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the edge of
the Galaxy?

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In this issue we review the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge and marvel at its power - and its price of more than £700. Yes, that is a very high price to pay for a top smartphone. Especially when you consider that the OnePlusOne (p30) and Motorola G (p37) can be obtained for just £269 and £150 and will also deliver a powerful Android-type smartphone experience.

However, let's not be too harsh on Samsung's SIM-free pricing for the edge. Yes, £770 IS a lot of cash for a smartphone. You could buy a powerful PC laptop and just a £100 or so more would see you on your way to an Apple MacBook Air. Certainly nearly £800 is a lot to pay for a mobile phone. But the edge isn't a mobile phone. It's a miniature super-computer, quality camera, TV set, Hi-Fi system and sat nav device.

Only a few years ago all that stand-alone equipment would have cost thousands of pounds. Around 25 years ago a voice-call only analogue mobile phone the size of a brick with a three-hour battery life would have cost more than £2,000 (around £5,000 in today's money). So it is incredible how the power and functionality of the mobiles we take for granted and discard after a year or so has grown for such a relatively cheap price.

If the car industry had kept pace with mobile technology we would all be driving £5,000 nuclear-powered flying cars.

Perhaps our observation on the edge's price has been sharpened by comparing it to the all-conquering iPhone. Apple can get away with naming its own price for the iPhone as it controls the hardware and software. Want iOS? The iPhone is the only game in town. But the edge IS 'just' another Android-powered product. Granted it is an exceptionally powerful and attractive device. But because it is just one of dozens of similar devices we must judge it in relation to those other top flagships that deliver the same experience.

On that basis we'd have a tough time justifying the edge's price. But – if it WAS the world's ONLY multi-functioned super pocket-computer with all the functions alluded to – it would be cheap at twice the price.



The What Mobile team

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WIN ONE OF FOUR PAIRS OF BASSBUDS EARPHONES

This month we have one of four Bassbuds Classic Collection earphones to give away.

These in-ear headphones focus on low-end sounds, making them perfect for anyone who's after some heavy bass.

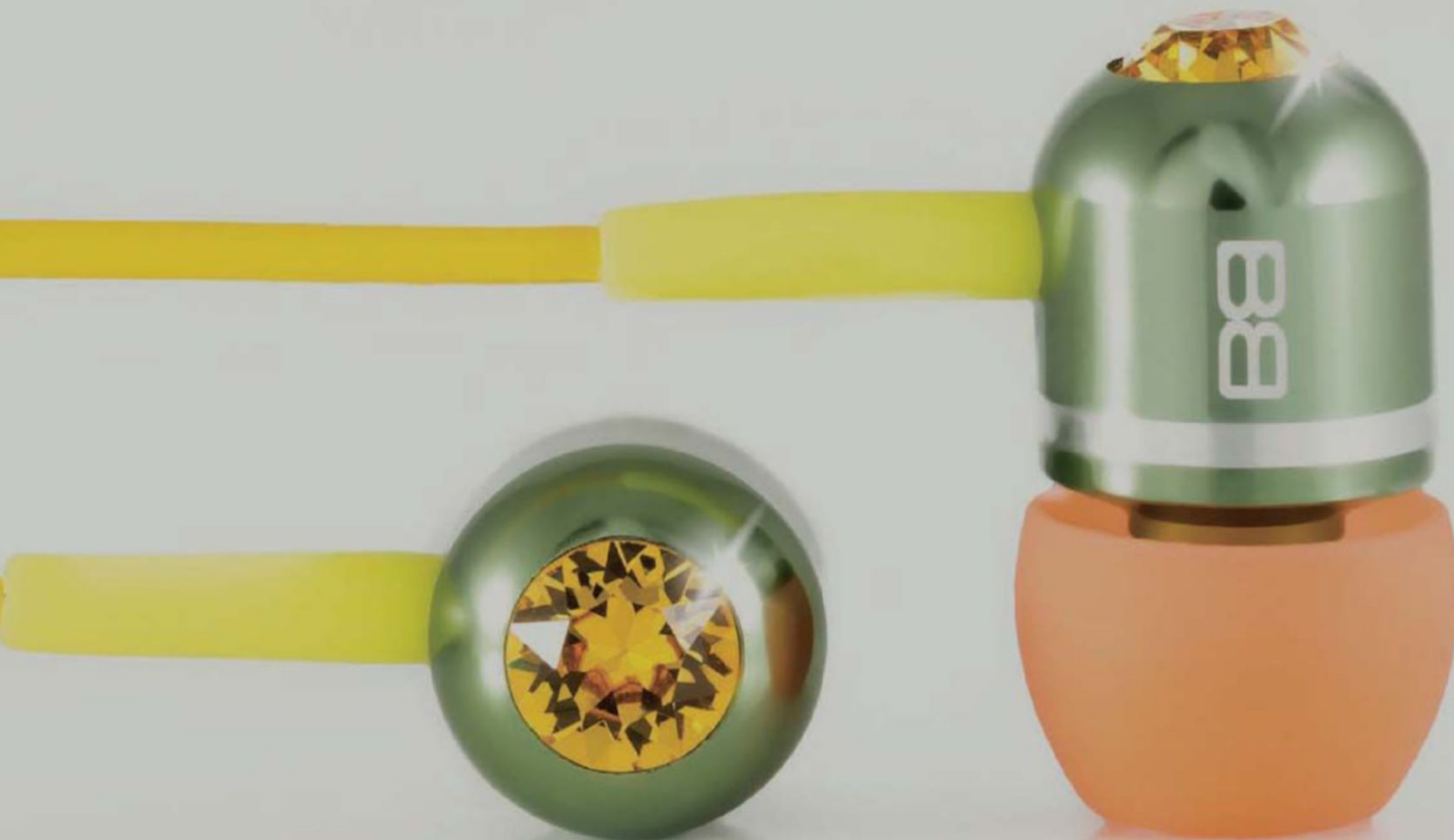
Built-in Swarovski crystals add a touch of class and elegance to them too. For a chance to win these headphones, simply answer this simple question.

What was the first full release of Android named?


- A. Cupcake**
- B. Crêpe**
- C. Cookie**

Email your entry, name and address (one only) to:
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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: 5 May 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 Karbonn A19. 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.



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Leather look for latest LG flagship

The LG G3 was one of our favourite handsets of 2015 - especially for its literally brilliant screen display. Its successor, the G4 (full review next issue) has an even more impressive specification

LG's next flagship device was revealed at a launch event in London. The most noticeable feature of the device is the leather back option, although you can also get it with a metallic or ceramic back. Improvements have been made to the camera and user interface which suggest that the LG G4 could be a serious contender against the Samsung Galaxy S6, One M9, and iPhone 6.

The LG G4 will be available to buy in hand-crafted, full grain leather in three colours: black, brown and red. It is also available in non-leather White, Metallic Grey and Shiny Gold colours.

Its design has been defined by what LG calls the Slim Arc – a curve that runs along the handset's entire body. LG claims that the Slim Arc offers "20 per cent better durability than a smartphone in face-down drops and gives the smartphone a more comfortable and secure feel in the hand."

At the rear of the LG G4 is a 16MP camera that features a wide F1.8 aperture lens, which allows 80 per cent more light in than

NEW FEATURES INCLUDE:

- **Quick Shot** – take pictures without opening the camera by double-tapping a key on the phone's back.
- **Gallery** – quickly scroll through thousands of images and view them on a time line. 'Memories' arranges photos and videos into an album based on when and where they were taken.
- **Events** – create one, unified calendar by dragging appointments and activities from multiple calendars and social media. Once setup, you needn't log into multiple calendars again.
- **Smart Notice** – personalised notifications for weather, travel and analysing your regular habits and issue personalised messages based on habits.
- **Quick Help** – search for instant answers about using the LG G4.





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other cameras. In simple terms, this means pictures will come out more detailed. There's also Optical Image Stabilisation that compensates for jittery hands and reduces the amount of blur. LG claims the camera can start up in just six-tenths of a second.

A Colour Spectrum Sensor also makes its way into the LG G4, a first for any smartphone. The Colour Spectrum Sensor enables the camera to take photographs that are close to what we see with the naked eye.

There's an 8MP camera at the front of the LG G4 that comes with Gesture Interval Shot. Simply open and close your hand in front of the camera whilst its active and Gesture Interval Shot will take four different shots two seconds apart from each other.

MANUAL MODE

Serious photographers will be happy to hear that the LG G4's camera comes with a manual mode. This will allow the user to control focus, shutter speed, exposure and white balance in every shot. Photographs can also be saved in RAW formats that allow for more detailed editing.

The LG G4 is the first smartphone to use LG's new 5.5-inch Quad HD IPS Quantum Display. This offers improved colour, brightness and contrast. The screen also uses Advanced In-Cell Touch, which combines the LCD and touch sensor to give better touch sensitivity.

Android 5.1 Lollipop is the phone's operating system, whilst a high-capacity 3,000AH removable battery powers the LG G4. LG claims that the battery, combined with a Qual-comm Snapdragon 808 processor, will allow the LG G4 to last longer than its predecessor, the LG G3.

"O2 will be the only operator to offer the G4 with the genuine leather brown back"

Paul E. Jacobs, executive chairman of Qualcomm International, said: "LG and Qualcomm Technologies collaborated from the initial stage of the Snapdragon 808 introduction to expertly tune the technologies and make several of the LG G4's unique features possible.

"The resulting G4 smartphone is an ideal example of how the best optimised technologies come together to meet consumers' needs."

Network-wise, the LG 4G is on 4G, LTE and 3G, whilst connectivity includes WiFi and Bluetooth.

The LG G4 is the first phone to use the new UX 4.0 user interface. LG promises that this interface is simple to use and responds to the needs of each user. It eliminates the needless steps that the user might make and provides configuration options for advanced users.

In the UK, O2 will be the only operator to offer the G4 with the Genuine Leather Brown back with a metallic grey front from May 28. Carphone Warehouse is offering the handset with a Genuine Leather Black back and a metallic grey front exclusively during the first month. Three will exclusively stock the ceramic white version of the device until the end of June. UK pricing of the LG G4 still remains unknown.



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Sony Xperia Z4

Sony's next flagship has a confirmed mid-year release date in Japan, but no international launch date has been confirmed.

The Sony Xperia Z4 shares a very similar shape with the Sony Xperia Z3. Boasting a 5.2-inch, full-HD display and a slim 6.9mm, 144-gram body, the follow up to last year's Xperia Z3 promises to be thinner than its predecessor. The device's face measures 146mm by 72mm and features a thin bezel around the 1,920 x 1,080-pixel screen.

The Xperia Z4 will also have powerful cameras and promises to be water and dust resistance. There's a 20.7-megapixel camera at the rear, whilst the front gets a 5-megapixel camera. It also comes with an IP6X dustproof rating and is certified IPX5 and IPX8. What all this means is that device is splash-resistant and can survive being submerged in water. The USB ports are also waterproof.

Specs-wise, the Z4 gets a 64-bit Qualcomm Snapdragon 810 processor, 3GB of RAM, Android 5.0 Lollipop, 32GB of onboard storage and the option to extend this to 128GB with a microSD card.

It will also be available in white, black, copper and aqua green colours.



HTC One M8S



With the HTC One M9's recent launch, you'd be forgiven for thinking that HTC has forgotten all about the HTC One M8.

Well, the Taiwanese brand has just announced the HTC One M8s; a repackaged version of the HTC One M8 that has less of an impact on your wallet. The cheaper handset will cost £379.99 SIM-free, which is much cheaper than the HTC One M8's price of £549.99.

Has this price drop made one of our favourite phones of 2014 any different? The HTC One M8s ditches the HTC One M8's premium processor for a mid-range version, whilst internal storage has been limited to 16GB. You can, however, add up to 128GB of external memory via a micro SD card. The phone also comes pre-installed with Android 5.0 Lollipop.

Although the HTC One M8s has a 13-megapixel camera on the rear, you should still be able to snap some decent quality photographs. The 5-megapixel camera on the front of the phone should also allow you to take some decent selfies.

Looks-wise, HTC hasn't changed much with the price cut and the HTC One M8s looks almost identical to the premium HTC One M8. You can get it in three different colours; silver, gold, and gunmetal grey.

No word on a UK release date yet, but we'll keep you updated on whatmobile.net as more details arrive.

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Heavenly Headphones

Finding the best headphones for your particular ears can be a bit of a headache. We clear up some of the mystique and sonic confusion to help you choose

There's no use having brilliant music on your phone if your 'cans' can't cut it. And if you're serious about music you can forget the headphones that came boxed with your handset. Top sound and build quality take a back seat on these bundled units. Quality

headphones cost more. But you'll realise why as soon as you strap them on and listen to your favourite track. How do you choose? Well, do you like - thumping bass or twanging treble? We surveyed a range of headphones and give our recommendations.

It's all about the frequency response

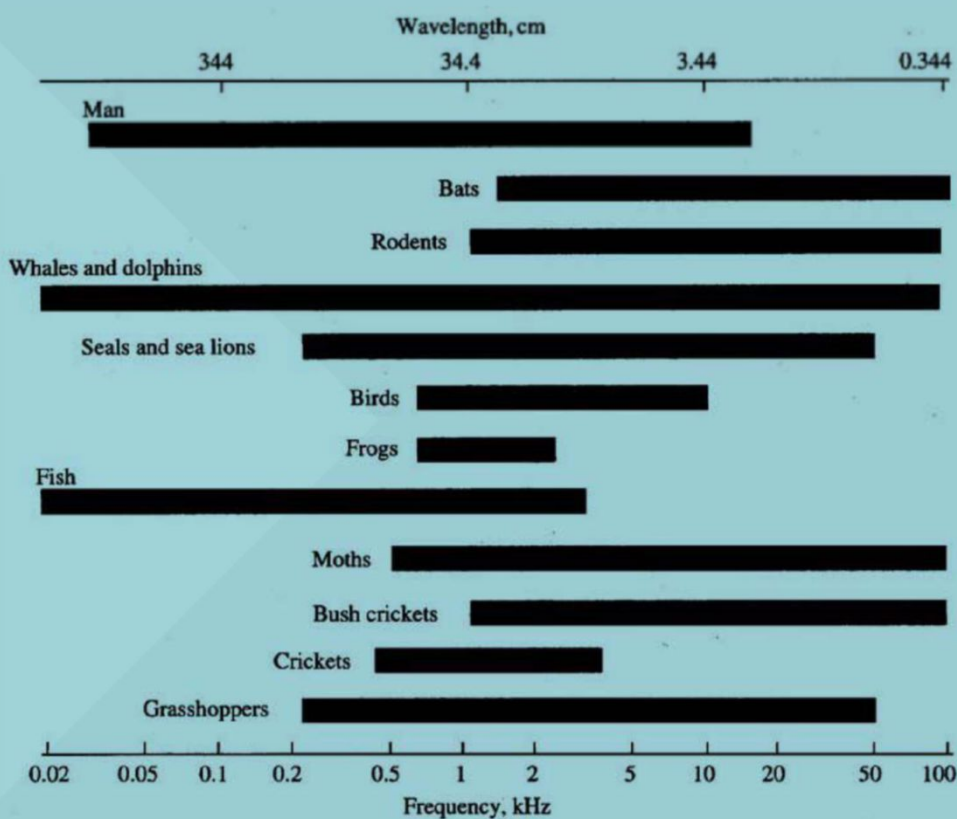
When buying a pair of headphones, you'll probably spot 'frequency response' on the box. 'Frequency response' is the range of bass, mids and treble (high noises) you hear. Frequency response is measured in Hertz (Hz). This relates to the number of times a soundwave (the invisible waves that carry sound) repeats every second.

So a soundwave that repeats 50 times a second would be measured as 50Hz. One that cycles 20,000 times a second would be measured as 20KHz.

Sound at the bottom end of the spectrum is more bass-heavy. Sound at the other end – treble – sounds much higher.

Human hearing only covers 20Hz to 20KHz. Animals such as dogs can hear beyond 20KHz.

Particular headphones go outside the human hearing range and, for example, have a frequency response ranging from 16Hz to 20KHz. Some argue that this is a gimmick because of the limited hearing range humans have. We've tested headphones outside the normal human hearing range to see whether there's any noticeable difference.





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Key



Full size headphones

Earbuds



Lightweight headphones

In-ear headphones



Bluetooth headphones

Frequency range



01

01 /

Aurvana In-Ear 2 Plus

Price: £99.99



15Hz-16KHz

The Aurvana In-Ear 2 Plus provided the best bass out of all the headphones we tested, which shows what a difference going outside the human hearing range can make. They provided a good balance of bass and treble, and we experienced no discomfort throughout use.

02 /

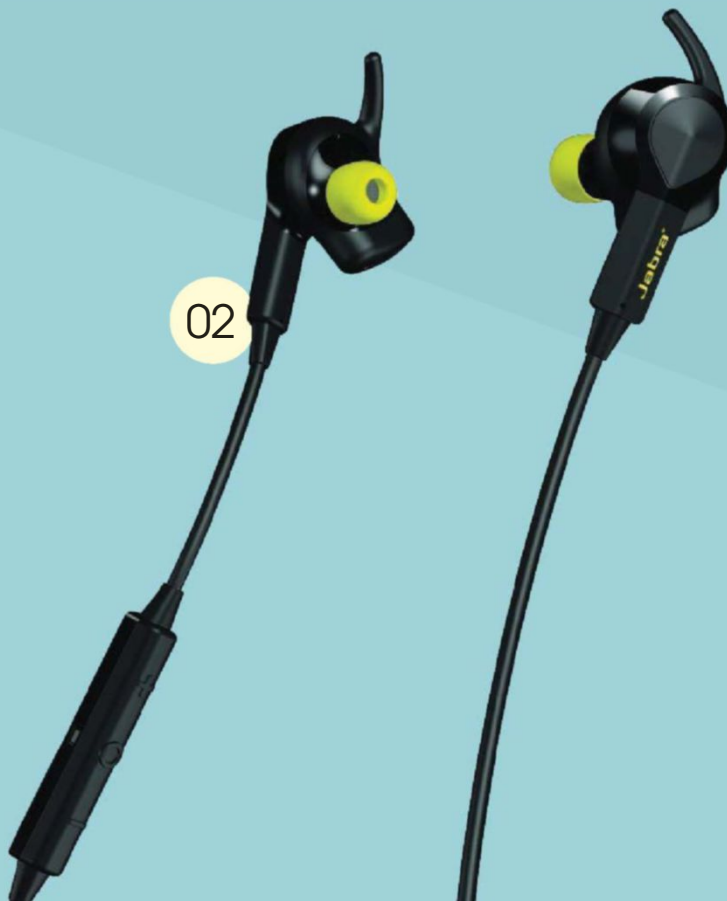
Jabra Sport Rox

Price: £119.99



20Hz-20KHz

Overall sound quality impressed us throughout our tests, which is partly due to the headphone's use of Dolby sound enhancement. These are an ideal choice if you want a good balance between bass, mid-range sound and treble. Even with the correct earpiece size, they were a little uncomfortable compared to the other headphones in our test.



02



03 /
Olixar X2 Pro

Price: £60



We can't fault these headphones for comfort. They were easy to connect to our device and the option to fold them up makes them extra portable. The treble was warm, but the bass could have been heavier. The fact that the frequency response only goes as low as 60Hz is probably the reason why the bass was a little weak.

04 /
Happy Plugs

Price: £24.99

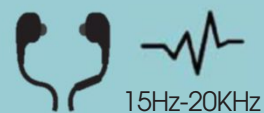


Like the Olixar X2 Pro, the bass was a little weak. One positive the Happy Plugs have over all the other products is the lack of noise leakage. When we took them out of our ears and whacked the sound up to full volume, there wasn't much noise coming out of them. This means the Happy Plugs won't annoy anyone nearby.



05 /
Bassbuds Classic Collection

Price: £39.95



As you can tell by the name, the Bassbuds' focus on thumping bass sounds make them perfect for bass-lovers. This does drown out the treble, however, which might put off those looking for a more balanced sound. Built-in Swarovski crystals also make them look more expensive than their affordable price tag might otherwise suggest.





06 /
**Dr Dre Powerbeats2
 Wireless**

Price: £79.95



These were the most comfortable of the in-ear and Bluetooth headphones we tested. There was a good balance between bass and treble, whilst the ear clips ensured they stayed securely in our ears during our running tests. We could also hear exterior noise quite easily, despite the comfortable snug fit.



07 /
Dr Dre UrBeats

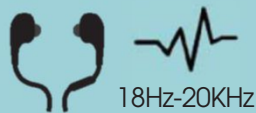
Price: £169.95



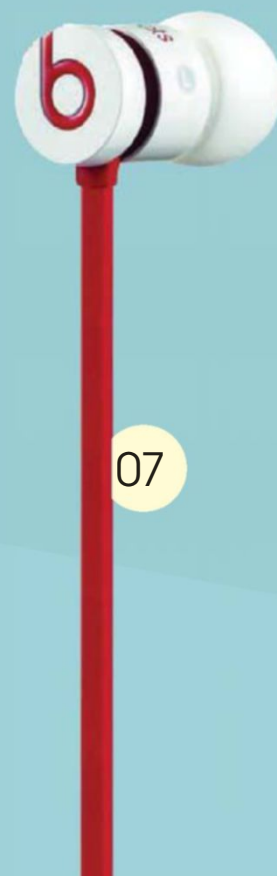
The bass in these headphones were very high, almost to the point where they overtook any other sound. They were comfortable, but there was a lot of noise leakage at higher volumes.

08 /
Sennheiser PMX 686

Price: £79.99



Slightly uncomfortable when we put them in our ears, especially with the correct earpiece size. These were the best for mid-range sounds, but there was quite a lot of leakage at higher volumes and they were a little confusing to fit at first.



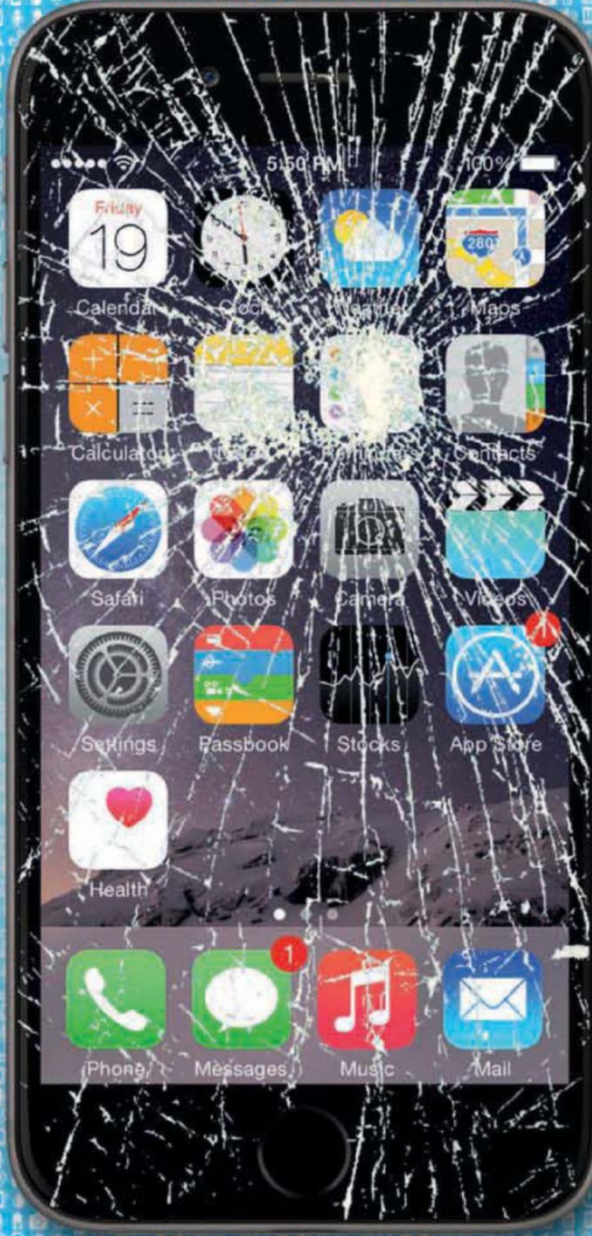


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09



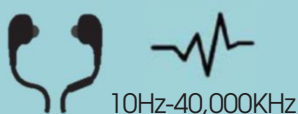
10



11

09 / Ted Baker Dover

Price: £79.95



10Hz-40,000kHz

Despite having the lowest frequency response (10hz) of all the headphones we tested, the bass wasn't that noticeably different when compared to the Bassbuds, for example. Although we prefer the Dover's more subtle design, that isn't enough to justify the £20 price difference.

10 / Sennheiser RS 185

Price: £299



17Hz-22kHz

As the most expensive headphones in our list, you'd certainly hope they'd deliver. Thankfully, they did. Sound quality was excellent and the headphones brought out tiny details in songs that we couldn't here with the other headphones.

11 / Plantronics BackBeat FIT

Price: £99.95



50Hz-20kHz

The Plantronics BackBeat FIT were a little uncomfortable to wear. This is made worse by the lack of additional earbud attachments and volume controls, which other Bluetooth headphones in the test did have. Sound was decent, even if the high treble did take focus away from bass noises.

And in other accessories ...



01

01 / SanDisk iXpand Flash Drive

Price: £57.95

The iXpand Flash Drive can help you quickly transfer photographs and videos from your iPhone or iPad to computers. We easily moved files as soon as we took the device out of the box, as there were no cables required, complicated setup processes or internet and data connection needed. With 16GB, 32GB and 64GB options, it also makes quite a decent storage device.



02

02 / Dr Dre Beats Pill 2.0 wireless speaker

Price: £169.95

This is an attractive bluetooth speaker that provided easy pairing with all our devices. The sound was quite huge for a small bluetooth speaker. Its size will make it ideal for taking it to parties or holiday, but its price and weak bass could be a deal breaker for some.

03 / Zepp Golf

Price: £130

The Zepp Golf sensor attaches to your glove to provide in-depth analysis on your swing. Its companion app shows you a 3D map of each stroke you take, giving feedback on how to increase distance and consistency. Club speed, swing plane, backswing positioning and even hip rotation are all covered. Even if you don't go on to win the Masters, at the very least, this gadget should pay for itself in money saved on mishit lost balls.



WHAT MOBILE

REVIEWS

Criticism of the Galaxy S5 (poor quality, bloatware etc) stung Samsung into putting more effort into the S6 Edge. It paid off. The S6 Edge is stunning technology. Alas, so is the iPhone-busting price.



“Makes the M9 and iPhone 6 mundane by comparison”

24/ **Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge**

30/ **One Plus One**

34/ **Motorola Moto G 4G**

36/ **HTC Desire 820**

34/ **Vodafone Smart Tab 2**

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.



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**WHAT MOBILE
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Samsung Galaxy S6 edge

With its “HOW MUCH??” price tag the Samsung Galaxy S6 better impress. Fortunately it does.

Price: £760 Reviewer: Alex Yau

Samsung's most Galaxy

Curves for go as well as show



SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420
Screen 5.1-inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Rear camera 16MP
Front camera 5MP
Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.11 x 70.1 x 7 mm
Weight 132g
Battery 2,600 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4₅

Camera



5₅

Battery



4₅

WHAT MOBILE
EDITOR'S CHOICE
★★★★★

The Samsung Galaxy S5's launch was troubled. Despite its display, processor and camera being some of the best at the time of release; the troublesome user interface and cheap, plastic build meant it wasn't really the incredible device many hyped it up to be.

A year on and we have the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge, what the Samsung Galaxy S5 should have been. Not only does the device perform impressively, it also boasts a unique design that will turn heads wherever you are. It's the world's first phone with a dual curved screen and its a gorgeous progression from the Samsung Galaxy Note edge's single curved screen.

This individuality isn't cheap. An entry level 64GB model will set you back by £760, which is expensive considering an iPhone 6+ with the same capacity costs just under £700. Then there's the regular Samsung Galaxy S6 that's £100 cheaper. Besides from the size and design, there's nothing setting the two devices apart.

Samsung veterans may be disappointed by the lack of MicroSD slot and removable

“An entry-level 64GB model will set you back £760 – expensive, considering an iPhone 6+ with the same capacity costs under £700”

battery, which have been taken away to make the device slimmer.

But if money isn't an issue and you want a device that truly stands out, we'd definitely recommend the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge. Put simply, this is Samsung's best looking phone yet.

DESIGN

It took us some time to adjust to the edge's curved screen and we sometimes mistook the front for the back, but we were gradually won over. Whether you opt for a black, gold or green version; the curved screen, glass black and metal frame makes the phone look very upmarket.

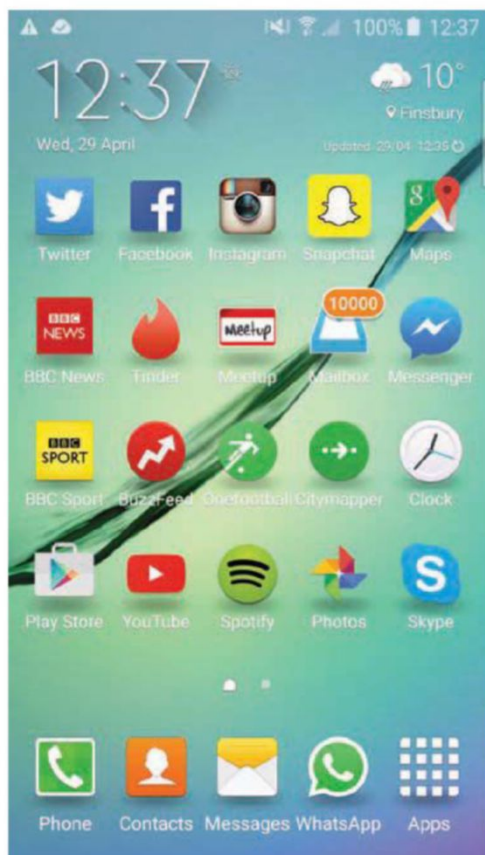
The handset is sleek, slim and very easy for those with small hands to hold it. That compact size comes at an expense, however.

The microSD slot has been removed and the battery is no longer removable. Samsung has also moved the infrared blaster and SIM tray to the top of the phone. The home button is noticeably sturdier than on previous Galaxy handsets.

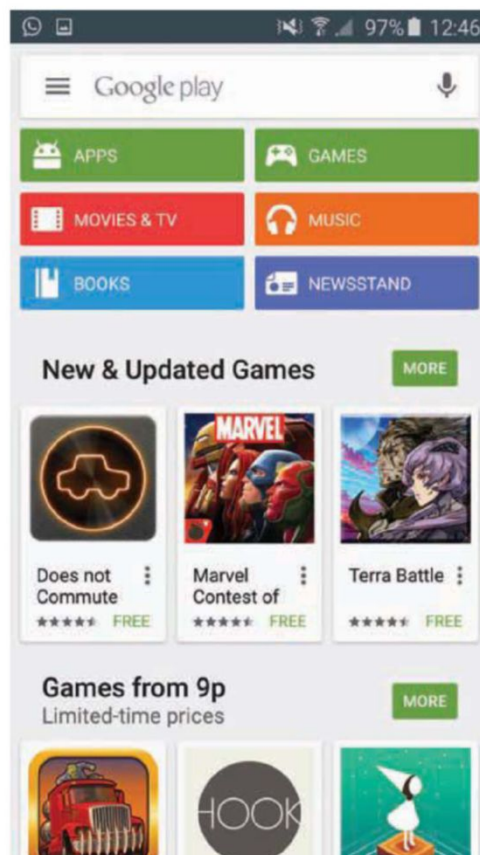
You may find the handset a little uncomfortable to hold for long periods, however, as the metal edges have a lip that dig into your hands.

CAMERA

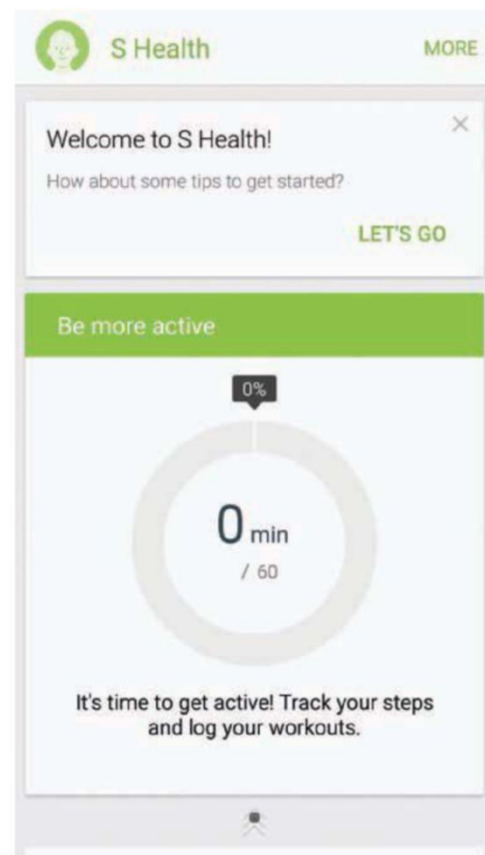
As you'd expect from a 16MP camera, the rear snapper produces some of the most clear and crisp photos we've ever seen. Landscape shots are full of detail, whilst interior photographs look noticeably better than the Samsung Galaxy S5. Some fantastic close-up shots also highlighted how impressive the S6



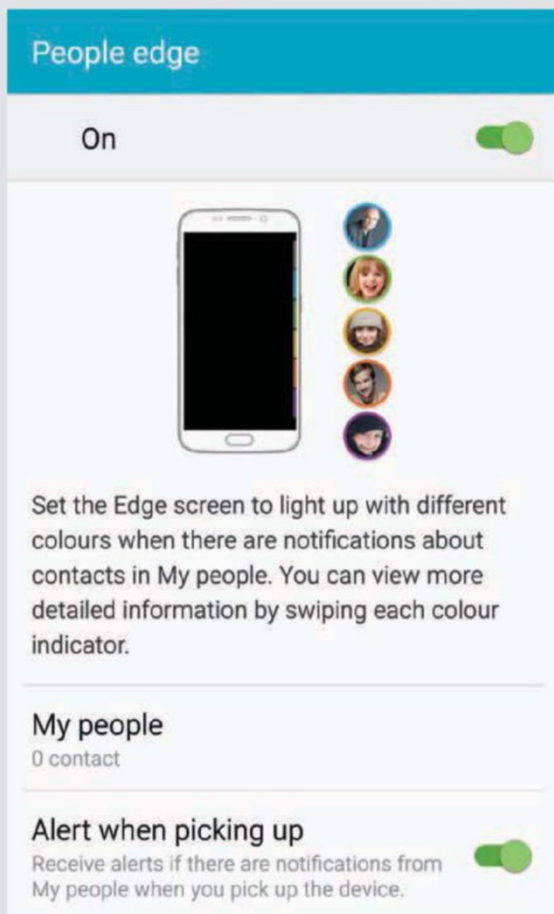
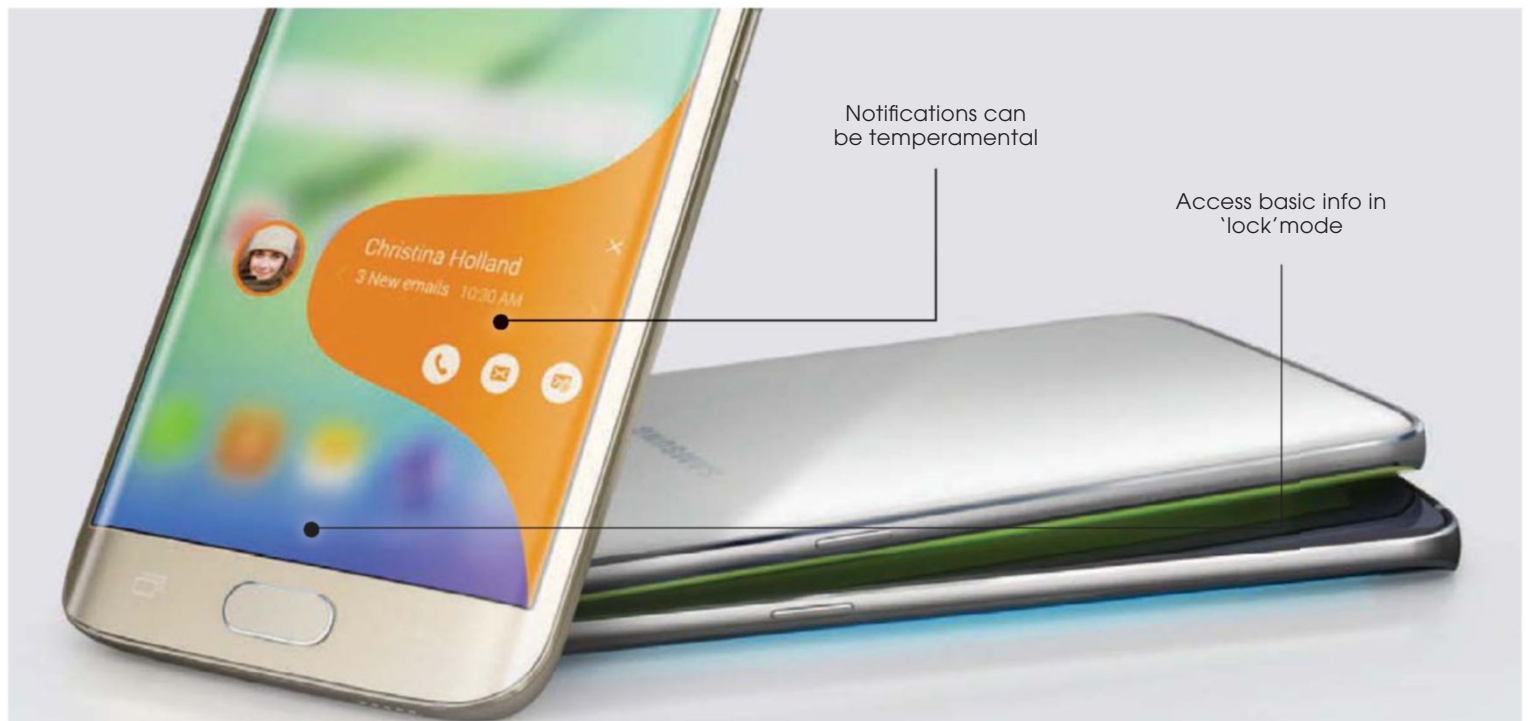
Lollipop – as you'd expect the Galaxy S6 edge uses the latest version of Android



Play time – full access to Google Play apps and games



Fit bug – the Galaxy S6 Edge comes with a range of fitness apps to log workouts



Set the Edge screen to light up with different colours when there are notifications about contacts in My people. You can view more detailed information by swiping each colour indicator.

My people
0 contact

Alert when picking up

Receive alerts if there are notifications from My people when you pick up the device.

The Edge screen is a nice touch but you'll pay a lot for the technology

S6 just edges it

The curved edges aren't just for show. They offer some functionality. Whilst the phone is locked, you can slide your finger back and forth along one curved edge to get weather, news and Twitter updates. This can be temperamental and we rarely managed to get it right on the first go. Information is also limited and you'd be better off going to the full screen. You can customise updates you see, but this is restricted to Yahoo news and Twitter trends.

Switch the S6 edge's screen on and you'll spot a transparent grey tab at the side of the screen. Open this tab and you'll get People Edge – a function that allows you to assign five contacts to colour-coded circles for calls, texts and emailing. You can't use it in-app, unfortunately, and will have to exit an app to use it. It also doesn't cover non-Samsung apps like WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

The Edge display comes into its own when your phone is face down. It lights up discreetly whenever you receive a call, text or email from an assigned contact. You can ever press the heart rate monitor to dismiss the call and send a pre-written text message. This is a good way to quickly tell who's calling if you can remember what colour you assigned them to.

edge is at taking macro shots. Both indoor and outdoor photographs were full of colour and detail, but we'd recommend switching off the flash as its strength often overtook our photos.

It's not the best camera we've used – the HTC One M9 and Sony Xperia Z3 both have phenomenal 20.7MP cameras – but the impressive shutter speed more than makes up for the 4MP difference. Photos were taken instantly and we had no problem snapping fast-moving action shots. The camera can be quickly activated by double clicking the home button, reducing any chance that you'll miss the perfect photo opportunity. Optical Image Stabilisation has also been added and reduces blur by compensating for any jittery hand movements.

A decent camera placement means you'll hardly ever find your fingers obscuring your shots. Both volume buttons can be used to take photographs, too – perfect for anyone with small hands who can't quite reach the shutter button.

Very little clutter appears on screen when using the camera app and you'll find a handful of useful modes including a setting for different photo filters. The many modes include Auto, Pro, Selective Focus, Panorama, Virtual Shot, Slow Motion and Fast Motion. Stick the camera on Auto and it does a decent job of bringing out the vibrancy in photographs. Dedicated photographers will want to choose Pro if they want to adjust white balance, exposure and contrast settings. Selective Focus is a nifty setting that allows you to set your camera's focus, be it a nearby subject, far-off landmark or an entire area.

Virtual Shot creates a 3D view of your subject. It does this by telling you to move your phone around the object and it stitches a series of images together. Once it's done, simply tilt your phone from left to right to get the 3D effect. We had no trouble using this feature, but we see no real practical use for it either.

You can also shoot up to five minutes of 4K videos, with four times the detail of 1080p HD. The camera never struggled to adjust from light to dark areas in our filming tests.



Fast action – Octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420 processor makes games fly

SCREEN

The dual curved screen is unlike any you'll find on another phone and it certainly makes the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge stand out from the crowd. It's not all about looks, however, and the screen has the specs to match its unique design.

Measuring 5.1-inches, the S6 edge's screen boasts Quad HD at 1,440 x 2,560 resolution. Quad HD has four times more detail than standard 1080p HD. Combine this with Samsung's Super AMOLED technology and everything on screen looks crisp and sharp.

Viewing videos on the screen isn't problematic, but parts of text running past the curved screen can be a little difficult to read. There was also noticeable glare on particularly sunny days too.

If you're worried about dropping the phone and smashing the screen, Gorilla Glass 4 – which is also used on the phone's back – should keep it protected to some extent. Gorilla Glass 4 is special glass that's been tested and punished to withstand drops twice as high as other glass designs.

AUDIO

Audio is loud, clear and perfectly good for videos and conference calling. We noticed crackling when listening to music at higher

volumes, so we'd recommend investing in a pair of good headphones. Samsung has positioned the speaker on the bottom of the edge, making it easy to muffle sound with either your palm or fingers. It's not as good as HTC One M9's BoomSound speakers, but it's noticeably better than the Samsung Galaxy S5's.

SOFTWARE

The Samsung Galaxy S6 edge runs on Lollipop 5.0, the latest Android operating system. Combine this with the TouchWiz interface and the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge is fast and easy to use, intuitive and offers plenty of customisation.

It comes pre-loaded with themes, but these aren't the most attractive and you can download better ones from the Google Play store. There's also a briefing widget that gives a rolling feed of news. If you find this a bit bothersome, you can easily get rid of it.

Galaxy S5 users will know how troublesome its fingerprint scanner was. Samsung has listened to these problems and has added a massively improved fingerprint scanner to the S6 edge. Setting it up was easy and we could easily unlock it with one simple press. This was our preferred unlocking method out of all the methods offered by the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge. Just make sure your thumbs or fingers are dry, however, as the fingerprint scanner had problems recognising our prints when they had moisture on them.

The heart rate monitor isn't new either, but like the fingerprint scanner, it has been improved. Its design is cleaner and provides

“Virtual Shot creates a 3D view of your subject by stitching images together”

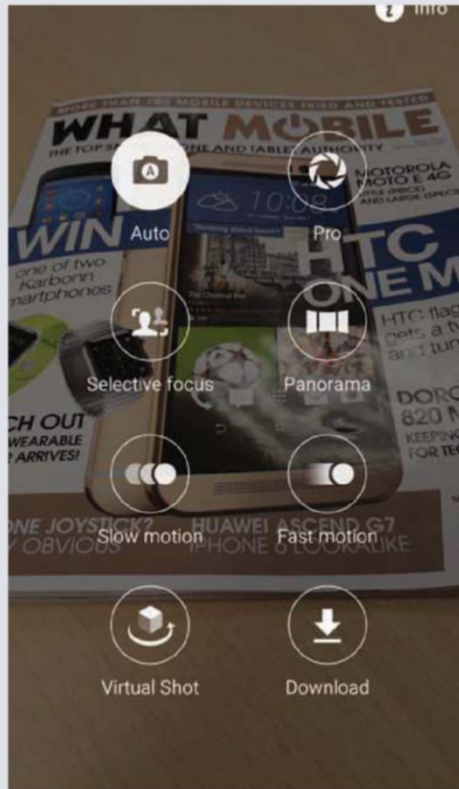
Camera action

The cameras on the latest range of flagship smartphones are approaching DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) quality. These are the cameras used by advanced amateur and pro photographers and which have interchangeable lenses.

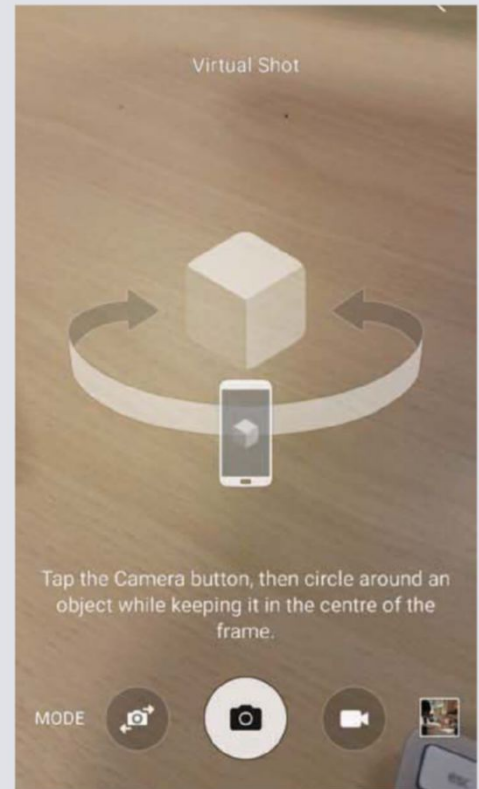
Smartphone camera technology has come on in leaps and bounds and devices like the Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge and iPhone not only produce stunning results from better lenses, but they can now produce excellent low-light results.

The processors fitted to these smartphones can power complex picture editing tools and special features such as Panorama slo-mo, and even the ability to produce 3D images.

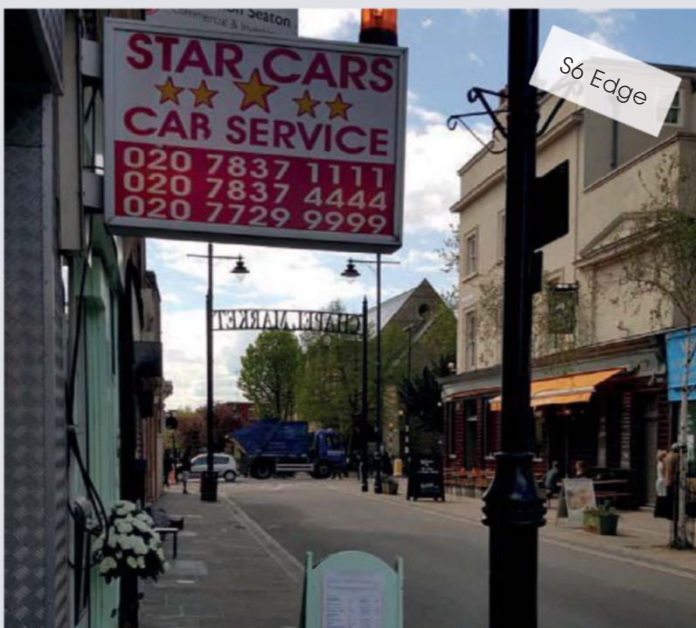
Smartphone cameras are now miles better than the dedicated point-and-shoot snappers of a few years ago.



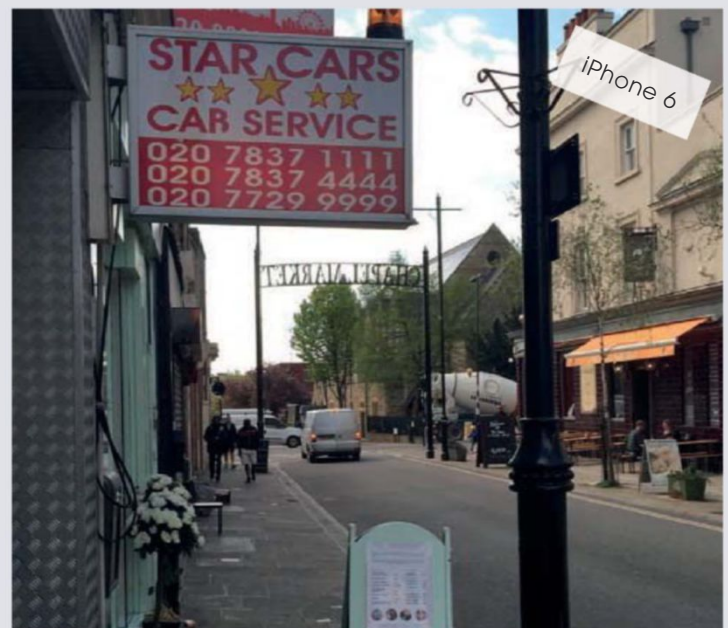
Modes on the S6 edge now include selective focus



Virtual Shot creates a 3D view by stitching images together



S6 colours (eg sky) more saturated than iPhone 6 Plus



iPhone 'edges' it with better exposure in dark areas

detailed information on your heart rate, workouts and stress levels. It will even tell you to be more active when you're having a particularly lazy day.

All the regular Samsung apps are here, including S Health, S Planner and S Voice. You can now disable these and take them off your app menu, but you can't un-install them.

The interface looks distinctly Samsung and the lock screen allows easy access to the camera and dialling apps. Want more space for apps? There's an option to change the grid from a 4x4 to 4x5. Once you press the left multi-task button, all your active apps will be displayed and you can disable them with a single touch or one by one.

PERFORMANCE

Some serious power is packed beneath the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge's attractive body. It has an Exynos processor that makes playing intense games and apps incredibly quick and smooth. We had no problems with overheating whilst testing out the phone.

Extra speed is provided by 3GB of RAM, making the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge one of the fastest phones we've used. The HTC One M9 uses a Snapdragon 810 processor and the S6 edge was noticeably more stable in comparison when playing processor-intense games.

There's no microSD slot for external memory, but most should find that the 64GB and 128GB both offer plenty of storage space.

BATTERY

Battery life is decent for a phone this powerful, but it could be better. It did manage to last the entire day through regular gaming, social media, WhatsApp and



Wireless charging – coloured lights on the base ring indicate when the charge is complete

mYouTube use. On more intense days where we went crazy with photography, Bluetooth, GPS, WhatsApp and gaming use; it didn't even last us an entire day.

Turn power saver mode on and the phone can last for up to an impressive two days. It's more impressive than the HTC One M9 which, despite having the bigger battery, lasts just as long as the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge.

There is no replaceable battery, but if you use the included fast-charger, you can get up to four-hours of life from just a 10-minute charge. The Samsung Galaxy S6 edge is also wireless charger compatible.

CONCLUSION

It's hard not to be drawn to the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge's unique design. The dual

curved screen really makes it stand out from the competition, whilst the glass body and metal frame add to its premium design.

Looks aren't the only good thing the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge has going for it, however. An incredibly fast-processor will allow you to go through functions without any noticeable delay. Its superb 16MP camera will ensure you can quickly take detailed and high-quality snaps with just a press of a button, whilst everything you view on the Quad HD display looks superb.

There are faults. The edge Screen's functions are limited and the curved screen can make reading it a little bit difficult. Battery life doesn't last all day with intensive use and that metal frame can make the phone uncomfortable to hold. It's also insanely expensive.

But those are only small flaws when you look at the phone's overall positives. Yes, you'll be paying a high premium, but you'll be getting a unique device. This is an impressively and powerful phone with looks that make the HTC One M9 and iPhone 6 appear mundane in comparison.

“This is an impressive and powerful phone which makes the HTC One M9 and iPhone 6 appear mundane in comparison”

VERDICT

One of the best looking phones Samsung has ever produced, but at an expensive price. The Samsung Galaxy S6 isn't really that different performance-wise, so we'd recommend going for that option if you want to save money. If you don't mind spending more cash, however, the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge is an ideal choice if you want a device that looks like no other.

- + Unique and gorgeous design
- + Insanely fast camera
- + Performance is superb
- Edge Screen functions are limited
- Design can make reading difficult
- No microSD slot or removable battery

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

OnePlus One




Probably the most powerful and advanced £269 smartphone you can't (easily) buy

Price: £269 Reviewer: Ian White

SPEC SHEET

OS Cyanogenmod version of Android 4.4
Processor 2.5Ghz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801
Screen 5.5 inches Gorilla Glass 3
Resolution 1920 x 1080 -pixels
Memory 3GBRAM
Storage 64GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes/No
Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 5MP
Connectivity 4G, dual-band wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC, GOS antenna
Video 1080 HD
Dimensions 152.9 x 75.9 x 8.9mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3100 mAh
Sensors Accelerometer, Gyroscope, Proximity, Ambient Light

AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
4 ₅	5 ₅	4 ₅

Super-spec phone for £269

Build quality belies the price

By invitation only (or online Tuesday)



The current crop of Android premium smartphone flagships is now with us. And we can all marvel at the amazing specifications of top-tier phones such as the Samsung S6, HTC One M9, and LG4. But just look at those premium prices – all around the £580 to buy SIM-free and unlocked. However – if you're not a badge or brand snob we'll let you into a little secret on how you can get a premium smartphone every bit as good for less than half that price. The secret is called One Plus. And it is a secret that has actually been known to the gadgerati community for nearly a year now.

START ME UP.

One Plus is a Chinese start-up company based in Shenzhen founded by Pete Lau and Carl Pei, two young Chinese phone geeks both still in their 20's. And they have developed a smartphone that matches the best from the giants you all know (but not necessarily love) for well under £300 SIM-free and unlocked.

One Plus designs and markets the phones which are then produced by Chinese manufacturer OPPO Electronics. The OnePlus

“Until recently you could only buy a One Plus phone by using an invitation from someone who had already bought one”

business model means One Plus is only selling phones at a tiny profit margin that have been ordered directly by users. This is why you can't go into a shop and buy one.

In fact, until recently you could only buy a One Plus phone if you knew someone who had already bought one. The company sold its phones using a system of exclusive invitations. If you wanted one (and were lucky enough to get an exclusive invitation) you could buy your own. You would then be sent an invitation that you could send on to someone else.

This led to some unintended consequences – mainly people trying to sell their invitations on eBay. So OnePlus then put a time stamp in the emailed invites which had to be used within a day or so.

A couple of months ago OnePlus must have increased its production because it made the OnePlusOne smartphone available for anyone to purchase on line – but only on a Tuesday

and only between 8am and 8pm. So, we bought the 64GB version for £269. The 16GB is even cheaper at £239. But it makes little sense to save £40 and lose out on 48GB of memory. We doubt anyone would bother with the 16GB version.

To put this in context an iPhone 6 Plus with similar memory costs nearly £700 as Apple deem it appropriate to charge £80 extra for 64GB compared with 16GB. The OnePlusOne has 3GB of RAM compared with the measly 1GB that Apple gives the more expensive iPhone 6. Unlike the iPhone 6 the OnePlusOne doesn't regularly crash due to running out of RAM when running memory-intensive apps.

BOXING MATCH

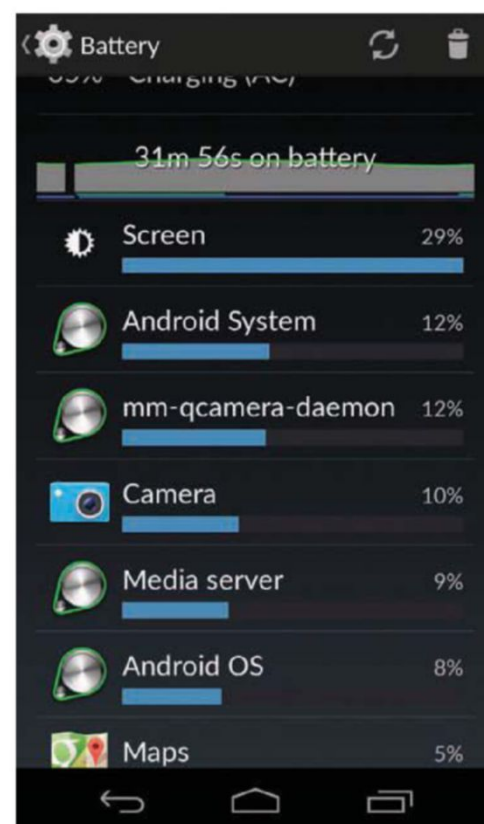
Open the top quality OnePlusOne box by sliding out a 'drawer' and pick up the phone and you'll not believe it is a £269 device. The boxing matches up to the best from Apple,



Rough stuff – the back is covered with an anti-slip suede-like coating



Mods – Cyanogenmod version of Android allows limitless tweaking of the system



Dash board – the operating system analyses how the phone's power is being used

1080p HD screen is vivid and responsive

Gorilla Glass 3 keeps it protected



Sony, HTC, Samsung and LG. The phone is extremely well built with no nasty plastic or gaps between panels. The One2One experience starts Apple-like with an attractive box-within-a-box arrangement which gives a premium feel from the start, even the charging cable looks special – a red ribbon instead of the usual thread of rubber cable. So it is much less likely to end up in a tangle than a conventional cable.

The first thing you'll notice about the OnePlus One is the back. It is made of a rough-textured fabric material clearly put there to enhance grip. It does this very well and, with the Gorilla

Glass 3 screen, means a protective case shouldn't be as essential as it is with a slippery iPhone.

Over the long-term we wonder how this will stand up to dirt and wear and tear. But it certainly makes the phone stand out from the herd. The quality of the fit and finish is up there with the best. The unit has a classy chrome rim which lends it a touch of class and which belies its relatively low purchase price.

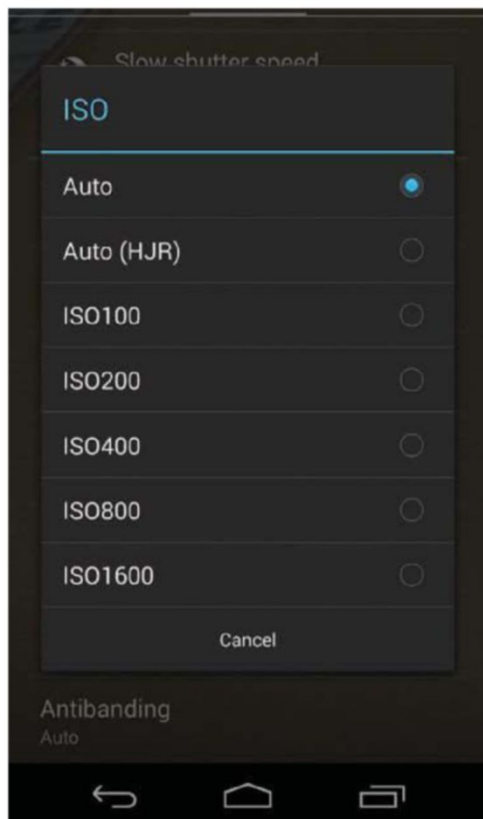
A tapered edge of just 4.6mm makes it very easy to hold. Under the screen you'll find the usual Android trio of 'Settings', 'Home' and

Back" virtual buttons. These can be configured to execute other functions according to your wishes.

TOUCHY FEELY

These days all premium smartphones come with vivid high-res screens that throw out clarity and definition that would have been unheard of five years ago. The 5.5" 1080p HD screen doesn't disappoint. Colours pop out even in bright sunlight and the unit responds to even a feather-like touch.

OnePlus one says is it has improved touch



Speed of light – adjust the sensitivity of the camera for low-light situations



In focus – a full range of focusing options just like on a DSLR camera



Configure this – content can be displayed anyway you like

response by closing the distance between the touch sensor and the display panel which also apparently makes the screen three times more shatterproof than the more usual OGS (One Glass Solution) technology which removes one of the glass layers.

ENTER THE DRAGON

If you're a regular reader of What Mobile reviews you'll already know that the top Android phones of 2014 were powered by a quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801 processor and this is what drives the OnePlusOne. This is the same chip used by the likes of last year's top Samsung phone, the Galaxy S5.

The 802 chip is especially good for capturing images in ultra-high definition and beefing up the camera processing power to handle up to 21MP images. The phone is also provided with a Qualcomm Adreno 3300 graphics chip which optimises the phone for intensive tasks such as watching films and playing games resulting in console quality gaming. This gives greater detail for rendering realistic scenes with power efficiency that doesn't drain the battery within an hour

EXMORE SENSE

With the 801 processor providing the processing firepower and 13MP Sony Exmore sensor taking care of the imaging you would expect the camera on the OnePlusOne to be top rate and indeed it doesn't disappoint. The main problem with mobile phone cameras is that they are not big enough to handle a larger sensor of the size you'll find on a proper DSLR.

The Exmore sensor does balance the dark and bright pictures of the frame quite well. The OnePlusOne also has a vast range of picture taking options, allowing you to manually adjust area of focus, shutter and apertures speeds, light balance and ISO rating – just like a 'real' camera. Framing the initial picture is just the start of producing the perfect shot. Editing tools allow you to crop and tweak the colour balance, saturation and apply any one



Fine detail – focus is sharp and exposure automatically adjusts white balance

of many filters. The 5MP front camera matches the quality of the main camera of the top smartphones of two years ago.

SOFTWARE

Although we'd class this as an Android device, in fact it uses a modified version of Android called CyanogenMod. This is a tweaked version of Android produced by a community of technical enthusiasts from around the world. They can do this because (unlike Apple's iOS) Android is 'open-source'.

So its source code can be accessed and manipulated. This means the OnePlusOne is devoid of the 'bloatware' manufacturers put on their phone and take away the memory you have paid for.

It also means that you can play around with the appearance and functionality of the phone to fit your exact requirements. Perhaps you'd like different navigation bars, colour schemes or widget. So the OnePlusOne will work



Exposed – good balance of exposure from dark (road) and light (sky) areas of the shot

exactly like an Android phone but with more customisation features. For example to operate the voice control you say "OK OnePlus" (instead of "OK Google").

SUMMARY

For the price and specification, nothing really comes close to the OnePlusOne delivering bang for buck. The downside is that the phone is not sold by any retailers or networks. You have to buy it online directly from OnePlus. So in the event of any faults the phone would have to be returned to OnePlus (they have a UK repairs facility). The fact that it uses a spin-off system from Android should not be a negative factor unless you are wedded to using Android the way Google intended. Should you buy one. In the melodramatic words of Ed Miliband – Hell YES. Log onto oneplus.net/uk at 8am sharp on Tuesday – and make sure you have your credit card at the ready.

VERDICT

A top-spec smartphone for half the price of the usual suspects. Brand snobs and Android adherents may be put off by the anonymity of the OnePlus name. But advanced users will adore the CyanogenMod operating system that enables the phone to be individually tweaked to the nth degree.

- + Class-leading specifications
- + Top-tier build quality
- + Unlimited customisation possible
- Online purchase and support only
- Material on back may not last
- CyanogenMod not widely supported

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

Motorola Moto G 4G

The best phone for well under £200 is back with a 4G makeover that makes it faster than ever

Price: £149.99 Reviewer: Philip Brown

Motorola's corporate and critical histories do not correlate, in any way. For the last few years, the American mobile manufacturer has been bounced around between owners, first dividing into two companies, then being bought by Google and passed on to Lenovo minus a few promising skunkwork projects. It's the red-headed step child of tech firms right now, at least on paper.

And yet, Motorola could not be on more of a roll right now. Its Moto handsets are some of the best on the market. It has launched a well-received Android Wear smartwatch, the Moto 360. It has always been first with Android updates, and even been given the opportunity to make Google's superb Nexus 6 reference smartphone. Now it's just fixed the only failing in its superbly-priced Moto G, by adding in 4G support for fast downloads. The result is a phone that undercuts all but the very cheapest phones on the market.

DESIGN AND BUILD

There's no contest: the Moto G is the best-designed phone under £200, and even though Motorola has made no external changes with this LTE model, that remains the case. It's robustly built, and despite its surprising thickness (11.6mm), feels much more manageable, mostly down to its smooth curves that echo the pricier Moto X's aerodynamic body.

With the Android navigation buttons worked into the screen itself, the front face feels like it's almost all screen (by comparison, HTC's flashy One M9 feels more like it's all bezel). We can't fault its button placement, and in this version there's actually a micro SD card slot so you can

bolster the 8GB of internal space, one of the only grumbles we ever had about the original Moto G before Motorola went and improved on it. (Oddly though, the second SIM-slot has been removed this time, though most won't miss it).

The display on this larger Moto G variant meanwhile is both its biggest selling point and also its weakest link, not that anything has changed from the 3G version. It's still five inches across, giving you the same amount of screen real estate as many flagship phones three to four times the price. Viewing angles are wide and colour accuracy is impressive, especially compared to the washed out, leaky panels you find on most Pay As You Go Android phones. You could very comfortably watch an entire TV series on the commute to work with it.

The downside is it's still not any sharper than the 720p resolution of the original Moto G - and stretched to the larger size, you start to be able to make out those pixels. It's not really a problem for videos, but you can detect some small amount of grain while reading text, which you might not want to put up with coming from a 2K Android screen or the iPhone's delicious Retina Display.

SOFTWARE

As you would hope - though certainly not expect at this price point - the new Moto G 4G has been updated to the latest version of Google's mobile operating system, Android 5.0 Lollipop. Existing Moto G owners shouldn't worry though: Motorola has already begun rolling out Android 5.0, and is by far the most

WHAT MOBILE
EDITOR'S CHOICE
★★★★★



5-inch 720HD display

MicroSD slot for easy expansion

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor Quad-core 1.2 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes

Rear camera 8MP
Front camera 2MP
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2390 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



5[⁄]5

Camera



4[⁄]5

Battery



4[⁄]5

efficient manufacturer at pushing these out.

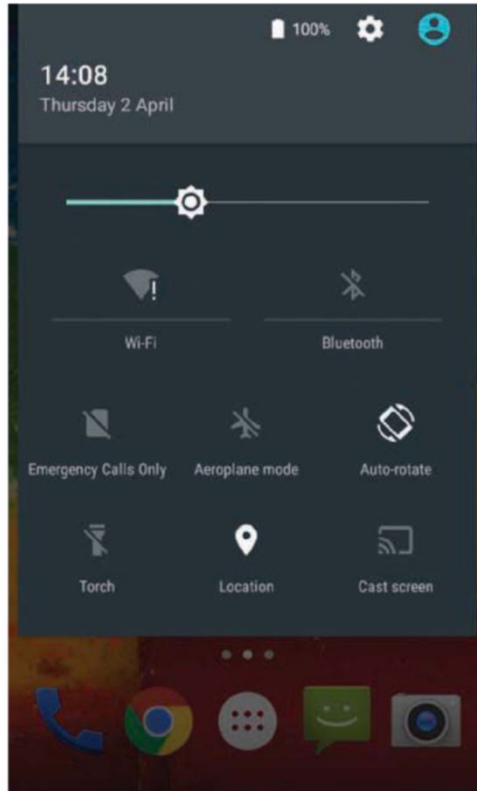
Motorola's principle of hardly tinkering with Google's work pays off once again: all you'll find are the core Google apps like Gmail, Drive and Maps plus a handy Migrate app for moving all your files and settings over from your old phone, Alert for sending emergency location/distress messages (and which you'll hopefully never need to use) and Assist, which can automatically vet your calls when you're in a meeting. Otherwise this is Android as Google intended, with an intelligent and predictive touchscreen keyboard, access to millions of apps and a clean interface.

PERFORMANCE

Somewhat surprisingly, the new Moto E actually sports a slightly faster Qualcomm processor than this Moto G, which is somewhat odd considering that it's the cheaper of the pair. No matter though: both phones are far ahead of their budget competitors, and you'd be hard pressed to spot the difference.

It's actually almost shocking: whereas most cheap Android phones ask you to put up with all sorts of crashes and pauses, the Moto G runs as quickly as a phone at least £100 to £150 faster in day-to-day operation. Motorola has worked really hard to make sure the camera app opens up ASAP when you launch it, for instance, so it knows that's what matters most, and you'll find most games on the Play Store run smoothly. You can cause it to stutter if you start switching between apps rapidly, but that doesn't change the fact Motorola has set the bar higher for budget phone performance here.

The major change with this iteration is of course the addition of LTE connectivity, and it works exactly as advertised. Web pages load much more quickly on the new Moto G 4G, and streaming videos is quicker and higher quality too. It's what you want if you've just started playing with one of the new live streaming apps like Meerkat or Twitter's own Periscope, and even if you're not bothered about faster download speeds and substantially faster upload speeds, it's a nice option to have just for better data connection wherever you go. The only

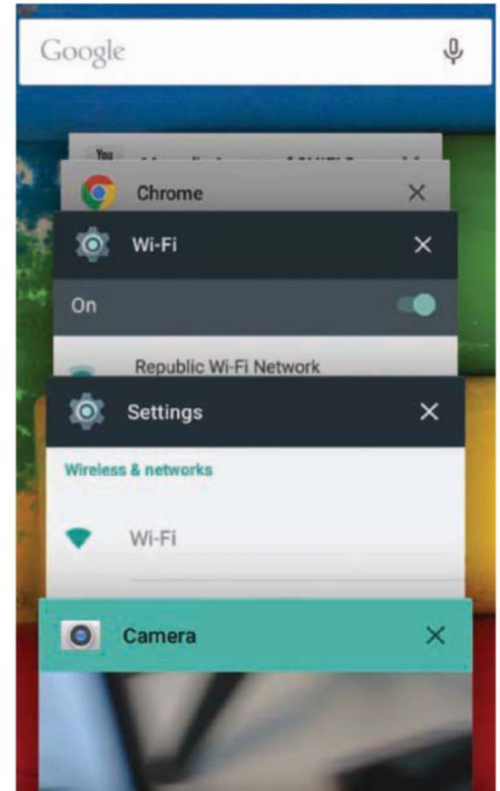


Smooth operator – the G runs as fast as phone that costs £150 more

reason not to plump for the 4G version is if you live in an area of the country still to see the 4G rollout.

The 8MP rear camera meanwhile remains unchanged from last year's Moto G, which is no bad thing, if not exactly spectacular either. You can get respectable shots in daylight, but the second visibility diminishes you'll be reaching for the Instagram filters to mask the noise and shake. This Moto G does have one useful extra over its younger brother however: there's an LED flash on the back, which isn't just useful for blown out pics of your friends with their arms round each other in nightclubs, but finding the keyhole in your door at night with the built-in torch app.

Battery life is a rather tepid way to round off this review, and shouldn't put you off an otherwise amazing phone. But the Moto G's



Raw Android OS – just as Google intended

just-about-a-day of use with email syncing, a few calls, web browsing and YouTube clips is only par for the course. If you want a phone with truly outstanding smartphone stamina, you need the Sony Xperia Z3 or Z3 Compact - but you'll pay much more for the luxury. And the Moto G 4G has just about everything else already.

BEST SELLER

The Moto G is Motorola's best-selling smartphone in its history for good reason, made even better with this iteration. Not only does a phone this fast, well-built and featured-packed call into question the existence of every other "budget" or off-brand Android smartphone on the shelf, this 4G version is starting to undermine the entire mid-range £200-£400 market too.

VERDICT

This isn't just the phone you buy when you smash your Galaxy S or iPhone and have £100 left on your contract, it's the one you keep after your contract too. It's that good. In the race to offering great value for money, Motorola is winning.

- + Best value smartphone on the market
- + Clean Android 5.0 install
- + Large display and LTE
- Not full HD
- Could have more RAM
- That's it really

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

HTC Desire 820

This HTC Desire offers phablet screen and top-spec camera and speakers at a good-value price

Price: £299 Reviewer: Philip Brown

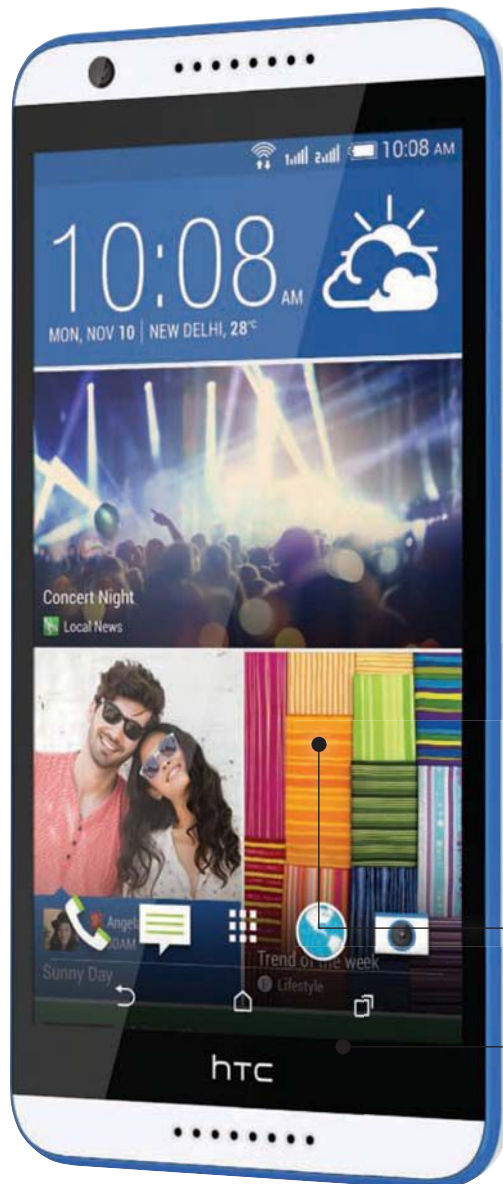
HTC's Desire brand has taken a strange journey over the years. Four or five years ago it was the company's high-end line, designed to compete against the iPhone. Gradually though it's been eased into the mid-range, and come to represent something slightly at odd with its name.

The Desire range is no longer desirable exactly - more HTC's best attempt at making something analogous to it out of cheap plastic and last year's components. With those caveats in mind though, the HTC Desire 820 is still a pleasant effort, and redefines our level of expectation for mid-range mobile photography.

DESIGN AND BUILD

HTC has been struggling in the wake of Samsung marketing for years, but the company's never had a problem with the construction of its handsets, belting out beauty after beauty while Samsung has only just got its act together with the Galaxy S6.

The Desire 820 is no exception - in fact it's probably the most attractive mid-range handset the company has ever released. It's plastic, yes, but as Nokia and (now Microsoft) have proved, that's hardly



a bad thing. It's reassuringly built - not thin, but sturdy - and resembles an intriguing hybrid of HTC's gorgeous One line and Apple's iPhone 5c, with its wrap-around plastic.

The button layout sticks closely to the One's design, with the power button thankfully moved to the right-hand side, and Android navigation buttons now part of the OS and touchscreen itself. Our review unit came cloaked in a dangerous red and black that recalls HTC's One XL from 2012, which might be your sort of thing, though we're actually more taken with the white model sporting an ultramarine trim. HTC's still found space for a micro SD slot - not every top end Android phone offers this nowadays - and at 155g it's not too heavy.

DISPLAY

A word of warning though: the Desire 820 is massive. The 5.5-inch display is huge, which has its pros and cons. On the plus side, there's plenty of space to play with, and games and videos look great.

On the downside the 720p resolution is technically HD, but stretched to its limits: pixels are visible and text looks

720P screen

Best mid-range handset from HTC

Case is thin but sturdy

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes

Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 8MP
Video 1080p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.7 x 78.7 x 7.7 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2600 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4/5

Camera



4/5

Battery



4/5

slightly blurry, so you won't enjoy reading full Kindle novels on it. HTC doesn't slouch on screen performance however, with the 820 excelling for outdoor visibility, viewing angles and accurate colour reproduction without the saturation excess of Samsung's AMOLED technology.

Compounding matters is the length of the phone. Despite their good looks, HTC's One line have been lumbered with absolutely enormous top and bottom bezels which skew the ratio of screen to frame badly, and the 820 suffers from the same problem. To give you some perspective, the Desire 820 is 157mm tall with a 5.5-inch screen, while the Samsung Galaxy Note 4 is shorter (153mm) with a larger 5.7-inch display.

If it's a choice between size and speaker quality, we'd actually opt for the former, though it's worth noting if you like annoying people from the back of the bus then the HTC's phone speakers really are the best in business, and fantastic here (if not quite up there with the One M8 and M9).

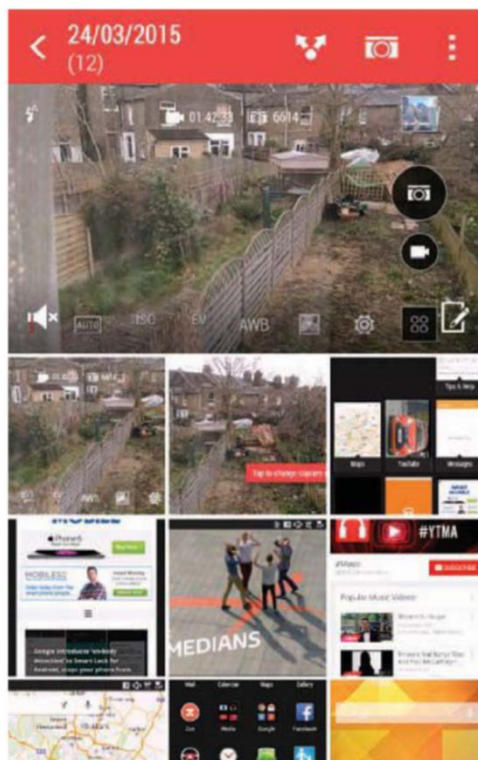
SOFTWARE

HTC gives Android its own coat of paint too in the form of its Sense UI. Purists will still hate Sense on the Desire 820 - though they can always remove much of it by installing a new launcher from the well-stocked Google Play store - but those new to Android will enjoy some of the exclusive features on offer, especially Blinkfeed, which is a user-friendly RSS feed for your homescreen.

There are a few differences between Sense here and on the flagship One line - HTC's Zoe camera function is absent but not missed, though the Motion Launch double-tap to unlock is. Still, all in all it's an easy combination to like, Android and Sense, especially since it no longer seems to cause any lag. Just be sure to dump HTC's terrible touchscreen keyboard for SwiftKey or Google's own.

PERFORMANCE

The quad-core Snapdragon processor on board manages to swim along well enough, and its 64-bit CPU (new to Android) paired with a respectable Adreno GPU mean multi-tasking is seamless - though given it's not pushing all that many pixels,



Camera magic - the Desire 820 has an excellent camera for the price

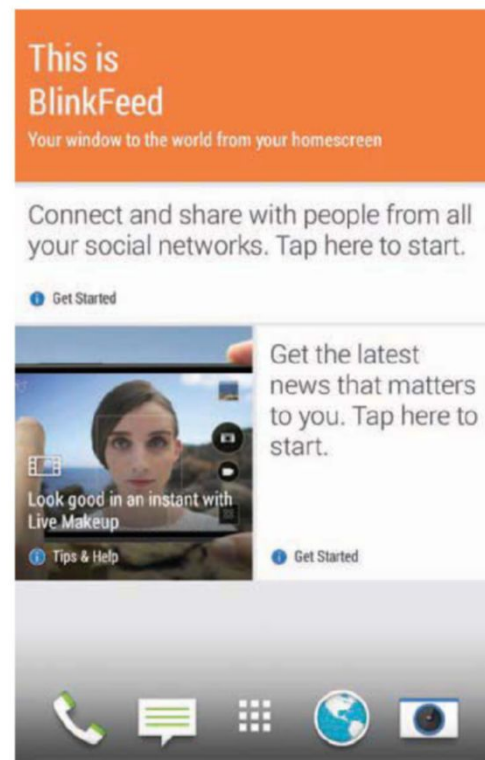
this comes as no surprise.

The HTC Desire 820 is not a powerhouse like the iPhone 6 or the Samsung Galaxy S6. In truth, for the most part it's outperformed by the cheaper OnePlusOne (Page 30) which offers a full HD screen from just £229 unlocked. Its battery life also leaves a bit to be desired (excuse the pun): its 2,600mAh battery is enough to see you through a day, but this is effectively a phablet, and we expect two days from our giant phones.

The HTC Desire 820 has one stand-out selling point. It has one of the best cameras on any sub-£400 handset we've ever tested.

HTC phones seldom stand out for their cameras - its UltraPixel technology never lived up to its hype - but like the selfie-primed Desire Eye, the 820's 13 megapixel sensor is actually very good value for the money.

Slow-mo mode isn't as awesome as the iPhone



Sense - HTC 'Sense' adaption of Android can be removed

6 but it's a comprehensive package nonetheless.

If you can cope with a single LED flash you'll get a lot of mileage out of the rear camera, which grabs a lot of detail, and accurate colours (read: a bit too dull for Instagram in British spring, but that's what filters are for). The HDR mode works well too, letting you grab some high contrast snaps the 820 might struggle to take in otherwise.

That praise extends to the front camera. It's not as ludicrous as the 13 megapixel sensor on the HTC Desire Eye, but at 8MP it's still very generous indeed, if selfies and video chats on the go are your game.

Here's the burning question though, and one no HTC Desire phone has still quite answered. If you're not shopping high-end, is smartphone image quality really your main concern? We'd rather save our money with the new Moto G 4G - handily reviewed on Page 34.

VERDICT

The HTC Desire 820 packs in excellent speakers and cameras into a fetching design. Its price leaves it in a mid-range limbo between the latest and greatest and well priced affordable Android phones like the OnePlus One (Page 30) and Motorola's Moto G 4G (Page 34). If you can't afford the HTC One, the Desire 820 might fit - but then so might last year's HTC One M8.

- + Large display
- + Great cameras for mid-range phone
- + Handsome design
- Non-HD screen
- Expensive compared to OnePlus One
- No Android 5.0

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE



USABILITY



DESIGN



FEATURES



Vodafone Smart Tab 4G

Solid budget tablet that will leave you change from £200 - just don't buy it on contract

Price: £125 Reviewer: Alex Yau

The Vodafone Smart Tab 4G is Vodafone's latest offering in the budget tablet market.

Glance quickly at the device, however, and you'd probably mistake it for a more expensive product. An 8-inch screen and premium-feel rubber back makes it feel like a very solid device, whilst the many features it packs should satisfy most people.

Getting the device on Vodafone's data contracts can be a bit expensive, costing you at least £624 over two years. The most sensible option is to buy on Pay as You Go. At a cost of only £125, it's the ideal choice for budget-wary buyers.

The Smart Tab 4G isn't the most outstanding tablet we've tested, but its sleek design and fact it doesn't compromise on features makes it well worth the budget price tag.

DESIGN

Look at the Vodafone's Smart Tab's front and you could easily confuse it with another tablet. From the minimalist black border framing its 8-inch screen to the tiny camera lens at the top; you'd be forgiven for mistaking it with an Apple iPad. The rear is just as minimal and it sports a 5-megapixel camera alongside Vodafone branding. Measuring 8mm thick, you shouldn't have any difficulty carrying this portable and lightweight device around, either.

Hold the device with one or two hands and it feels more well-built than the £125 price tag suggests. The soft-touch back makes it comfortable to hold, whilst the SIM card slot, SD card slot and side buttons are all placed in easily accessible positions.



On contract this will cost £624

Pay As You Go is just £125

KitKat is not the latest Android OS

SPEC SHEET

- OS** Android KitKat 4.4
- Processor** 1.2 GHz Quad-Core
- Screen** 8.0-inches
- Resolution** 1280x800-pixels
- Memory** 1GB RAM
- Storage** 8GB
- Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 64GB
- Rear camera** 5MP
- Front camera** 2MP
- Connectivity** GSM/EDGE/3G/4G/HSPA+/LTE
- Dimensions** 209 x 128 x 7.99mm
- Weight** 309g
- Battery** 4060 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3/5

Display



4/5

Battery



3/5

DISPLAY

The sharp 8-inch HD screen did a good job of making videos, photographs, text and games look warm and vibrant. Colourful games like Crossy Road and Minecraft looked fantastic on the 1,280 x 800 pixel display and we had no trouble reading text in long articles or eBooks.

Bright sunlight shouldn't be a trouble either. We tested the device on one of the brightest days in April and there were no problems with glare or annoying reflections obscuring our view.

The Vodafone Smart Tab 4G also boasts ultra-wide viewing angles, which means you can look at the tablet side on and still have a clear view of what's on screen without too much distortion.

PERFORMANCE

Whilst the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G's display and design stood out, it has let us down slightly on performance and was noticeably sluggish upon start up. Once started up, however, the device is mostly responsive and smooth.

We had no trouble with video playback. From short five-minute YouTube clips to lengthier 20-minute videos, the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G impressed with its ability to quickly load videos. This is partly down to the tablet's ultra-fast WiFi and 4G connectivity. Perfect if you're taking the kids on holiday and need to keep them busy straight away.

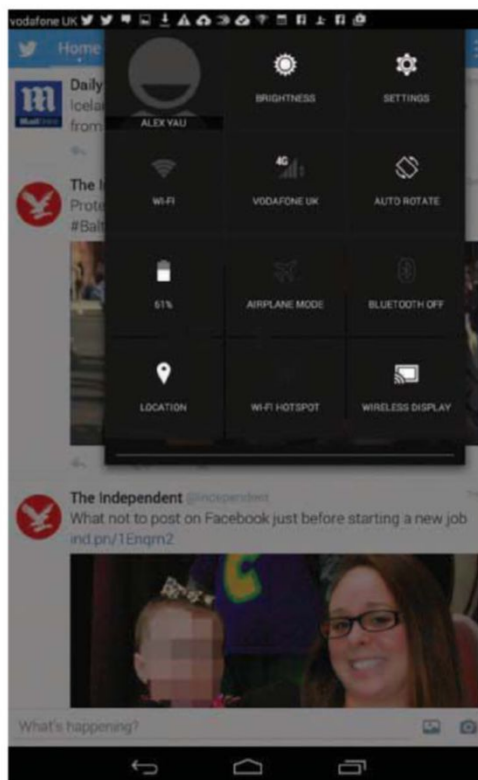
The tablet easily handled casual, less processor-intensive games like Angry Birds. Load up more demanding games and the processor's flaws reveal themselves. It struggled to handle games like Galaxy on Fire 2 and Real Racing 3, with noticeable stutter at various times.

The 8GB internal storage doesn't offer much for additional downloads, so we'd recommend getting an external memory card – the device can take up to 64GB – if you like your downloads.

Battery life is decent. We managed to get two days of casual gaming, social media and video streaming use before the battery died on us.

CAMERA

As you'd expect from a 5MP rear camera and 2MP front camera, the quality of the Vodafone Smart



KitKat – comes preloaded and should satisfy the needs of most users

Tab's camera isn't outstanding. The more dedicated photographer won't be impressed by the limited camera settings and slow shutter speeds, the latter of which makes action shots difficult to capture.

Both cameras are perfectly fine for casual photographers, however, and the colours and details in both close-up and distant images are decent enough for social media posts.

SOFTWARE

The Vodafone Smart Tab 4G comes loaded with Android KitKat 4.4. Whilst not the latest Android operating system, it should still satisfy the needs of most users. It's fluid, clutter-free and easy-to-use, so anyone from a child to a seasoned tech-geek will have no problem using it. Anyone who may have trouble will be glad to hear that on-screen instructions appear when you first use the device, but these can be a bit irritating if you're an experienced tech user.



Camera – 5MP rear camera are fine for happy snaps - but their are limitations

Apps including Facebook, Twitter and games like GT Racing 2 come pre-installed, so you'll be liking posts, tweeting away and playing games the moment you switch the device on.

It'll be no surprise that the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G comes packed with Vodafone branded apps. Some are the opposite of bloatware, however, and you might actually find them useful. The My Vodafone app, for example, lets you check the number of minutes, texts and data used. Vodafone Net Perform, meanwhile, is useful for monitoring data usage and testing networking speeds.

CONCLUSION

Vodafone has done a decent job of creating a budget tablet that doesn't compromise on features that some more expensive tablets offer. More demanding tasks take their toll on the Smart Tab 4G, but that's a small price to pay for such an affordable tablet.

VERDICT

Attractive, cheap and feature-filled, the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G is let down slightly by its processor. However, that shouldn't put you off it. It's easy enough for anyone to use, which makes it an ideal choice as a family tablet, whilst its attractive design will make you feel like you're using a much more premium product.

- + Easy to use
- + Well-designed
- + A very affordable tablet
- Processor isn't the most powerful
- Internal memory isn't big
- Camera could be better

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★



The London connection



London is full of free WiFi. Alex Yau tests some of the more popular hot spots

WiFi

Whether you're a tourist who needs to find the best route to iconic landmarks, or an office worker who needs to fire off an important finance report during lunch; a good WiFi signal is crucial to ensuring you stay connected around central London. Most cafes offer free WiFi, but London's rammed with hundreds of them, which makes the task of finding a cafe with WiFi as good as its coffee harder than it sounds.

But there's some good news: you needn't experience the frustration of unstable WiFi connections in London again. From independent cafes to large chains; we went all around central London to find cafes that offer the best free WiFi. Alongside testing the WiFi's strength, speed and ease of connectivity, we looked at the comfort, ambience and quality of service each cafe offered.

These are 12 of the best free WiFi hotspots in central London.



The Hoxton

The Hoxton was the best cafe we tested. Connecting to its super-fast WiFi was instant and required no fiddly registration process. It was one of only two cafes we tested that offered friendly table service. Despite coming during the lunchtime rush, we found comfy seating easily and could chat without raising our voices.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

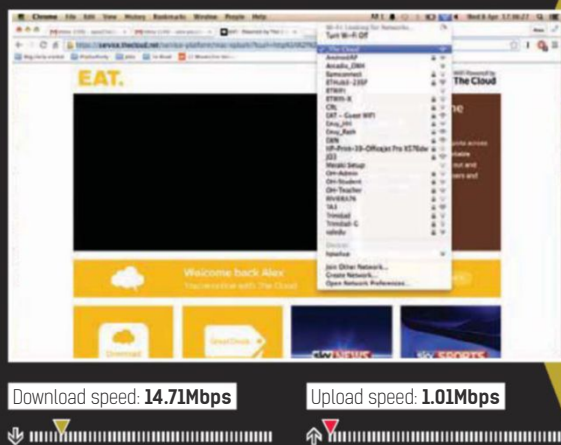


Atmosphere



Eat

Connecting to the WiFi was easy and required few registration details. Although we managed to find a seat, the cafe's size meant we had to squeeze up with others at a table; which could be a bit uncomfortable during busier hours. Major construction works outside did make our experience slightly grating.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

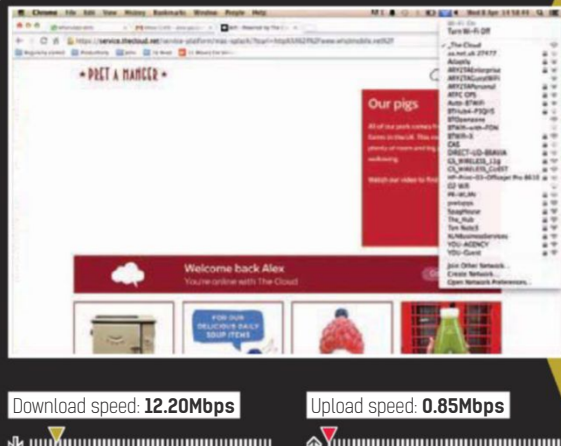


Atmosphere



Pret a Manger

Not one for you if you're after some peace and quiet. Pret a Manger was rammed with tourists, which you'd probably expect from one of London's busiest areas. Despite that, registering to the WiFi was quick, easy and we had no problems with slow-loading web pages or videos.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

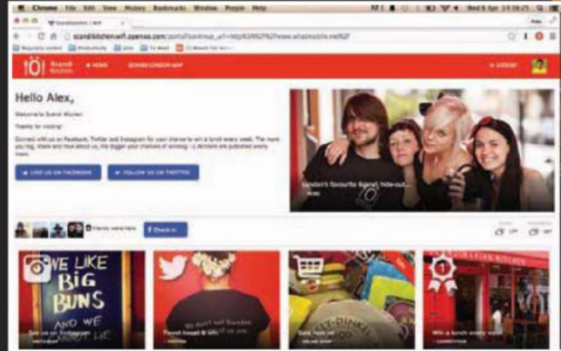


Atmosphere



Scandinavian Kitchen

ScandiKitchen's WiFi was stable and quick throughout our experience and the options to register via Facebook, email or Instagram offered easy access. Upstairs was packed and no available seating was visible. Downstairs is less rammed, but the quiet seating area was ruined by cushioned benches falling apart, and its close proximity to the cafe's



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

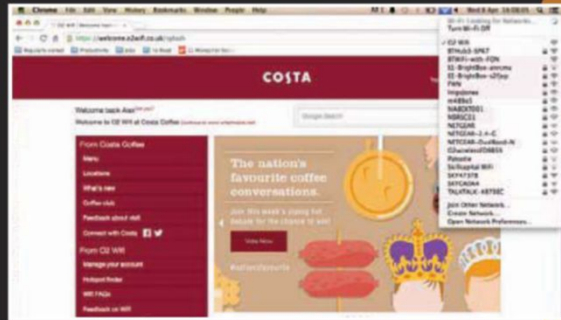


Atmosphere



Costa

Although the WiFi was decent and easy to connect to, the opposite could be said about the cafe's comfort. It was hard to find an available seat and there was very little room to navigate through the cramped space.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

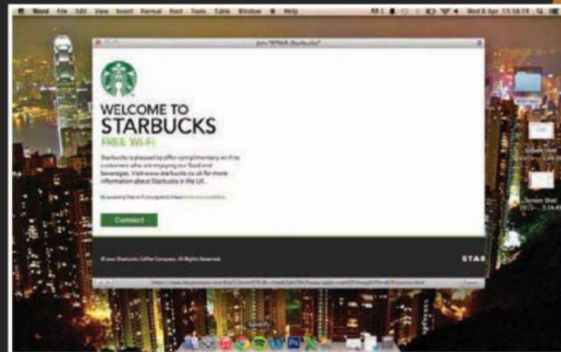


Atmosphere



Starbucks

This Starbucks was rammed with people and it took us 10 minutes before we were able to get a drink. We had to do a fair bit of wandering around before finding a seat downstairs. Getting onto the WiFi was a little confusing, too, as there was no indicator telling us if we had connected to it or not.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere



McDonalds

Not the best place for comfort. We had to share a table with a complete stranger because it was so busy. Any hope of peace and quiet was ruined by screaming children, whilst an unpleasant smell lingered in the air. The WiFi was the only redeeming feature and we had no issues loading videos or web pages.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere



Joe & The Juice

The incessant whirring of juice blenders and loud thumping house music created a soundtrack that gave us a bit of a headache during our time here. This wasn't helped by the unstable WiFi connection that, although strong and quick, cut out after five minutes of logging in.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability

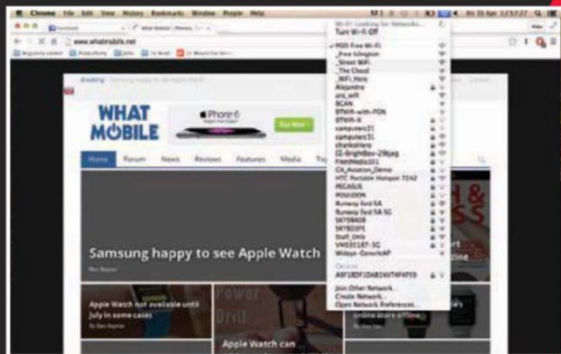


Atmosphere



Pod

The WiFi here was slightly invasive and required us to check into the cafe on Facebook before connecting. It also struggled to buffer YouTube clips quickly, so not one if you want to watch videos. The atmosphere was what you'd expect from a large chain; a bit bland with little character.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere

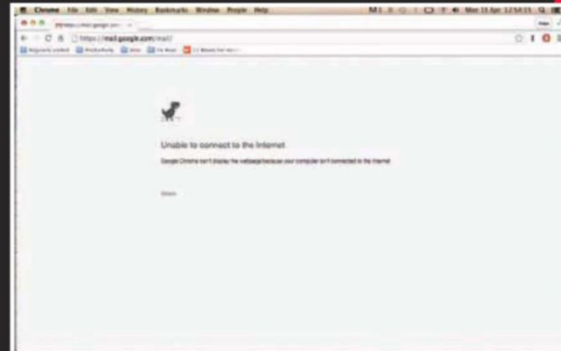


Appestat

A quiet, cozy cafe that was otherwise ruined by its bad WiFi connection.



Despite multiple attempts, we had no luck connecting to the cafe's WiFi. When we told the staff about the problem, they provided no solution other than rebooting the router. We still couldn't connect after they tried this.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere

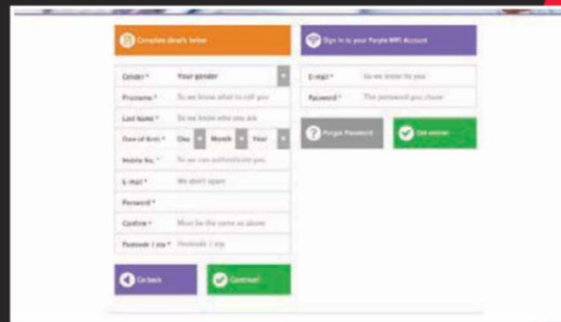


Fleet River Bakery

A similar story with this otherwise comfortable cafe. Registering for Fleet River Bakery's WiFi was long winded and required far too many details.



After making it through the process, we still couldn't connect to the WiFi. The staff offered no answers other than telling us their WiFi was temperamental.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere

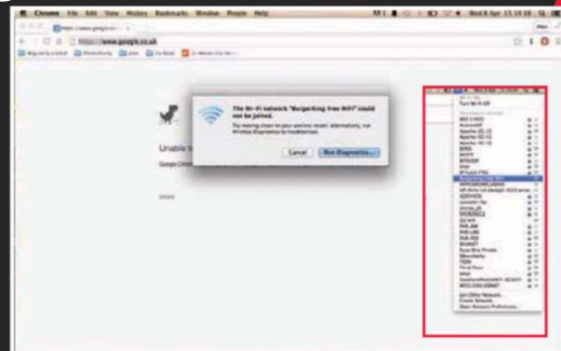


Burger King

Burger King comes bottom of our table for its poor WiFi and uncomfortable atmosphere.



We couldn't connect to the WiFi and our experience was made even worse by the long wait times for food, difficulty finding decent seats and headache-inducing noise coming from the large crowds in the restaurant.



Speed



Ease of use



Signal reliability



Atmosphere



Scores on the doors

Good WiFi hotspots can be hard to find. Even when you've managed to get a decent one, you'll more often than not have to go through laborious registration screens before finally getting connected or squeeze up with other people. We only found one cafe that offered truly outstanding WiFi and service in our tests, whilst the others were either average or poor. Is free actually WiFi worth it? In most cases, if you're patient and don't mind sharing space with some else, then yes. Otherwise we'd suggest investing in a dongle or using the comfort of your own home or workplace.



1 The Hoxton
Score: 20/20



2 Eat
Score: 15/20



3 Pret A Manger
Score: 14/20



4 ScandiKitchen
Score: 14/20



5 Costa
Score: 13/20



6 Starbucks
Score: 13/20



7 McDonald's
Score: 13/20



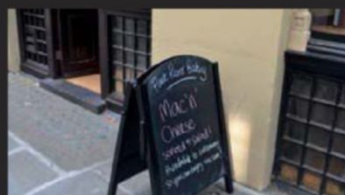
8 Joe & The Juice
Score: 13/20



9 Pod
Score: 12/20



10 Appetat
Score: 6/20



11 Fleet River Bakery
Score: 5/20



12 Burger King
Score: 1/20

Monster game thrills

We've been having so much fun playing these mobile games it's a wonder we got the magazine out.

Reviewer: Alex Yau – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Perfect Shift

Free (Android, iOS)

Smartphone racers aren't easy to play. Once you've mastered the fiddly steering system, you've got the trouble of your thumbs blocking the view. Perfect Shift doesn't have this problem. You win by changing gears at the correct time for the 'perfect shift.' Anyone can play it and, with gorgeous 3D graphics and over 25 customisable cars, it's one of the slickest racers we've seen.



Hearthstone

Free (Android, iOS)

Hearthstone, one of 2014's most addictive games, is now on iOS and Android. It's so addictive that it's taken over our lunch breaks in the What Mobile office. The rules are simple. You build a deck of monsters and battle against either human or computer controlled opponents. Strategy card game newbies will find it easy to play, but very hard to put it down.

EA Sports UFC

Free (Android, iOS)

With over 70 of the most famous UFC fighters to choose from, this is one of the most detailed and diverse UFC fighting games we've played on a handheld device. An addictive levelling system, unlockable opponents, HD graphics and tactical element during fights ensures that this solid fighter isn't just another generic button basher.



Final Fantasy Record Keeper

Free (Android, iOS)

Whether you're new to the series or a dedicated fan, we'd recommend Final Fantasy Record Keeper. The amount of content impressed us the most; the game allows you to relive famous moments from previous games in the series, whilst the option to make teams made up of iconic characters keeps everything nice and fresh.



Tiny Guardians

£2.29 (Android, iOS)

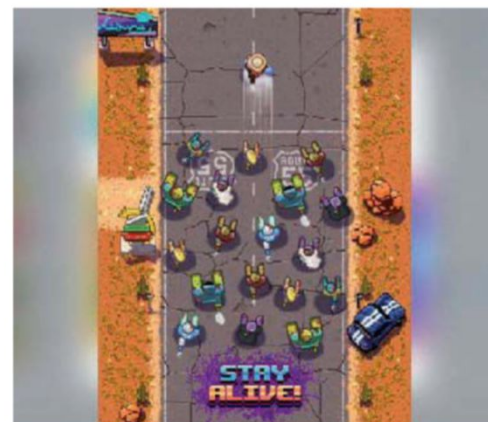
We've played dozens of tower defence games, so it's nice something that puts a little twist on the traditional formula. Rather than protect a base from attackers, you control a sorcerer and have to summon protecters to ward off enemies from the path you're walking. It doesn't divert from the traditional formula too much, but colourful graphics and a detailed upgrade system make it entertaining nonetheless.



Must Deliver

Free (Android, iOS)

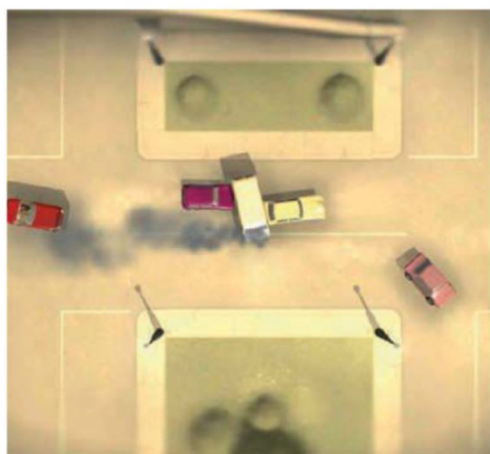
The aim of Must Deliver is to dodge the undead in various environments and deliver the cure for the zombie outbreak. However, Must Deliver diverts away from the traditional endless-runner formula and lets you use powerful attacks to bring down the zombie hoards getting in your way. There are several unlockable characters to pick from, each with their own unique powers.



Does Not Commute

Free (Android, iOS)

Does not Commute has you control rush hour traffic in different chunks. You'll drive one car through the city streets before the game gives you control over another vehicle. What makes the game unique is that, when you control a new vehicle, you'll see your previous vehicle travelling along the path you directed it in and you have to do your best to avoid it.



Top Eleven 2015

Free (Android, iOS)

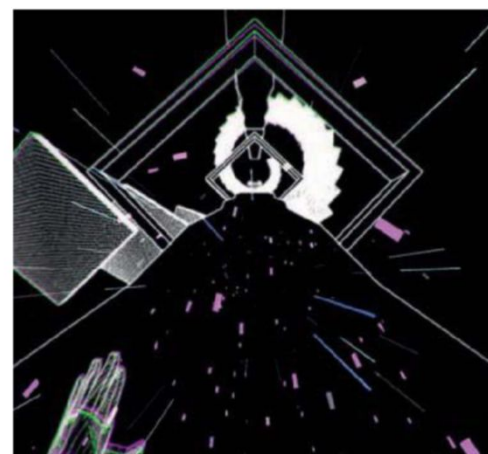
Top Eleven fetches the most exciting bits of football management to your device. The ability to train players, sign top new talent, develop stadiums and support your team during matches makes you feel like a real football manager.



Fotonica

£2.29 (Android, iOS)

Take your eyes off the screen for a second and this game will punish you. Fotonica is an auto-runner that tests your reaction speed by having you dodge potential hazards that could end your fast-paced run. The action is complimented by a fantastic dance soundtracks, whilst Tron-inspired visuals should grab the attention of nostalgia lovers.



Driving technology

Driving a new BMW in London is a touch away with DriveNow among the apps reviewed this month

Reviewer: Alex Yau – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

DriveNow

Free (iOS, Android)

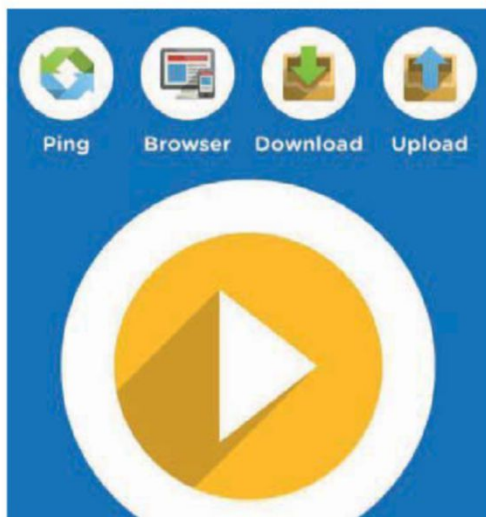
Car rental apps aren't new, but Drive Now is a bit different. Customers across parts of North London are never more than five minutes away from a new iSeries BMW or Mini Countryman for a rental rate of around 19p a minute. The app locates and books a car and allows access inside. DriveNow's appeal is that you can return the vehicle anywhere within the designated area without having to search for a parking space. DriveNow is a joint venture between BMW and Sixt in Europe and North America. It operates over 2,400 vehicles, for 330,000 customers



GWS Speed

Free (iOS)

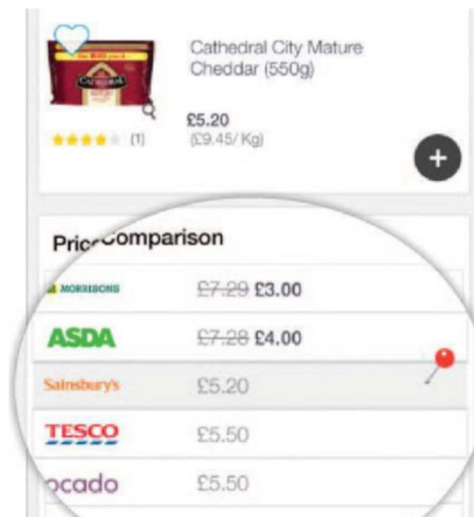
When you're looking for a new home, you want to know that there's good phone reception in each room. The GWS speed app helps you make sure of this by running tests that tell users the quality of the mobile data service they're receiving anywhere they are. This means you needn't worry about whether your potential new home has bad reception.



MySupermarket

Free (iOS)

Finding the best supermarket deal can sometimes be a bit of a headache. The mySupermarket app makes this common frustration a little easier and allows users to compare supermarket prices on the go. Simply create a shopping list and the app will tell you which supermarket offers the product at the cheapest price.



Where Chefs Eat

£10.99 (iOS)

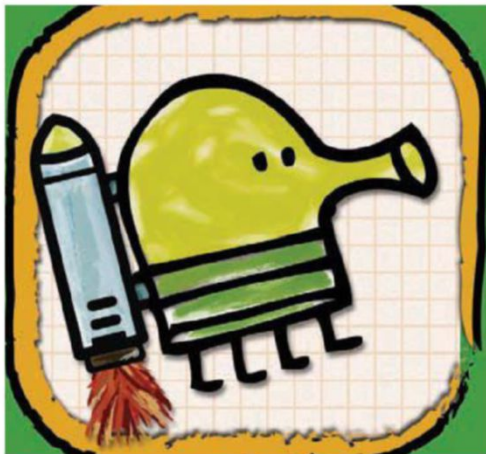
Where Chefs Eat features over 3,000 restaurant recommendations all over the world from some of the world's best chefs. So whether you're after breakfast, lunch or dinner; this app can help you find the perfect place. Users can use the app's NEAR ME feature to locate nearby restaurants, making it perfect for food lovers.



Doodle

Free (iOS, Android)

Organising social events on messaging services can be frustrating. You'll sometimes have to trawl through dozens of messages before finding the information you want. Doodle eliminates this – simply create an event and invite friends to pick their preferred times. Doodle tells you what the best time for the event is based on responses and allows you to plan it in just one message.



Navmii

Free (iOS, Android)

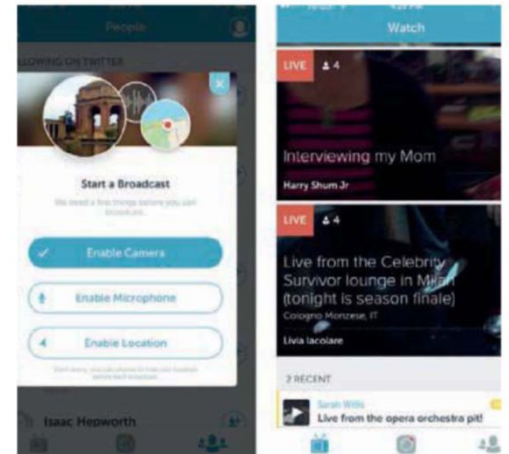
Navmii makes driving to your destination hassle-free. You can easily set it up in a couple of minutes, there's no unnecessary on-screen clutter and audio instructions are easy to follow. Real time traffic data, Google integration and offline usage makes Navmii one of the most intuitive sat nav apps out there.



Periscope

Free (iOS)

Periscope, the latest app from Twitter, lets you broadcast live video from anywhere in the world. The interface is simple to use and you can choose whether you want to create public or private video streams. Viewers can show their reaction through comments or by leaving hearts, whilst streams can be saved for later viewing.



Cord

Free (iOS, Android)

Cord simplifies the whole process of voice messaging. Simply pick a contact, hold the screen to record your voice message and let go. It's that simple. All messages last no longer than 12 seconds, you needn't worry about long messages, and you can even group chat with multiple friends.



Onefootball

Free (iOS, Android)

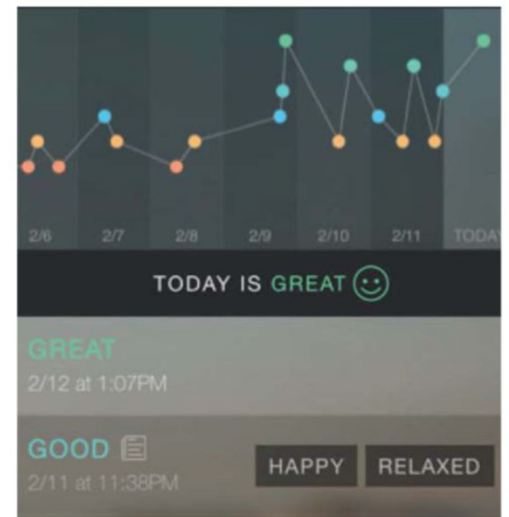
Onefootball is a must if you're a football fan. Not only can you get the latest scores from every match, the app displays detail facts about your club and their upcoming matches. Perfect if you're down at the pub with your mates and want to really impress with your footie knowledge.



Pacifica

Free (iOS, Android)

For those with stress in their lives, Pacifica aims to help reduce any anxiety. This app uses audio exercises, deep belly breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation and positive visualisation to help calm you. It even includes daily health trackers and though analysis, so you can see how much progress you've actually made.



Nintendo 3DS

More than 262 million Super Mario games have been sold. There's life in the crazy plumbers yet

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



Mario vs. Donkey Kong Tipping Stars

£30

Super Mario and Lemmings. They're two of the biggest video games of a generation - one has proven to be an enduring household name, the other... not so much. So what happens if you combine the two together?

You get a rather excellent game, as it happens. Even if no gamer ever asked that question before you'll certainly be glad that someone at Nintendo dared to, as Mario vs. Donkey Kong Tipping Stars is one of the best Super Mario spin off titles in years.

Miniature clockwork versions of Mario blindly march around each level, whilst you are tasked with stopping them from meeting a rather

abrupt end. Spikes, Piranha Plants, Whomps and good old-fashioned gravity will all try their best to destroy the little guys, unless you create a safe path for them.

Things can get a little more tricky once you realise that by quickly creating and removing pathways the mini-Marios can actually separate from one another, forcing you to multitask on the fly as each one tries its hardest to off itself.

It's addictive, old-school fun and it makes terrific use of the 3DS' stylus input, too.



Codename: S.T.E.A.M

£30

It seems like top-down turn based strategy games are all the rage right now, and frankly we couldn't be happier. Particularly if that means more games like Codename: S.T.E.A.M are getting made.

It takes an XCOM/Valkyria Chronicles approach to things in that each level dumps you and your team of characters into an enclosed arena filled with alien monsters. You don't know where these monsters are, though, meaning battles rely on carefully planned tactics as much as anything.

Where S.T.E.A.M separates itself from the rest in its genre, though, is the combat. Rather than moving around a tiled grid your soldiers roam freely as they might do in a third-person shooter - you even control them

from an over the shoulder perspective. A set number of 'moves' per turn is replaced with a steam meter. Every action consumes a set amount of steam, so whilst you still have to be disciplined in your actions and movements the combat has a more free-flowing, skill-based feeling to it.

Considering this is a title from the same team that brought you the Advance Wars series, S.T.E.A.M could make for a rather good replacement for those desperate for a new Wars title on their 3DS. It also helps that there's been more effort put into the story and characters than in any Wars title, with surprisingly big-name voice talent from sci-fi veterans like Adam Baldwin, Will Wheaton and Michael Dorn lending credibility to the zany steam punk fantasy.



PlayStation Vita

Two BIG games set in the past and the present keep our resident games reviewer boggle-eyed

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



Shovel Knight

£11.99

Shovel Knight revolves around the titular character and his partner, Shield Knight. Both are separated when an evil sorcerer, called the Enchantress, takes over the kingdom they protect. As Shovel Knight, you must defeat the Enchantress and her gang of eight knights to take back the kingdom and reunite with your partner.

Anyone who grew up with the NES will feel instantly familiar with Shovel Knight. The 8-bit pixelated graphics look fantastic and the gameplay, bosses and level designs take influence from classics like Mega Man, Super Mario, the Legend of Zelda and Castlevania.

There are no complicated controls and, as his name suggests, you use Shovel Knight's shovel to bash enemies, dig up treasure or clear paths blocked by sand, rock and other obstacles. It all sounds so familiar, right?

Yet despite all these influences, Shovel Knight has its own identity. You can trade in treasure for weapon, armour, health and mana upgrades. This encourages you to replay levels and grind more loot to get the upgrade you really want. A New Game+ mode, unlocked after completing the game, will make you sink even more hours into this addictive game.

Shovel Knight is a must play for those who want to relive their 8-bit childhood or a younger generation wanting to experience a golden age of video gaming.





Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number

£9.99

Of all the indie titles to release in recent years, Hotline Miami has had the most enduring legacy. For two-and-a-half years fans have ravenously awaited a sequel, and it's finally upon us - on PS Vita too, no less.

It's not like your typical indie title though. There's no cutesy sprite-based childhood protagonists or ambient fantasy worlds full of mystery and intrigue. There is only the city of Miami in the early '90s, and all of the corruption and filth that accompanies it.

Once again the player is thrust into the body of a series of mentally unhinged protagonists and tasked with brutally murdering wave after wave of mobsters. Mysterious figures in a variety of animal masks appear to each character urging them to kill time and again, as the plot unfolds from different points of view.

The game play is largely the same, bar a few changes. Each different character has a different special ability which can completely redefine the way the player approaches the game - one has the ability to roll out of the line of fire, for example, whilst another has deadly fists. The impossibly frantic, twitchy, top-down gunplay is still intact, though.

Levels are larger this time, with more windows and longer hallways providing more opportunities for the player to die at the hands of unseen enemies. If anything it's actually harder than the original.

Not only is Hotline Miami 2 somehow more difficult than the original, its soundtrack is somehow better, too. The thumping electronic score plays like a cross between a Nicholas Winding Refn soundtrack and Daft Punk, and ensures that your adrenaline and your immersion never drop.

It's a must play (or at least a must try), but only if you've got a strong stomach - both for visceral 8-bit gore and consistently punishing game play.



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 Jade

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £199
<http://www.acer.co.uk>

A decent handset from a smaller brand, the Liquid Jade has all the components in place to be a much better handset than it actually is. What holds it back is Acer's lack of polish when compared to bigger brands like Motorola. The end result is a handset that you could settle for, but probably shouldn't.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.5 x 69 x 7.5mm
Weight 110g
Battery 2,100mAh

VERDICT: A decent low-end handset, but there are too many better alternatives.

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

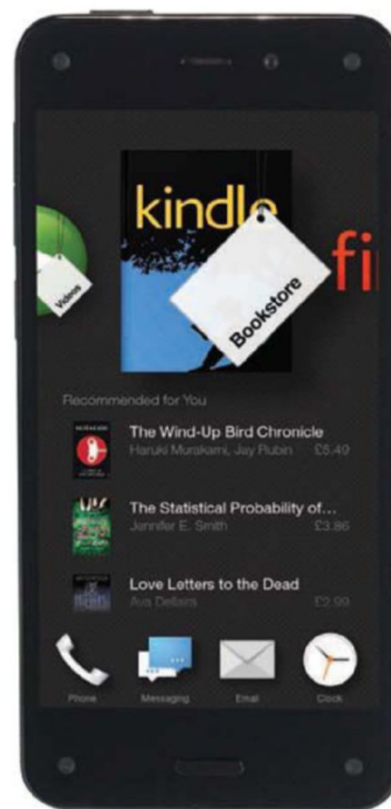
We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to 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 iOS8
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	Connectivity 4G
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz	Dimensions 158.1 x 77.8 x 7.1 mm
Screen 5.5 inches	Weight 172g
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Battery 1,810 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 16GB/64GB/128GB	
Micro SD compatible? No	
Camera 8 MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

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	Dimensions 145 x 71.5 x 8.95mm
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Weight 160g
Screen 5 inches	Battery 2,000mAh
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels	
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP	
Video 1080p	
Connectivity 4G LTE	

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

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



BlackBerry Classic

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £330

uk.blackberry.com

BlackBerry diehards will love the modern touchscreen and keyboard – and even some actual apps, just like a proper smartphone. There are certainly worse handsets you could be issued at work. But there's nothing here to tempt an iPhone, Android or Windows user. For almost everyone other than BlackBerry fans, this phone is just a reminder of how far we've moved on in recent years.

OS BlackBerry OS 10.3.1	Video 1080p @ 30fps
Processor Dual-core 1.5GHz Krait	Connectivity 4G
Screen 3.5 inches	Dimensions 131 x 72.4 x 10.2mm
Resolution 720 x 720 pixels	Weight 177g
Memory 2GB RAM	Battery 2,515mAh
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Rear camera 8MP	
Front camera 2MP	

VERDICT: Difficult to recommend to all but the most ardent of BlackBerry fans.

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





BlackBerry Passport

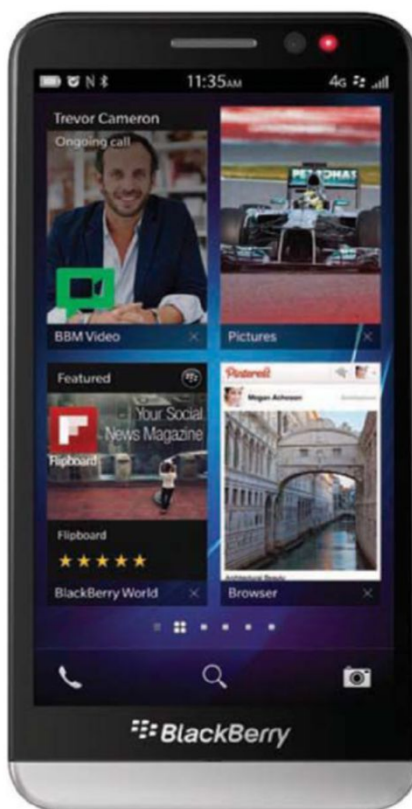
Reviewed: November 2014, price: £530
uk.blackberry.com

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 ★★★★★



Doro 820 Mini

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £169
www.doro.co.uk

The Doro 820 Mini's software is simple to use; first-time smartphone users and the elderly won't get confused by any cumbersome on-screen options. Unfortunately, this usability has been hampered by hardware problems. A slow processor creates annoying delays when navigating through the phone, whilst a poor build quality ruins what could have otherwise been a decent budget phone.

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	Connectivity 4G
Processor 1.5Ghz quad-core	Dimensions 107mm x 61mm x 12mm
Screen 4.7 inch	Weight 100g
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels	Battery 2,100 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 4GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

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

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



Google Nexus 6

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £499
www.google.com/nexus/6/

The Nexus 6 is a reminder of exactly what so many manufacturers are doing wrong by overly modifying Android. Google's flagship is a tremendous powerhouse - more of a media hub than a mere smartphone, and one of the best phablets on the market. Whether you'd rather it had a stylus is a matter of preference, though.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.7 GHz quad-core	Dimensions 82.98 mm x 159.26 mm x 10.06 mm
Screen 5.96 inches	Weight 184g
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels	Battery 3,220 mAh
Memory 3GB RAM	
Storage 32/64GB	
Micro SD compatible? No	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 4K	

VERDICT: Fast, fresh and tremendously powerful. A dream for Android purists.

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



HTC Desire 500

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199
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	Dimensions 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9mm
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Weight 123g
Screen 4.3 inches	Battery 1,800 mAh
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	

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 spec'd 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

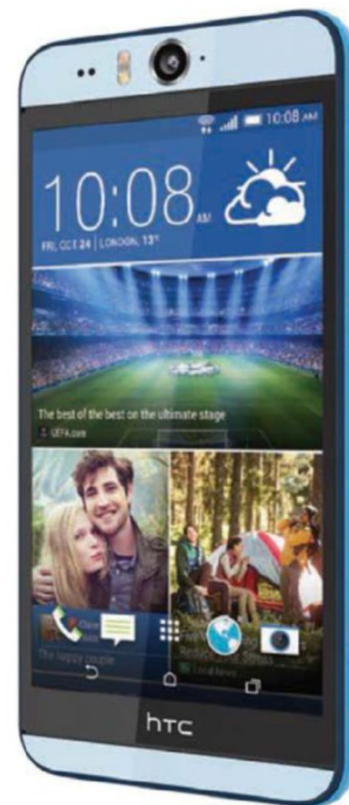
In a market lacking a viable midrange phablet the HTC Desire 816 stands out. It might have its flaws, but for the price you can certainly look past them. If you can't, then a midrange device probably isn't for you. For the rest of us, there's no better option for getting your hands on a jumbo screen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

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 2,600 mAh

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

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



HTC Desire Eye

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £365
www.htc.com/uk

Whilst we love the cameras (having a front-facer as highly powered as the rear-facer is a huge boon, particularly for selfie-lovers) the Desire Eye's build quality and price make it a tougher sell than you might think. It does look nice though, and is an interesting concept. Just not a 100% successful one.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 13MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5 mm
Weight 154g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: A hard sell when the superior One M8 can now be bought for the same price.

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





HTC One M8

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £530

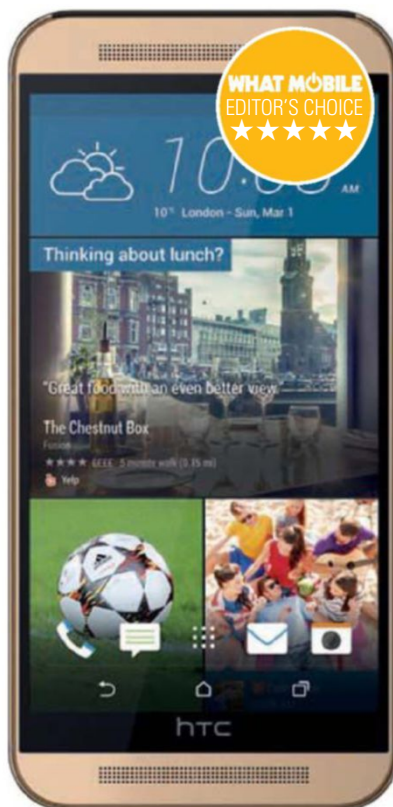
www.htc.com/uk

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.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core	Dimensions 146.36 x 70.6 x 9.35 mm
Screen 5 inches	Weight 160g
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Battery 2,600 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing	
Video 1080p	

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

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



HTC One M9

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £580

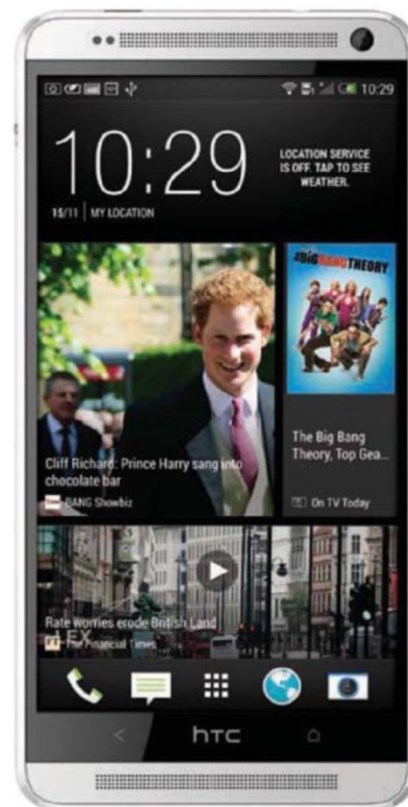
www.htc.com/uk

The One M9 is HTC's first major release of 2015 and its top-notch build quality, powerful processor and phenomenal battery life makes it one of our favourite phones of this year. However, it doesn't really provide anything different to what flagship rivals like the iPhone 6 already offers. Despite that, the HTC One M9 is still one of the best looking and most powerful phones on the market.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop	Video 4k
Processor 4 x 2GHz + 4 x 1.5GHz octa-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 5 inches	Dimensions 144.6 x 69.7 x 9.61mm
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Weight 157g
Memory 3 GB RAM	Battery 2,840mAh
Storage 32GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 4MP UltraPixel front-facing	

VERDICT: It has no unique selling point, but it's still one of the best devices out there.

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



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 4.3 Jelly Bean	Video 1080p
Processor 1.7GHz quad-core	Connectivity 4G
Screen 5.9 inches	Dimensions 164.5 x 82.5 x 10.3mm
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels	Weight 217g
Memory 2GB	Battery 3,300mAh
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing	

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

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 ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend G7

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £205

www.huaweidevice.co.uk

With a large screen and the gorgeous looks that remind us of the iPhone 6; the Huawei Ascend G7 might look good on the outside, but the software is another story. Huawei has redesigned Google's vanilla Android operating system and reskinned it as something that looks both cheap and ugly. Despite that, the Ascend G7 is a decent choice if you want an iPhone 6-lookalike that runs Android software.

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 153.5 x 77.3 x 7.6mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000mAh

VERDICT: Its great performance is ruined cheap and ugly looking operating system.

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: £365

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 ★★★★★



Kazam Tornado 348

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £247

www.kazam.mobi

Despite great looks and smooth performance, lack of 4G connectivity and storage makes the Tornado 348 something of a non-starter for serious users. The casual market will be plenty content with what's on offer here - particularly those eye-catching physical dimensions.

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 rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm
Weight 95.5g
Battery 2,050 mAh

VERDICT: Standout design and performance at an attractive price.

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

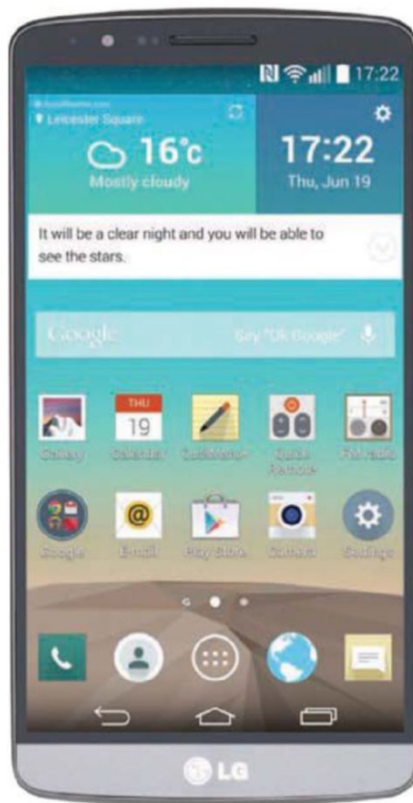
Despite its impressive performance, long-lasting battery and excellent screen, the G2 doesn't quite hold up next to its competition. It doesn't lag behind in any one area, but it doesn't truly excel anywhere else either. It won't give you any hassle aside from its heating issues but this isn't a best-in-class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

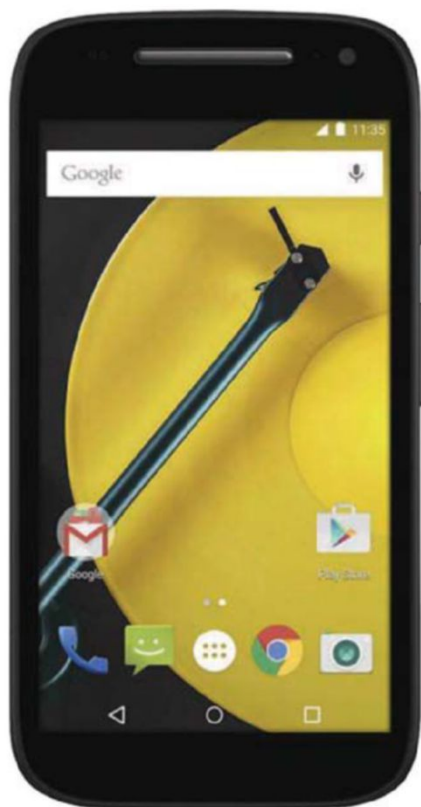
OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD Compatible? No
Camera 13 MP rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing
Video 1080p

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 E (2015)

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £109

www.motorola.co.uk

Paying £109 for a full-blown, powerful 4G smartphone is seriously good value for money. This value is only increased by a high-quality camera, powerful processor and excellent battery life. The only major faults we found when testing the phone included no LED camera flash, a plastic body that easily picks up marks and a fiddly SIM-card slot.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 410, 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches Resolution 540 X 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD Compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 640 x 480 front-facing
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129.9 x 66.8mm, 146g
Weight 145g
Battery 2,390 mAh

VERDICT: After a smartphone that's seriously good value? This is for you.

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
MicroSD 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 ★★★★★



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

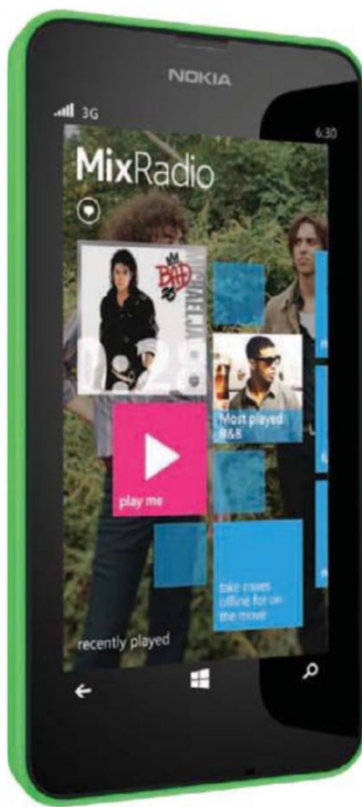
Reviewed: October 2013, price: £180
www.nokia.com

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	Connectivity 4G-LTE
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core	Dimensions 133.3 x 72.3 x 9.2 mm
Screen 4.7 inches	Weight 159g
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels	Battery 2,000mAh
Memory 512 MB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Camera 5 MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing	
Video 1080p	

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	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 129.5 x 66.7 x 9.2mm
Screen 4.5 inches	Weight 134g
Resolution 480 x 854 pixels	Battery 1,830mAh
Memory 512MB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB	
Camera 5MP rear-facing	
Video 720p	

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	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1GHz dual-core	Dimensions 127.9 x 67.5 x 9mm
Screen 4.3 inches	Weight 128g
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels	Battery 2,000mAh
Memory 512MB RAM	
Storage 8GB	
MicroSD Compatible? Yes	
Cameras 6.7MP front-facing, 1.3MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

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 830

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £267
www.nokia.com

The Nokia Lumia 830 is not 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 is no exception. It does look the part, and Cortana is improving, but there are simply better options out there.

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
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 0.9MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5 mm
Weight 150g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: Underpowered and overpriced, the Lumia 830 is average and forgettable.

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 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 ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note Edge

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £610
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Note Edge points to an exciting future when we no longer have to accept that a smartphone screen has to be rectangular. As is often the case with a new technology, though, it needs more work. As cool as the edge looks, it serves little purpose, other than to make this a more expensive Note 4. Call us when the screen wraps all the way around, Samsung.

OS Android 4.4.4 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 2.7GHz Krait 450
Screen 5.6-inches
Resolution 1,600 x 2,560 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing,

3.7MP front-facing
Video 4K @ 60fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.3 x 82.4 x 8.3mm
Weight 174g
Battery 3,000mAh

VERDICT: A worthwhile endeavour - for Samsung's engineers, not the consumer.

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 2014, 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 ★★★★★



Yezz Andy A5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £207
www.sayyezz.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)
Processor Quad-core 1.2GHz
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
Weight 106g
Battery 2,000mAh

VERDICT: A great camera, but the rest struggles against more bullish counterparts.

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





YotaPhone 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £549

www.yotaphone.com/gb-en/

The YotaPhone 2 fixes almost all of the original's flaws, and turns the rear E Ink display from an impractical cherry on top, to one of the phone's main ingredients. There's no denying this quirky conversation-starter is for a niche audience, and a rich one at that. We can't wait to see what the YotaPhone 3 will bring - not least a price drop for this model.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 2.3GHz Krait 400
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 144 x 69.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,500mAh

VERDICT: If you're constantly reading on the go this is the best new smartphone in years.

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
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Micro SD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.3 x 70.4 x 7.8mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,300 mAh

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
Processor Snapdragon S4 Play
Screen 480 x 800, 4 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Camera 5 MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64 x 10.9mm

Weight 130g
Battery 1,800 mAh

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 Iconia Tab 8

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £140
www.amazon.co.uk

Acer has managed to do what manufacturers of every cheap tablet should aspire to: create a tablet that is priced extremely competitively, but which performs to a standard much higher than you'd expect for its cost. A few compromises have been made along the way, but this is still a budget slab that's well worth considering.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	2MP front-facing
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core	Video 720p
Screen 8 inches	Connectivity Wi-fi only
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels	Dimensions 215 x 130 x 8.5mm
Memory 2GB RAM	Weight 360g
Storage 16GB/32GB	Battery 4,600mAh
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB	
Camera 5MP rear-facing,	

VERDICT: It has a few flaws, but for less than £150 you should look past them.

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
Processor Quad-core A9 1.6GHz
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
Weight 366g
Battery Lithium Polymer

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

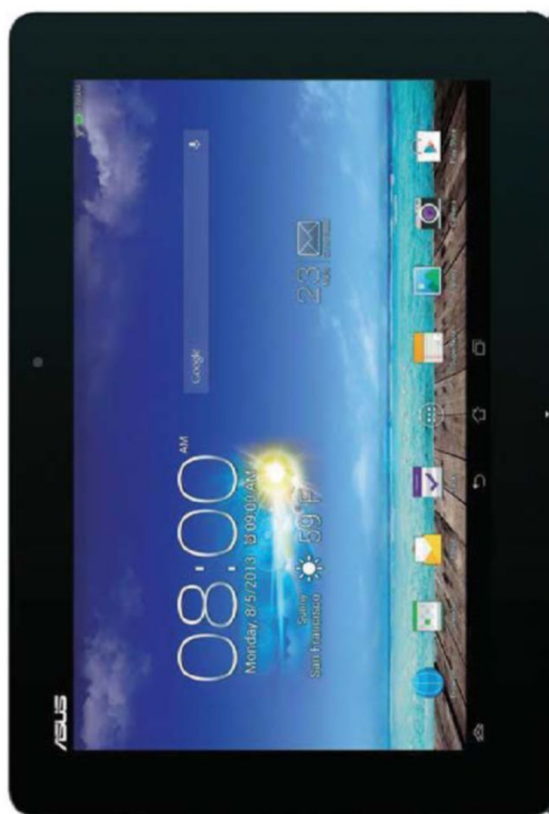
A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

OS Android 4.2.2
SCREEN 10.1-inch/1,280 x 800 pixels
CAMERA 2MP rear, 2MP front
VIDEO Record/playback
AUDIO Music player/3.5mm jack
MEMORY 16GB expandable via microSD
DIMENSIONS 273 x 169 x 10.1mm (tablet), 273 x 169 x 5mm (keyboard)
WEIGHT 636g (tablet), 200g (keyboard)

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 Yoga Tablet 2

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £249

www.lenovo.com

Lenovo certainly deserves credit for trying to break the 'black slab' mould. It's an interesting attempt at 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 that much value for money.

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
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing

Video 720p
Connectivity 4G optional
Dimensions 255 x 183 x 7.2 mm
Weight 619g
Battery 9,600 mAh

VERDICT: A nice idea, but one we don't fully buy into. Not quite up to scratch.

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
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

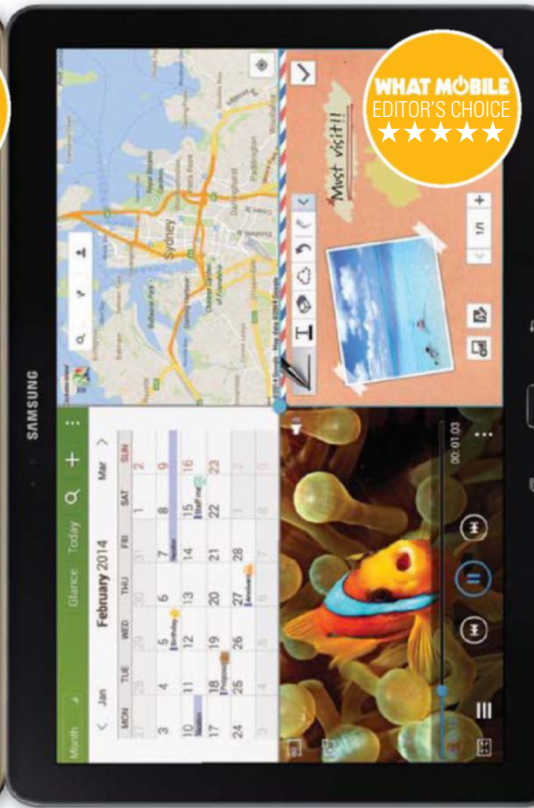
The Tab 3 Kids is surprisingly robust, with a solid camera, great battery, fantastic educational apps and software to suit kids. But the premium design doesn't feel like it was meant to be enjoyed by young users and we'd suggest going with a company that specialises in the market rather than one that's 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.

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

VERDICT: Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

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



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.

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

VERDICT: Big, beautiful, functional and priced to match. Android's finest.

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



Sony Xperia Z2 Tablet

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £399
www.sony.co.uk

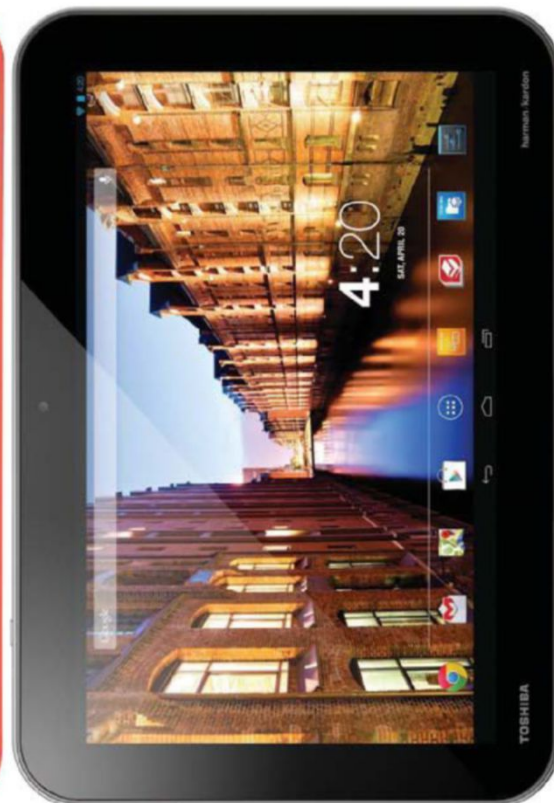
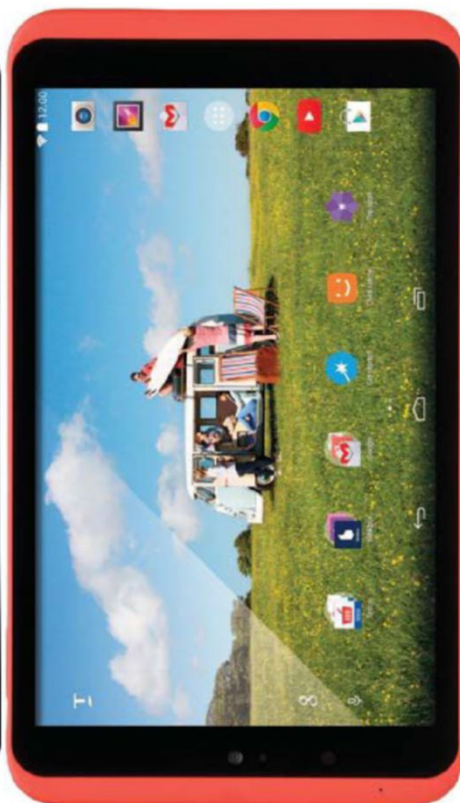
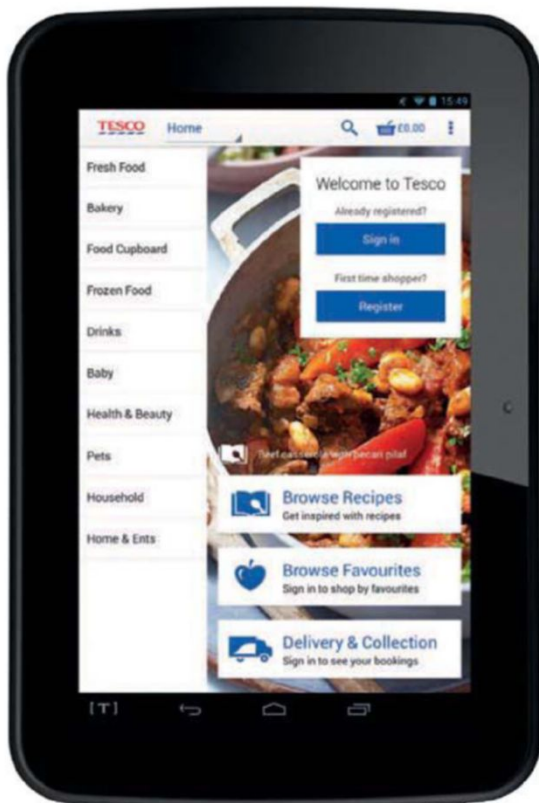
If looks could kill, Sony murdered the competition. Add to that a powerful processor and decent screen size and you have a great new addition to the high-end tablet market. Innovative features like dust and water resistance are impressive too, and manage to make up the expensive price tag.

OS Android OS v4.4.2 (KitKat)
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, 4G LTE

VERDICT: A good all-round tablet, with looks that set it apart from the rest of the flagships.

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 ★★★★★





Asus ZenWatch

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £204
www.asus.com/uk/

The Asus ZenWatch is handsome enough, but fails to stand out from the crowd of Android Wear devices. Google's wearable OS still feels like a solution in search of a problem - unless you have a specific use in mind for its features you may want to hold out for the next generation of devices.

VERDICT: Attractive, but with too many caveats to recommend outright.



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.



LG G Watch R

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £180.00
www.jawbone.com

The LG G Watch R may be one of the most mature-looking smartwatches yet, but not everyone will find it attractive - or appreciate Android Wear's limitations. The market's set to explode with the advent of the Apple Watch and the Pebble Time. Unless you're desperate for what the LG G Watch R does right now, it's hard to see the value in yet another second-generation Android Wear watch.

VERDICT: Although attractive, it has limited functionality compared to other smartwatches.



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



iPhone
6 / 6 plus

Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
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HTC
One M8

Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
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Samsung
Galaxy S5

Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green
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Sony Xperia
Z3 / Z3 Compact

Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
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