreen, 1080 x 1920
Processor Qualcomm Krait quad-core 1.5 GHz
RAM 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB, microSD (to 32GB)

Cameras Main 13.1 MP, 4128x3096 pixels, autofocus, LED flash. Front - 2.2 MP, 1080p@30fps
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC enabled
Ports MicroUSB v2.0, MicroSD, 3.5mm audio jack.
Battery Li-Ion 2330 mAh battery

VERDICT: A powerhouse phone, let down only by some design niggles.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z1

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £475
www.sonymobile.com

It's a little on the large side, but Sony's latest handset is rock solid, with powerful hardware and a unique design. Fans of the company will be right at home with the software that stores movies, music and games you've bought across other platforms. Add in a great camera and you've got a phone that stops just short of best in class.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Snapdragon 800 quad-core 2.2GHz
Screen 1080 x 1920 pixels, 5 inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB expandable up to 64GB via micro SD
Camera 20.7 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports micro SD, microUSB
Battery 3000 mAh
Dimensions 144 x 74 x 8.5mm
Weight 170g

VERDICT: Software makes it great for Sony fans, hardware makes it good for the rest

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Sony Xperia Z1 Compact

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £449

www.sonymobile.com

If you hate giant displays and don't have the patience for Apple's iOS and its restrictive App Store, the Sony Xperia Z1 Compact your only choice, and a great one at that. Sony have done well to make a phone with the power to rival the mighty iPhone in an equally small package. In-built Sony-branded apps such as Walkman and PlayStation is an inherent plus, too. Fingers crossed for a KitKat 4.4 upgrade soon.

OS Android 4.3
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Screen 4.3-inch HD Triluminos
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB, expandable to 64GB

Camera 20.7MP Exmor RS
Video 720p
Connectivity Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 9.5mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: The most powerful, best looking compact Android available. Simple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £579

www.sonymobile.com

The Z2 matches its rivals' power and usability. A lack of design innovation and similar specs might deter Z1 owners from upgrading, though, and the large size might not appeal to fans of smaller devices. That said, superior imaging and a powerful processor and CPU means it excels in the right places.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.8 x 73.3 x 8.2mm
Weight 163g
Battery 3,200mAh

VERDICT: An immaculate smartphone, if only a small step up from its predecessor.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z3

Reviewed: December 14, price: £549

www.sonymobile.com

We were all a little bit surprised when Sony elected to release a new flagship a matter of months after the Xperia Z2 hit shelves. After reviewing it though, the company's reasoning is obvious. The Z3 is a true flagship as worthy of your attention (and cash) as any other in this Buyer's Guide. The Z3 has premium design, hugely powerful internals, and an array of neat features. A very impressive device.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146 x 72 x 7.3mm
Weight 152g
Battery 3,100mAh

VERDICT: Sony's best full-sized offering yet, although the camera is aging a little now.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Sony Xperia Z3 Compact

Reviewed: December 14, price: £429
www.sonymobile.com

The Xperia Z3 Compact is indisputably the most powerful compact Android ever made. We can't really slight it for anything, and no other Android phone in its size bracket can come close to matching it. It's remarkable that Sony has managed to squeeze almost the exact same technology from the Z3 into a smaller body. Finally, Android power-users have a valid option in the sub-five inch display category.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 4.6 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 8.6mm
Weight 129g
Battery 2,600mAh

VERDICT: The definitive small-sized Android smartphone. The most powerful yet.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart 4 Power

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £79
www.vodafone.co.uk

The benchmark scores of a £79 phone were never going to impress anyone: the Smart 4 Power is not a handset for playing the latest taxing games on. That said, it's enough to deliver on the advantages of 4G. If instant information rather than instant gratification is what you're after, this phone delivers for the price.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141 x 71.4 x 9.5mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Poor specs distract from what is an ergonomic and capable 4G starter.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Mini

Reviewed: September 2013, price: £50
www.vodafone.co.uk

The Smart Mini is almost as cheap as chips, and it shows. Whilst it's not a bad device, it's not a particularly good one either. The size is great and for the price you couldn't go wrong — but you could also spend an extra tenner and get a whole lot more. The performance was very sluggish and the screen had dismal quality, but the battery just kept on lasting, going several days on a single charge — a rarity these days.

Dimensions 115 x 62.3 x 12.2mm
Weight 118
OS Android 4.1.1 Jelly Bean
Screen 3.5-inch TFT capacitive touchscreen, 320 x 480 pixels, 165 ppi
Processor 1 GHz
RAM 512MB
Storage 4GB, micro SD slot

Camera 2MP, 1600 x 1200 pixels
Video VGA @ 30 fps
Audio MP3, WMA,
Battery 300h standby, 7h talktime (3G)

VERDICT: Extremely cheap which shows through the sluggish performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Yezz Andy A5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £207
www.sayezz.com

Camera phone fans on a tight budget should definitely seek out the Andy A5 for its affordable price and high-quality camera. If taking photos is not that important to you then you'll probably have seen the uninspired design and bland features a million times before.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean) **Weight** 106g
Processor Quad-core 1.2GHz **Battery** 2,000mAh
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Connectivity 3G, wi-fi
Dimensions 144.1 x 73.5 x 8.6mm

VERDICT: A great camera, but the rest struggles against more bullish counterparts.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



ZTE Blade Vec 4G

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £153
www.ztedevices.co.uk

Once you've fixed all the software customisations present on the Vec 4G, you're left with a pretty respectable performer for the price. The large, sharp display does a great job of quickly rendering web pages over 4G. Unfortunately, the Vec 4G battery's small capacity and demanding hardware mean you'll often find the phone emptied by the end of the day. It also has storage issues - namely no SD card slot.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat **Connectivity** 4G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core **Dimensions** 142.3 x 70.4 x 7.8mm
Screen 5 inches **Weight** 155g
Resolution 720 x 1280 **Battery** 2,300 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

VERDICT: Solid specs for 4G at a reasonable price, but there are better options out there.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



ZTE Blade V

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £99.99
www.ztedevices.co.uk

A fantastic price makes the ZTE Blade V easy to recommend for first-time buyers. Anyone hoping to get the most out of a smartphone's apps and snaps should look elsewhere, but if you don't want to worry about a phone for the kids being broken or stolen, then this is your guy.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean **Weight** 130g
Processor Snapdragon S4 **Battery** 1,800 mAh
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 480 x 800, 4 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Camera 5 MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64 x 10.9mm

VERDICT: A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HD 8.9"

Reviewed: May 2013, price: £229/259
www.amazon.co.uk

A good looking e-reader with tablet capabilities, limited by Amazon's annoying operating system and app eco-system, and an annoyingly slow browser. This device will doubtless be a commercial success, with its branding and ease of use, but for the more serious user there are much better tablets out there.

Dimensions 240 x 164 x 8.8 mm	RAM 1 GB RAM
OS Customized Android 4.0	Storage 16 GB/32 GB
Screen 8.9 inch IPS LCD capacitive touchscreen	Cameras front facing 1.3MP with 720p video
Resolution 1920 x 1200, 254 ppi	Wireless 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band
Processor TI OMAP 4470 dual-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A9	Ports USB 2.0, 3.5mm audio jacks, Bluetooth A2DP
GPU PowerVR SGX544	Battery life 10 hours (accurate)

VERDICT: A solid, functional tablet which is limited by its Amazon associations.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Acer Aspire P3

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £550
www.amazon.co.uk

The P3 suffers from an identity crisis in trying to be both a tablet and a laptop. Its thick build makes it an uncomfortable, bulky slate while the specs fail to live up to some of its rivals. Still, it's about as powerful as the current Windows 8 tablets get and available at a great price for this kind of device.

Processor Intel® Core™ i5-3339Y processor (1.5 GHz, 2.0 GHz with TurboBoost, 3 MB cache)	Screen Size 11.6"
Operating System Windows 8	Screen Resolution 1366x768
Memory 4GB DDR3	Dimensions 295 x 190 x 10 mm
Storage 120 GB SSD	Weight 790g
Graphics Intel HD Graphics 4000	

VERDICT: Too thick to be a tablet but available at a good price.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Advent Vega Tegra Note 7

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £140
www.nvidia.co.uk

It's a contender, alright. Aside from some clunky desing issues, the Advent Vega Tegra Note 7 is a powerful and punchy little machine. If you're after a compact and affordable tablet its speed sets it aside from its rivals as a device that's great for gaming, customising images and browsing the web.

OS Android Jelly Bean 4.3	Weight 320g
Processor Nvidia Tegra 4	Battery 8 hours
Screen 7 inches	
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels	
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0	
Dimensions 119 x 199 x 9.6mm	

VERDICT: Its speed sets it apart from its competition. A cheap and capable device.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HDX

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199-329
www.amazon.co.uk/kindle

The Kindle Fire HDX is around £100 more than the Fire but the improved screen and processor justifies the extra cost. The real human Help feature will be a boon to tablet newbies; experienced users will regard it as a gimmick. The HDX is a top-rate device – but if you're not a regular Amazon customer you're better off with a Nexus.

OS Amazon customised Android OS, v4.1.2
PROCESSOR Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core
SCREEN 1902 x 1200 pixels, 7 inches
MEMORY 2GB RAM
STORAGE 16GB, 32GB, 64GB versions available
CAMERA 8MP front-facing
VIDEO 720HD
WIRELESS Wi-fi (optional Vodafone 4G version)
PORTS microUSB
DIMENSIONS 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9 mm
WEIGHT 302g

VERDICT: A significant update to the Fire and ideal for Amazon users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad Mini

Reviewed: December 2012, price: £269
www.apple.com/uk

The iPad Mini represents Apple playing it safe, which is to say, disappointing. This is little more than an iPad 2, with all its limitations - a low res screen and weak processor power - shrunk down to an odd 7.9-inch size. It is also overpriced, the Google Nexus 7 offers superior performance for £100 less. Despite its luxurious design, you really are paying for little more than 4G support, and Apple's App Store. Average.

OS iOS 6.0.1
Screen 7.9-inch LED-backlit IPS LCD
Resolution 768 x 1024 pixels at 162 pixels per inch
Input Capacitive touchscreen
CPU Apple A5 1GHz dual core
GPU PowerVR SGX543MP2
Memory 512MB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing
Video 1920x1080 (1080P HD) at 30fps. Video stabilised
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, Apple Lightning port (USB 2.0)
Size 200 x 134.7 x 7.2mm
Weight 308g

VERDICT: Little more than a shrunken iPad 2 with 4G. Disappointing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad 3

Reviewed: April 2012, price: £399
www.apple.com/uk

The new iPad boasts the highest-resolution display of any tablet, as well as an improved 5MP camera and better connectivity. Not to mention a high-powered new processor which makes it the most powerful iPad ever, too. Though some may resist the upgrade path, the unrivalled Retina display is a subtle but deeply appealing feature which will become more and more desirable. The new iPad is by far the best tablet around

OS iOS 5
Screen 9.7-inch TFT
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Processor 1GHz Cortex-A9
Memory 1GB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD
Wireless 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, proprietary Apple connector
Standby time 720 hours
Use time 9 hours
Size 241 x 186 x 9mm
Weight 662g

VERDICT: There's simply no contest - the new iPad is the best tablet in the world.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPad 4

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £399
www.apple.com/uk

A rather cheeky move by Apple to release the iPad 4 (or 'iPad with Retina Display') just months after the iPad 3. All it really adds is a new processor (the iPhone 5's A6X) and Apple's new lightning connector. However, this means it remains as the best tablet money can buy - and Apple's App Store and its 300,000 dedicated tablet apps only make the proposition more enticing.

OS iOS 6.0.1, **Screen** 9.7 inch LED
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels at 264 ppi pixel density
CPU Apple A6X, Dual-core
GPU PowerVR SGX554MP4,
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64 GB storage
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing
Video 1080P HD at 30fps
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, Bluetooth 4.0
Cellular 4G, 3G, 2G
Ports Lightning Connector (USB2.0) and 3.5mm audio jack,
Dimensions 241.2 x 185.7 x 9.4 mm
Weight 662 g

VERDICT: The best tablet money can buy.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 79 Platinum

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £150
www.archos.com

With so many budget tablets to choose from the Archos 79 Platinum has no features or unique selling points to attract the consumer in a saturated market. Its hardware is woefully underpowered, its features are bog standard and it is at least £10 too expensive. Its attractive looks are not enough to redeem it. The bottom line is that it should have never been conceived.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean **Weight** 366g
Processor Quad-core A9 1.6GHz **Battery** Lithium Polymer
Screen 7.85 inches
Resolution 1,024 x 768 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 2MP rear-facing
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth
Dimensions 201 x 137 x 8mm

VERDICT: There is no reason you ever would, or should, buy it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 101 XS 2

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250
www.archos.com

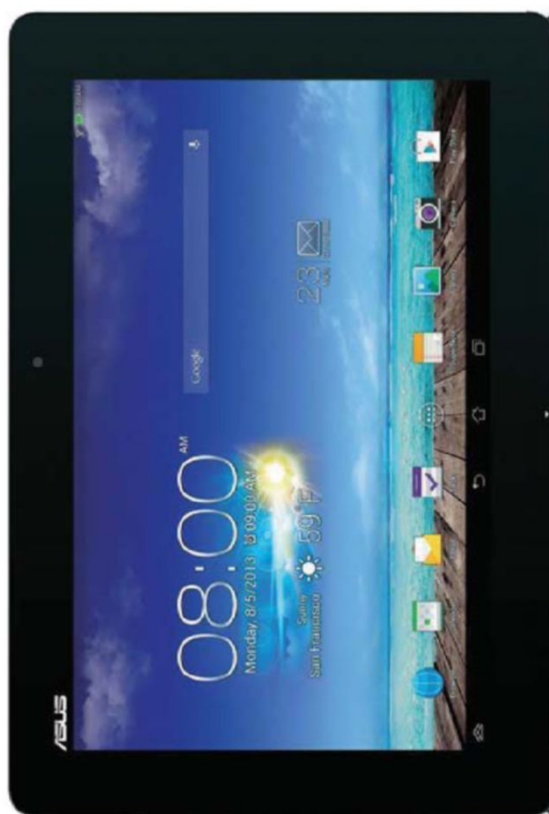
A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

OS Android 4.2.2 **Weight** 10.1mm (tablet), 273 x 169 x 5mm (keyboard)
SCREEN 10.1-inch/1,280 x 800 pixels **WEIGHT** 636g (tablet), 200g (keyboard)
CAMERA 2MP rear, 2MP front
VIDEO Record/playback
AUDIO Music player/3.5mm jack
MEMORY 16GB expandable via microSD
DIMENSIONS 273 x 169 x

VERDICT: A great price is let down by a poor screen and cheap build.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Asus Transformer Pad TF701T

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £429
www.asus.com

The Asus Transformer Pad TF701T packs a beautiful screen and the keyboard dock is well thought out. But dated software and the threat of a Google Nexus 10 sequel make this a niche device. Do you really need a keyboard? The iPad mini begs to differ.

OS Android 4.3 (via an over-the-air update)
SCREEN 10.1-inch/2,560 x 1,600 pixels
INPUT Capacitive touchscreen
CAMERA 5MP rear, 1.2MP front
VIDEO Record/playback
AUDIO Music player/3.5mm jack

MEMORY 32/64GB
BATTERY Tablet 31Wh, dock 16Wh

VERDICT: It packs fast hardware but can't compete with the iPad Air or Nexus range

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Asus VivoPad

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £399
www.asus.com

This delivers on the promise of a being a Windows 8 PC in tablet form, with access to powerful apps like Photoshop. Managing this on a 10-inch tablet is no small feat. That said, the Intel Atom processor keeps it from reaching its full potential, struggling with many of the things you would want to use a PC for. The lack of storage hinders it further.

OS Windows 8
Processor Intel Atom Z2760 dual-core
Screen 10.1-inch (1366 x 768 pixels) IPS display
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 64GB SSD
Camera 8 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports Micro HDMI, Micro SD, Micro USB
Dimensions 262.5 x 171 x 9.7 mm
Weight 580g
Battery Li-Po 6,760 mAh

VERDICT: A good attempt at making a PC tablet, but too underpowered.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Google Nexus 9

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319
www.google.co.uk/nexus

The Google Nexus 9 is an impressive and welcome return to the tablet market for HTC, and a jewel of a gadget for Android 5.0 to debut on. The size is right, and if you know for sure you want an Android tablet, it's your best bet - it's certainly the best slate HTC has ever made - but for the money we'd still go for the quality build and thriving eco-system of an iPad.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Screen 8.9-inch
Resolution 2048 x 1536 pixels
Processor Tegra K1 2.3GHz
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB internal
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD

Dimensions 153.68mm x 228.25mm x 7.95mm
Weight 425g
Battery 6,700 mAh

VERDICT: The best tablet on the market - if you insist on Android, that is.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Google Nexus 10

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £319

www.google.co.uk/nexus

Finally, the Android tablet everyone's been waiting for - except Apple. This is a tablet that can go head to head with the best in the Apple iPad stable - it has a powerful processor, a Retina Display quality screen, the latest version of Android. Along with the Nexus 7, this is the best tablet Android users can buy. The only flaws are an uninspired body, and a dearth of tablet specific apps.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)	Cameras 5 MP (main), 1.9 MP (front)
Dimensions 263.9 x 177.6 x 8.9 mm, 603g	Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
Screen 10-inch	NFC Android Beam
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels	Storage 16 GB/32 GB
Input Super PLS TFT capacitive touch-screen	Connectivity Micro USB, Micro HDMI, 3.5mm headphone jack
CPU Exynos 5, Dual-core ARM Cortex-A15	Battery 9,000 mAh
RAM 2 GB	

VERDICT: The best Android tablet of 2013 slips behind the iPad only due to apps.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



HP Slate 7

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £125

www.hp.com

The steel frame makes the Slate 7 an impressive sight and its audio uses Beats technology to great effect. The fantastic price will help it to undercut some of its rivals, though the slow processor and low quality camera keep it from besting them elsewhere.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	Video 720p
Processor Dual-core 1.6 GHz Cortex-A9	Dimensions 197.1 x 116.1 x 10.7 mm
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7.0 inches	Weight 372 g
Memory 1 GB RAM	Battery non-removable, 5h media time
Storage 8 GB expandable to 32GB via SD card	
Camera 3.15 MP pixel rear facing, VGA front facing	

VERDICT: Great audio and build, but corners have been cut to keep costs down.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Lenovo ThinkPad 8

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £424

www.lenovo.com

If you just want a device for general tasks then you can find better alternatives within Lenovo's Yoga range of Android slates, and elsewhere. If you're a fan of Windows and in search of a bulkier device that offers plenty of productivity tools, then the ThinkPad is an (almost) viable option.

OS Windows 8.1	Video 1080p
Processor 2.4GHz quad-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 8.3 inches	Dimensions 8.83 x 5.2 x 0.35 inches
Resolution 1,200 x 1,920 pixels	Weight 439g
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 32GB	
Micro SD compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing	

VERDICT: Even with so few Windows tablets available the ThinkPad still fails to stand out.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Lenovo Miix 2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £255
www.microsoft.com/surface

With solid performance across the board, frequently usable built-in apps and compact size the Miix 2 is a small but surprisingly versatile slate. Despite the limitations that come with the Windows OS, it performs general tasks well and, for the price, won't let you down. With 3G capability you can even connect to the internet on the move. Overall, it offers plenty of pleasant surprises to combat the weaknesses of its OS.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8 inches
Resolution 1280 x 800 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 8.3 x 215.6 x 131mm
Weight 350g
Battery 4,730mAh

VERDICT: A small but substantial Windows offering that still trails its Android rivals.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga 11S

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £399
www.lenovo.com

The IdeaPad might have a cheesy name but it excels in almost every other area, with a fun, quirky design, amazing performance that's ideal for gaming and a slew of ports for accessibility. This comes at the price of the battery, which won't make it through a full day of use, and it's sometimes awkward to hold. But if its raw performance you're looking for, this delivers.

OS Windows 8
Processor Intel Core i7-3689Y 1.5GHz
Graphics Intel HD Graphics 4000
Screen 11.6-inches (1366x 768 pixels) IPS
Memory 8GB DDR3 RAM
Storage 256GB SSD
Connectivity Wi-Fi,
 Bluetooth 4.0
Keyboard Full-sized QWERTY
Ports USB 3.0, USB 2.0, 2x1 card reader, HDMI-out
Dimensions 297.94 x 203.96 x 17 mm
Weight 1.39 kg

VERDICT: A fantastic device that offers you all the power you could ask for in a hybrid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Microsoft Surface 2 Pro

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £720
www.microsoft.com/surface

We can't fault Microsoft's ambition for the powerful Surface Pro 2 to become your all-in-one portable work and play device. It's got a great display and solid hardware but a lack of dedicated apps, software compromises and stiff - cheaper-competition make it a tough sell.

OS Windows 8.1
Screen 10.6 inches/1,920x1,080 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Camera 720p-resolution front and rear
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack
Memory 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB, expandable
Battery 48Wh

VERDICT: Price holds back what is an otherwise excellent work/play hybrid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Microsoft Surface Pro 3

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £640
www.microsoft.com/surface

From software to hardware and even design the Surface Pro 3 is a wonderful piece of kit. It's refreshing to come across a tablet with grander ideals than the norm, challenging us to rethink the notion of the medium. For most people this could genuinely replace their laptop. It's just a shame, and an almost inexcusable mistake, that the keyboard which is so integral to its function is sold as an expensive extra.

OS Windows 8.1	Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Processor 1.5GHz Intel core i3/2.9GHz Intel core i5/3.7GHz Intel core i7	Camera 5MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Screen 12 inches	Video 1080p
Resolution 2,160 x 1,440 pixels	Connectivity Wi-fi only
Memory 4GB/8GB RAM	Dimensions 292.1mm x 201.4mm x 9.1mm
Storage 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB	Weight 800g
	Battery 42Wh

VERDICT: The first tablet with enough function to conceivably replace a laptop.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 2520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £399
www.nokia.com

The Windows-run Lumia 2520 is a decent first effort from Nokia - and it's certainly one of the more attractive and solid pieces of tablet hardware on the market. It has a few issues with the weight and a lackluster camera but overall we have no trouble recommending this to Windows 8.1 and Lumia fans.

OS Windows 8.1	Dimensions 168 x 267 x 8.9mm, 615g
Screen 10.1 inches, 1,920 x 1,080 pixels, 218PPI	Battery 8120 mAh
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800	
Memory 2GB	
Camera 6.7MP with Carl Zeiss lens	
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack	

VERDICT: A rock solid first effort from Nokia in this market with powerful specs.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Kids

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250
www.nokia.com

The Tab 3 Kids is surprisingly robust, with a solid camera, great battery, fantastic educational apps and software to suit kids. But the premium design doesn't feel like it was meant to be enjoyed by young users and we'd suggest going with a company that specialises in the market rather than one that's testing it out.

OS Android 4.1	Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0
Processor Dual-core 1.2GHz	Ports micro-USB, microSD
Screen 600 x 1,024 pixels, 7 inches	Dimensions 188 x 111.1 x 9.9mm
Memory 1GB RAM	Weight 306g
Storage 8GB/16GB, expandable up to 64GB	Battery Li-Ion 4,000 mAh
Camera 3.15MP (back), 1.3MP (front)	
Video 720p@30fps	

VERDICT: A little too premium for the market it's aimed at.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★

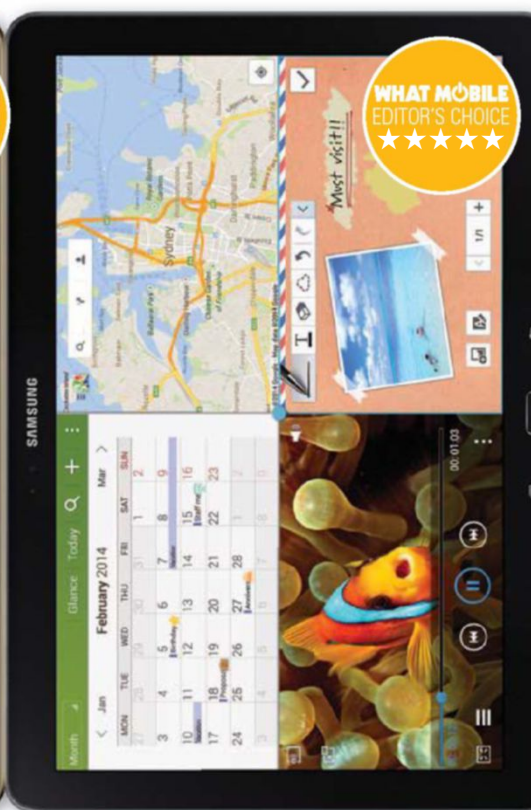




Samsung Galaxy Tab S

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £319
www.samsung.com/uk

While the Tab S may not be a radical departure from other Android tablets, it encompasses everything that is great about a top-notch Samsung product. It's enough to rebuild the Korean giant's brand image, and proof that the company can still surprise us with a fantastic all-round product.



Samsung Galaxy Note Pro 12.2

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £649
www.samsung.com/uk

One of the biggest displays ever seen on a tablet - at no detriment to quality. Combine that with solid design and a super powerful processor to run loads of unique applications and the NotePRO 12.2 is arguably the best tablet on the market. It's certainly the best Android slate, although it's definitely priced as such.



Sony Xperia Z2 Tablet

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £399
www.sony.co.uk

If looks could kill, Sony murdered the competition. Add to that a powerful processor and decent screen size and you have a great new addition to the high-end tablet market. Innovative features like dust and water resistance are impressive too, and manage to make up the expensive price tag.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8.4 inches
Resolution 2,560 x 1,600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB, 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 125.6 x 212.8 x 6.6mm
Weight 294g
Battery 4,900mAh

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Octa-core (1.9GHz + 1.3GHz quad)
Screen 12.2 inches
Resolution 2,560 x 1,600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB/64GB
Camera 8MP rear/2MP front-facing
Video 1,080p Full HD
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 295.6 x 204 x 7.95mm
Weight 750g
Battery 9,500mAh

OS Android OS v4.4.2 (KitKat) 4G LTE
Screen 10.1 inches
Processor Quad-core 2.3 GHz
Memory 3GB
Storage 16GB, microSD up to 64GB
Camera 8.1MP rear, 2.2MP front
Battery 6,000mAh
Network Wi-fi connectivity,

VERDICT: Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

VERDICT: Big, beautiful, functional and priced to match. Android's finest.

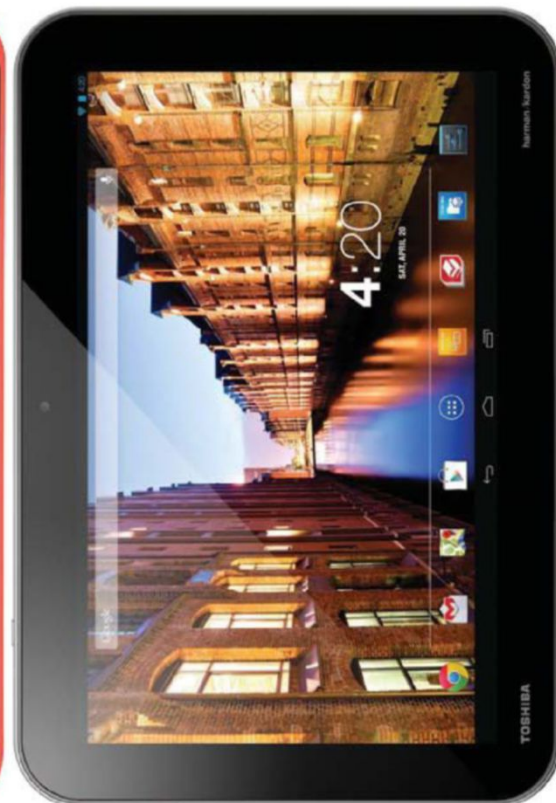
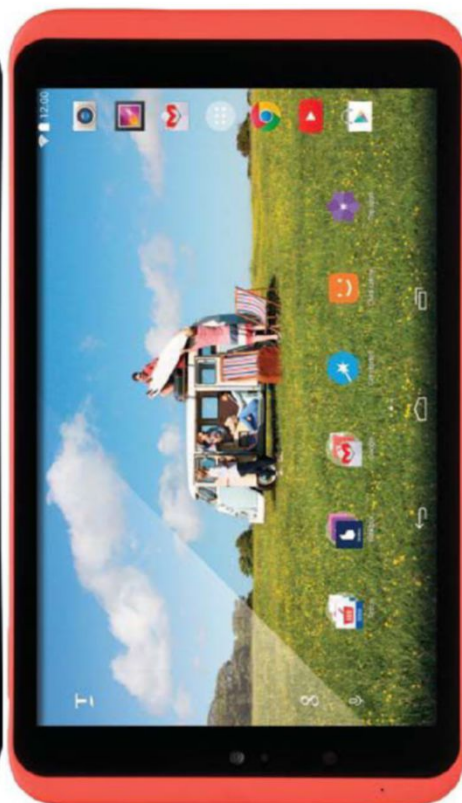
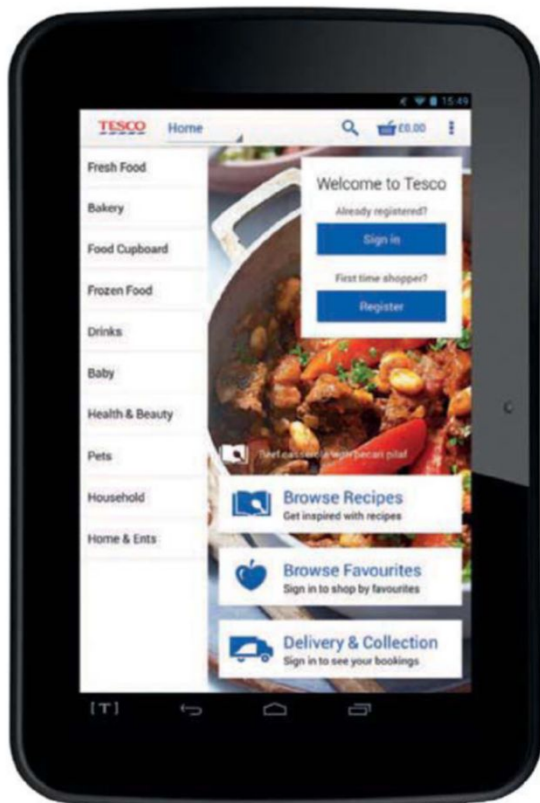
VERDICT: A good all-round tablet, with looks that set it apart from the rest of the flagships.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Tesco Hudl

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £119

www.tesco.com/direct/hudl

No awards for specs or design, but we can recommend the Hudl as a family-oriented tablet. It lets you store pictures, browse the web and watch movies: It may not be groundbreaking, but its simplicity is its greatest strength. That, and its incredible £119 price. Those looking for anything more complicated should head elsewhere.

Tesco Hudl 2

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £129

www.tesco.com/direct/hudl

This is no Tesco Value attempt at a tablet. Make no mistake, the Hudl 2 is a fantastic Android slate that's great value for money. Sure, it's not on the cutting edge like Google's Nexus series of devices, but if all you want is a gadget to casually surf the web, watch some films or read a few comics, this device is every bit as capable as an iPad mini.

Toshiba Excite Pure

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.toshiba.co.uk

The Toshiba Excite Pure's £250 price is attractive but its display is far too faded. It means apps and the like don't look very good. It might appeal to families looking for a cheap way to keep the kids entertained but little else. Even so, the slow processor and useless apps force us to recommend you look elsewhere.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean) x 9.85 mm
Processor Quad-core A9 **Weight** 370g
Screen 7 inches **Battery** 9 hours
Resolution 1,440 x 900 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Connectivity Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 128.8 x 192.8

OS Android 4.4 KitKat **Connectivity** Wi-fi
Processor 1.83GHz quad-core **Dimensions** 224 x 128 x 9mm
Screen 8.3 inches **Weight** 410g
Resolution 1,920 x 1,200 pixels **Battery** 4,900mAh
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps

OS Android v4.2 (Jelly Bean)
Processor Nvidia Tegra 3
Memory 1GB
Storage 16GB
Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 10.1 inches
Video HD
Audio Stereo
Dimensions 261.6 x 177.8 x 10.2mm

VERDICT: Cheap as cheap can be, with specs to match. It keeps things simple.

VERDICT: Don't be fooled - Tesco is now a serious contender in the tablet space.

VERDICT: It's got a cheap price tag but the poor display and tech shows why.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Fitbit Flex

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £79.99

www.fitbit.com

Minor niggles aside, the Fitbit Flex is possibly the best fitness wearable on the market. Its features are so diverse, and its app so beautiful and intuitive, that it can be tailored to just about anyone's lifestyle. With interchangeable bands in a variety of colours, and a low price, the Flex is practically a must-buy.

VERDICT: A fantastic companion app and great functionality put the Flex on top.



Jawbone UP24

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £99.99

www.jawbone.com

If you want a wearable which isn't just for the athlete inside of you, but for every aspect of your life, then the Jawbone UP24 is almost perfect. It both looks and feels great, and the app manages to provide incredible amounts of detail without being ugly or overwhelming. Plus, the sleep tracker and smart alarm are revelatory.

VERDICT: Incredibly detailed tracking and great looks sets the UP24 apart.



Misfit Shine

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £79.95

www.misfit.com

When considering the Misfit Shine's pros and cons, the price should be a big factor to consider - remember, this is a crowd funded device which costs at least £30 less than its more esteemed rivals. Still, you may decide that not having to deal with the Shine's rather limited app is worth the extra cash. With waterproofing, cycling tracking and versatile wearability it still offers plenty of advantages, though.

VERDICT: A great budget option, with some neat tricks of its own.



Nike+ Fuelband SE

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £89
www.nike.com

The Nike+ FuelBand SE is close to being the perfect sports tracker. It's social capabilities combined with its numerous features to keep you motivated ensure that it will be a permanent mainstay in any gym addicts kit bag. You might not be so keen on wearing it every single day, though, with its appealing design being more clearly tailored to a casual setting. Plus, its lack of waterproofing could be a deal-breaker for some.

VERDICT: When it comes to fitness, Nike is a name you can trust - this is no exception.



Samsung Galaxy Gear 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £250
www.samsung.com

The design needs a rethink but the Samsung Galaxy Gear 2 provides decent fitness tracking features and a good music player. Trimming down on other functions, however, would have made for a slimmer and sleeker product. It would be unfair to say this is a needless addition as it packs a lot of functions, but it's an expensive product that's hindered by an impractical design and redundant features.

VERDICT: A decent effort that has since been eclipsed by superior Android Wear devices.



Sony Smartband SWR10

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £80
www.sony.com

A mishmash of features means that the SWR10 occupies an odd space in the wearable tech world. But at least it is a space all of its own. No similar device can offer you all of the features of the SWR10, though that's irrelevant if those features don't suit your needs.

On the plus side, a large number of the SWR10's drawbacks are with its partner app, and apps can always be improved.

VERDICT: Potential to be a serious contender, but a hard sell for most in its current state.



Wearable compatibility guide



LG
G Watch R



Pebble
Watch



Samsung
Gear Live



Sony
Smartwatch 3



Garmin
Vivofit



Archos
Activity Tracker



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6 / 6 plus



HTC
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