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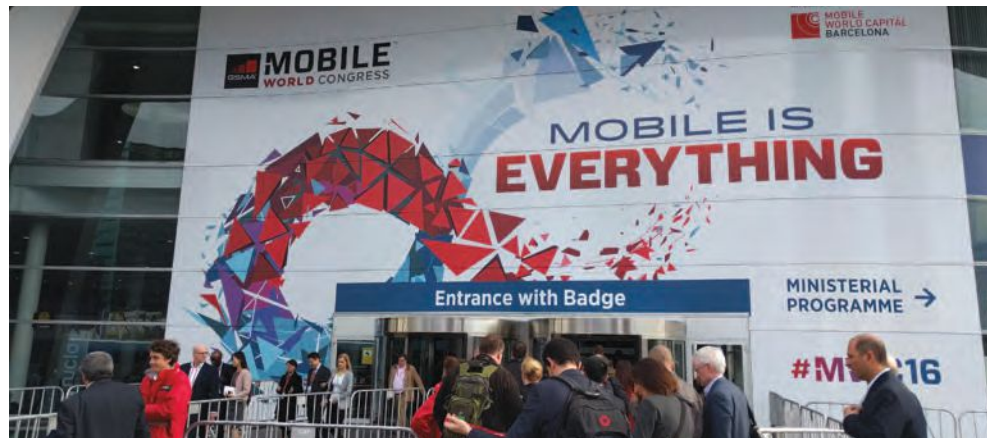
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Barcelona bun fight



Imagine 100,000 people walking hither and thither in an exhibition area several times bigger than Wembley Stadium. That will give you some idea on just how big the annual Mobile World Congress is. MWC is to the mobile industry what Glastonbury is to music festivals. So no surprise that this is the show that everyone launches their new products for 2016. Which is why we were burning shoe leather rushing from the launch of the Samsung S7 to the unveiling of the LG G5 and then squeezing in time for the Sony and Huawei unveils. The result is an 11-page special giving you all the inside track on what will be available to satisfy your gadget lust.

Virtual Reality - the next big thing?

One of the big developments at the Barcelona Mobile World Congress was the buzz around VR (Virtual Reality). Samsung presented their entire press conference in VR (reporters found a VR headset on their chair). There is no doubt that VR can be fun. But it also isolates you entirely from your surroundings. As soon as all the journalists in the Samsung press conference had strapped on their VR sets, who should be ushered unidentified through the crowd than Mark Zuckerberg? Journalists were too busy amazed at the colourful 3D changing shapes they were viewing through their headsets to notice the uber-famous Facebook supermo walking among them. Other VR headsets were launched by LG, Huawei, and HTC. So it's clear that this could be the next killer app for smartphones. Or it just might go the way of 3D TV.



The What Mobile team

INSIDE STORY



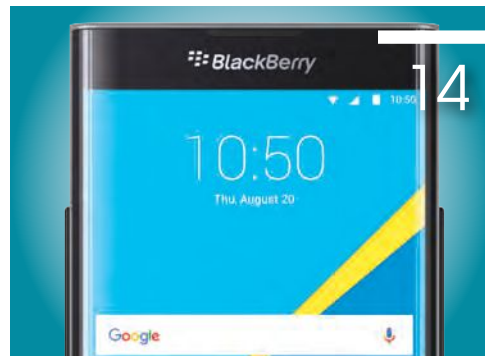
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YOUR CHANCE TO WIN

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The guys over at GEAR4 have been kind enough to gift us a brand new Bluetooth speaker, which we reviewed in last month's accessories round-up and gave a very impressive four stars. To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is answer the simple question below:

What IP rating is the GEAR4 StreetParty Dance speaker?

- A. IPX4
- B. IPX5
- C. IPX6

Email your full name, address, contact number and answer to the address below:

competitions@whatmobile.net

Alternatively, head to:
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and fill in the online form.

The winner will be contacted via email on the 10 April 2016.

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: 10 April 2016. 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 PNY PowerPack. 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. 10. You accept that the competition prize may be an open box item that was previously reviewed in the magazine by one of our reporters.

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Samsung J1

Quietly released in January without any bells and whistles, Samsung's newest entry-level handset has plenty to like.

Samsung is mostly known for its high-end Galaxy S series devices, but it is worth noting that the range extends quite far beyond ultra-premium devices. The J series is pretty much the company's entry-level range and consists of fashion-conscious devices at a pretty lucrative price. The previous version shot off the shelves and sold several million units last year, so it was only natural that Samsung would end up releasing a successor.

The first thing to note is that this is not a handset that will blow you away. Specifications are frugal at best, but the design itself is something very nice considering the price-point. It may be plastic but it definitely does not come across as cheap, with a subtle chrome trim edge around the screen helping to complete the package. We'd compare it to one of the older generation Samsung Galaxy S handsets, which is no bad thing for a budget device.

Inside is an Exynos 3475 clocked at 1.3GHz; this is an entry-level chip that will only be good for minimally intensive usage. The same goes for the RAM, which comes in at 1GB. Compared with last year's model both of these components have essentially doubled in performance... But there's still no hiding that this is a basic device. The screen has increased in size to 4.5-inches, though the actual pixel resolution remains the



same at 480 x 800. This means that the overall density slips ever closer to that dangerous 200 PPI mark, meaning lots of pixilation.

The primary snapper is a 5MP sensor with f/2.2 aperture, a decent benchmark that puts it on the better end of most budget cameras. Being that Samsung is currently one of the front-runners in camera technology, we'd expect the new J1 to impress, though it is highly likely that it uses the same sensor as the last generation version. The secondary camera weighs in at 2 megapixels, which is fairly high for an entry-level handset. The ability to record 720p HD video on the selfie cam is also a nice touch, as we have often seen mid-range handsets that could only just manage to achieve this.

Battery life for the handset is another positive, with the J1 having a 2,050mAh cell, up from 1,850mAh in last year's model. This is a significant jump that puts it on a par with lower mid-range devices, though we'll reserve judgement until we properly get our hands on one. The internal memory has also been doubled to 8GB, up from the OS-breaking 4GB that was on the previous model. Yes, it was possible to use microSD on the old model too, but seriously, 4GB?

The Samsung Galaxy J1 should be available when you read this issue, having quietly been announced at the back end of January. We've already seen it available in a few retailers with prices floating around the £80 mark.

WHAT MOBILE Excitement Meter



A cheap and cheerful device that offers some marked improvements over the original. Since the previous version was such a hot seller, we're genuinely interested to see what all the fuss was about with this new model.

Xiaomi Redmi 3

Xiaomi is back with another follow-up to its popular budget powerhouse smartphone, the Redmi.

The Xiaomi Redmi line has become something of a staple for the Chinese smartphone giant and in many ways even eclipses that of the flagship Mi handsets. Built to a budget yet still absurdly powerful and with beautiful design, it pretty much had the market to itself little more than a few years ago. Enter the Redmi 3, the latest evolution of that line and a handset that is altogether better than its predecessor.

On the design front, the Redmi handsets have never failed to impress. All-metal bodies encased in glass re-imagine what you would expect to get from a sub £200 handset and it has all been carried over here in the Redmi 3. At only 8.5mm thick and 69.6mm wide, it barely has any footprint in your hand. Add to that the 144g weight and you have a device that is easy to slip in a pocket and forget.

Xiaomi has done things a little different this time around with the Redmi 3, opting for a subtle dotted pattern on the back which looks like diamonds. The Mi logo sits proudly in the middle and unsurprisingly it looks great. Some may call it a bit too bling but it is definitely more tasteful than what some other Chinese manufacturers attempted – the ZTE Axon series being a case in point.

Moving to the hardware itself and you get a lot for your money. A mid-range Snapdragon 616 and 2GB RAM helps to propel the Redmi 3 into the same performance levels as handsets like the Honor 5X and even the HTC One A9 (almost). The 720p panel isn't the best in the world but at 5.0 inches it almost reaches that 300dpi standard for pixel-free viewing. With regards to cost cutting

measures, we'd much rather take a lower resolution screen (within reason) and a faster processor than the other way around.

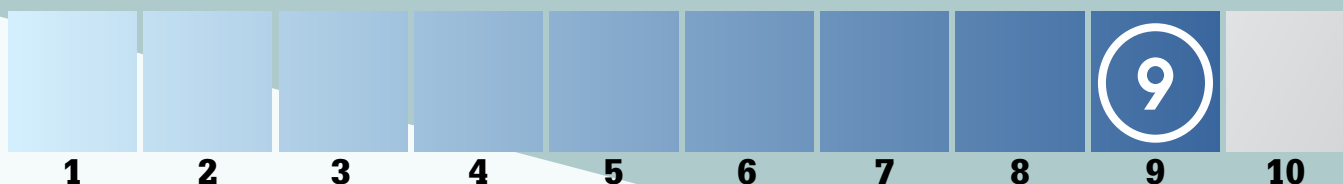
The camera on the Redmi 3 is equally impressive for a budget device, with a 13 megapixel rear sensor that includes such luxuries as Phase Detection Autofocus and a wide f/2.0 aperture. Even the front camera is no slouch, with a 5 megapixel sensor that's capable of taking 1080p video at 30FPS. Internal memory is a decent 16GB, which puts it above the usual 8GB we see on cheaper handsets. There's also the option of microSD expansion up to 128GB, though it will eat up the second sim slot in the process.

Perhaps the crown jewel of the Redmi 3 is the battery, which comes in at an eye-watering 4,100mAh. Bearing in mind that this is only a 5-inch handset with thickness of 8.5mm, you have to commend the team for this feat. Even larger devices such as the Nexus 6P and Moto X Force can't compete with that, despite both having excellent life.

The Xiaomi Redmi 3 will be available in a choice of four colours – Gold, Dark Grey, Silver and Classic Gold. Its global release is yet to be confirmed. More details to follow.



WHAT MOBILE Excitement Meter



An excellent handset that manages to cram in an insane amount for a cheap price. If it performs half as good as it sounds, it will be another sure-fire winner.

Meem

Cost: £49.99 - £69.99

Reviewer: Manny Pham

Available from: Meem Store (Online)

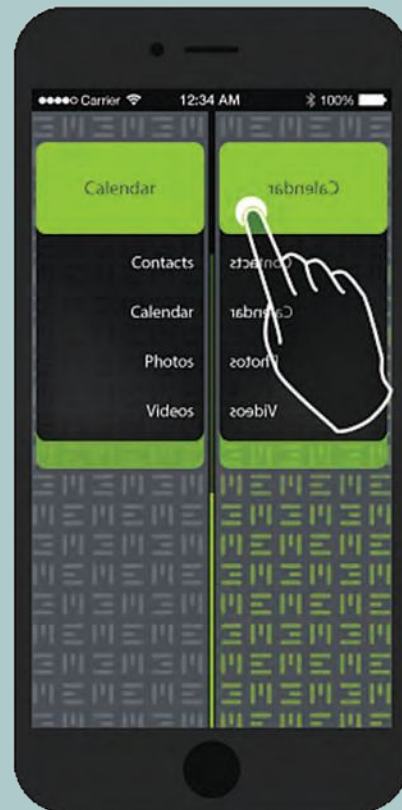
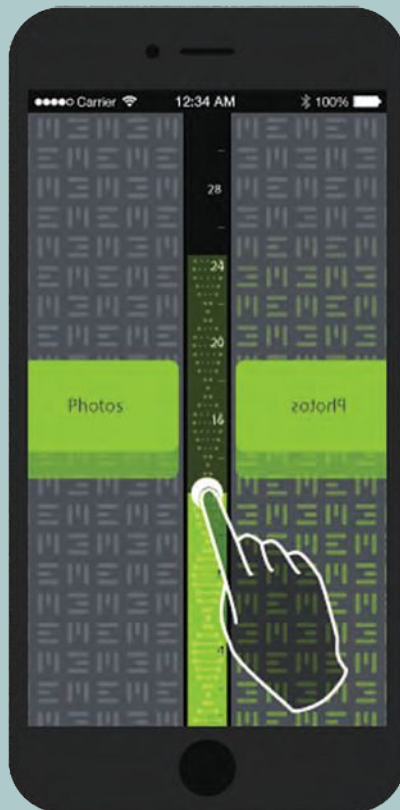
It's all about cloud storage nowadays and it seems inevitable that 'The Cloud' is our future and there's no point resisting. The high-profile scandal nicknamed 'The Fapping' caused a massive loss in trust for cloud storage, and massive nods of approval from heterosexual men everywhere. If you're worried about cloud storage leaking and like to keep your data on you physically, Meem is just for you.

It is basically a charging cable with a small hard drive that backs up your device every time you plug it in. Small as in it's super convenient to transport, as for internal memory – 16GB for Android and 32GB for iOS. You're probably thinking that's not enough to back up a phone but Meem only backs up the important data; photos, contacts, calendar and videos. It takes around four minutes for every gigabyte it backs up. After the first time you back it up, Meem will look for what's new on your device and copy it over in less time.

CEO Kelly Sumner says in his YouTube video that Meem will automatically ask you to download the app as soon as you plug it into a power source. Our Meem failed to do this so those that don't read instruction books might think it's all done and ready to use.

The charging cable supports fast charge, a massive plus, and just adds to the convenience factor.

As people who jump between phones a lot, we fell in love with Meem. It's a bit steep in price but you won't need another cable after this investment.



- + Good build quality
- + Fast charge support
- + Unique physical data backup

- Price can deter some
- Cable discolours if not stored away properly



Wraps Wristband Headphones

Cost: £24.99

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

Available from: wrapswear.co.uk

The last time we reviewed the Wraps was in the Christmas gift guide and we quite enjoyed them, so when we had the chance to try out a new hands-free option, we thought why not?

If you didn't read that issue, allow us to fill you in on some of the quirks surrounding these little in-ear buds. Billed as both a fashion accessory and a pair of headphones, they are designed in a way that you can wear them around your wrist as a bracelet, rather than stuffing them in your pocket like most other brands. This is a unique feature that definitely helps them stand out in the market, especially when you consider that they're actually quite attractive.

You can get them in a multitude of colours and the cable is encased in a thick woven fabric that doubles up as added

protection from unintentional damage.

Move onto the sound quality and that is nothing to be frowned at either, with decent clarity and solid presence. They won't compete with the best in their price range but they're perfectly usable. We would argue that the mid-range is a little recessed and somewhat muffled, while the 'disco smile' that is common in cheaper cans can be heard in full effect here. Lows and highs are accentuated quite heavily, burying the mids in some material. That said, they're definitely exciting and the treble in particular has a tendency to really shine through.

Add to this a hands-free function that seemed to work flawlessly in our testing and you have a pretty complete set of in-ear buds for only twenty five quid.



+ Strong, clear treble

+ Well-built

+ Cheap

- Recessed mids

- A little muffled



Earebel Beanie

Price: £39.92

Available from: akg.com

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

Headphones built into a hat definitely sounds like something of a novelty... And it may well be a novelty too.

The new Earebels are a pair of AKG-designed cans knitted into a virgin wool beanie.

When we first put them on, we unsurprisingly had a few chuckles from fellow office folk. The model we received was a blue/red version which seems more appropriate for girls than guys. Nevertheless, it certainly felt comfy when on the head

and the virgin wool seemed to resist soaking up odour from our sweeping Bieber locks. The problem is, there are noticeable design flaws with the product that seem to render it pretty useless for its intended purpose.

Being a warm, woollen beanie, you would probably expect to be using it outdoors in the cold. That would ideally mean that it needs to insulate sound well in order to resist the

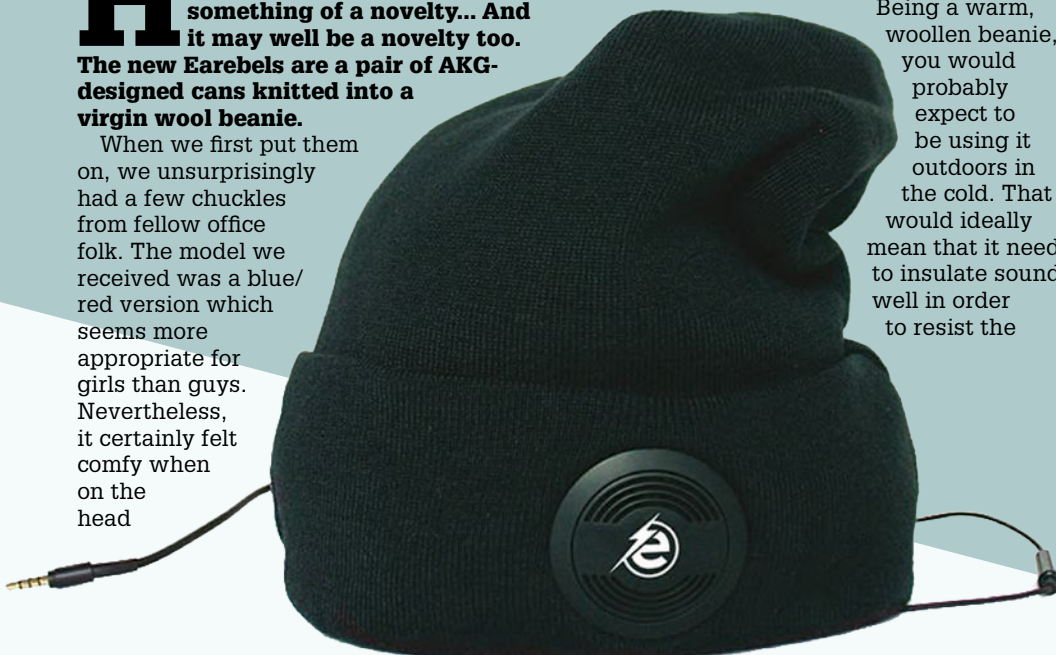
embarrassment of being in public. We found the leakage to be very bad and at loud volumes, they could be heard from the other side of the office, which isn't good for commuter use at all. Also, the lack of any clamping force for the cans really makes sound quality suffer as a result. Push them up to your ears to get the desired force and you will realise that the Earebels actually have some very decent cans built into them, but half the time you'll be hearing a bass-less representation of their capabilities because there's no seal to lock in the sound.

+ Very comfy

+ The speakers themselves are good quality...

- ...Except you never get to hear them at their best

- A lot of noise leakage



GEAR4 Black D30

Cost: £29.99 - £34.99

Reviewer: Manny Pham

Available: Carphone Warehouse

Phone cases are arguably the most important thing you'll be thinking about when buying a brand-spanking, high-spec, landing-a-rocket-on-the-moon smartphone. Accidents happen and with devices nowadays going for more high quality but less durable materials to construct their devices, it is almost a must to get one. GEAR4 has launched a new range of special cases that incorporates D30 technology. What is D30 you may ask? It's a smart material scientifically proven to protect against impact and shock damage through absorption. The army and Olympic ski teams use D30 for their uniforms

We tested the case in the most extreme way possible, and that was to smash it really hard against the floor. Result: it came out almost unscathed. For the test we used an iPhone 5s with a Corning Gorilla Gl ass display as opposed to the stronger ion-strength glass iPhone 6s. We were expecting a lot of damage but you couldn't tell at first glance. Upon removing the case there is a slight dent on the silent/ring switch, which was the point of impact. The switch is still operational with no hint of damage use wise.

The case itself is very svelte, adding



roughly a millimetre to the body – not massively cumbersome at all and you will get used to the slight increase in size. Volume and power keys are at first a bit stiff but after using it for a couple of days they loosen up and become as intuitive as if there wasn't case on.

There is the problem of colour transfer. In a black pair of jeans the orange started going black, giving it an unappealing dirty look. But it does over achieve in protecting your device. D30 is an incredible substance that is soft to the touch, but upon impact becomes a solid.

It's now our case of choice, it can be yours too if you can get over the colour transfer.

- + Extremely good protection
- + Excellent design
- Colour transfer ruins the look
- Keys are stiff at first



iMend

Cost: £84.99 - £139.99

Reviewer: Manny Pham

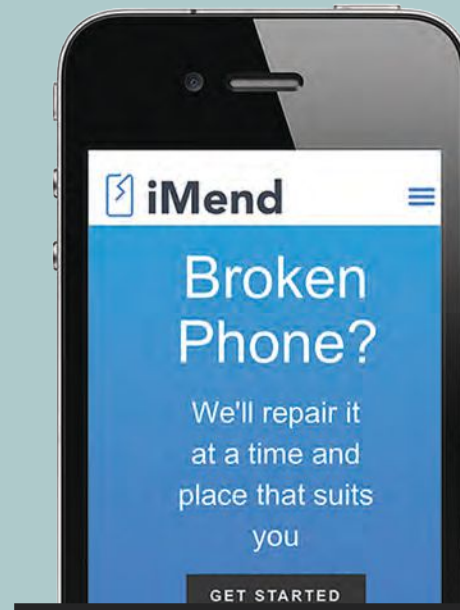
Available: www.imend.com

Smartphones are precious, they are an extension of yourself and God it's horrible when you're without it. A collective wince from strangers is common practice when a smartphone slams onto a hard floor. Everyone knows that pain and go through measures to prevent it – cases, insurance, wrapping in cotton wool. The process of getting it repaired can be equally painful, those who have tried to book an appointment at an Apple Store know it too well. You could be spending a few days without a smartphone until your appointment date. That is if you can get an appointment – it's notoriously hard to get a seat at the Genius Bar, at a convenient time.

For a quick and easy solution, iMend will come to your rescue with their on-site service. That's right they can come to you on the day (depending on time and available slots) and repair your smartphone for you. The repair took no longer than

ten minutes to replace a screen, that was pretty much in pieces. We had an iPhone 5s repaired (after some thorough smashing), those with iOS devices need to bear in mind official parts aren't used in the repairing process. Apple has a patent to prevent third parties from buying their parts. We had the smashed screen replaced and while it may not have been an official part, you can barely tell the difference. Touch screen responsiveness is 100% with a screen that's as good a brand new iPhone.

According to iMend 99.9% of service requests are fulfilled on the day. The convenience is the main appeal of the service, you can also mail it in or even pop into an iMend approved repair service store.



- + Same day repairs
- + To your door service
- + Brilliant customer service
- Official parts aren't used
- Repairs for iPhone 6s is pricer than the Apple Store



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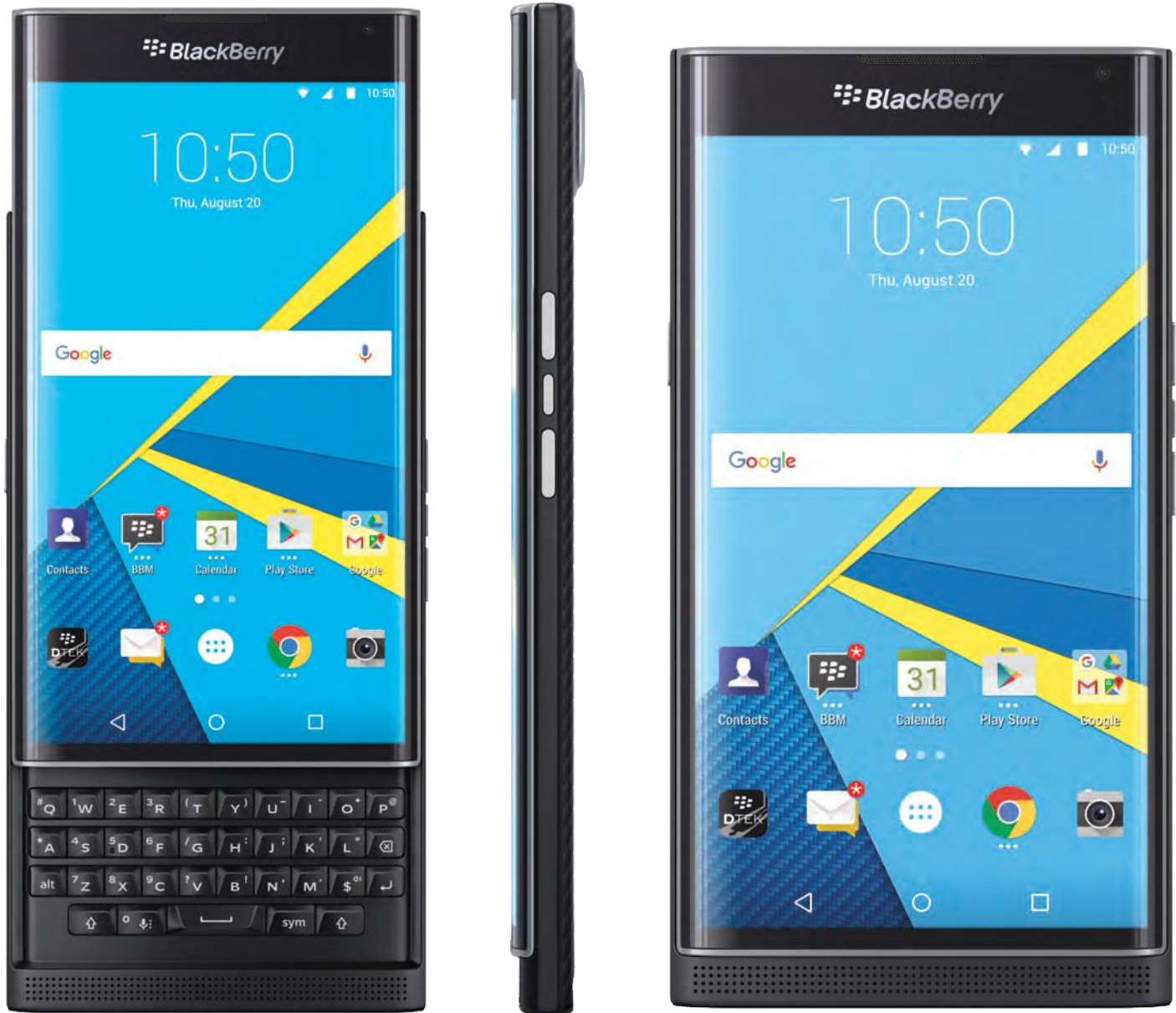
Duration of credit agreement: 24 months	Upfront fee: £0	Monthly device/s payment: £8	Total credit amount: £192	Representative APR: 0%	Device/s cash price: £192	Monthly tariff cost: £5
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Monthly tariff price may change at any time during the contract. General: Prices shown for eBill. For paper bill add £1.50. 24-month contract. Credit check and payment by Direct Debit required. Early disconnection fees apply. The charge for your tariff will increase with your July bill each year. Any increase will be in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation at the time and we'll always give you 30 days' notice of the exact increase each year. **Freestyle Legal Stuff:** You must pay off your loan in full in order to upgrade your handset. 0% APR Representative. Based on a 24-month consumer credit agreement with Virgin Media Mobile Finance Limited for the phone and a 30-day rolling Pay Monthly Airtime Contract with Virgin Mobile Telecoms Limited. Credit subject to status, credit check and payment by Direct Debit. 18+. Terms and conditions apply. Visit virginmedia.com/freestyle for full details. Virgin Media Mobile Finance Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under register no. 626215. Registered office: Media House, Bartley Wood Business Park, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9UP. Registered in England and Wales no. 9058868. **Android™ tablet offer:** Free Aicatel Pixi 3 7-inch WiFi Android™ tablet (the 'tablet') available when purchasing a Sony Xperia™ M4 Aqua from Virgin Media on a Freestyle Pay Monthly tariff. Offer available while stocks of the tablet last. If the handset and tariff order is cancelled or exchanged within 14 days, the tablet must be returned with the handset in an unused condition along with its original packaging and all accessories. If the tablet is damaged on return or you fail to return all the parts and accessories, we reserve the right to charge you for the full recommended retail price of the tablet (£59.99) or for any repair cost. There is no cash, credit or other alternative to the tablet. Non transferable. Further Legal Stuff applies. See virginmedia.com for details.

BlackBerry Priv

BlackBerry is back with its eagerly awaited first Android-powered handset aimed squarely at conquering the corporate flagship market. Is it enough to turn around the company's fortunes?

Price: £559.00 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn






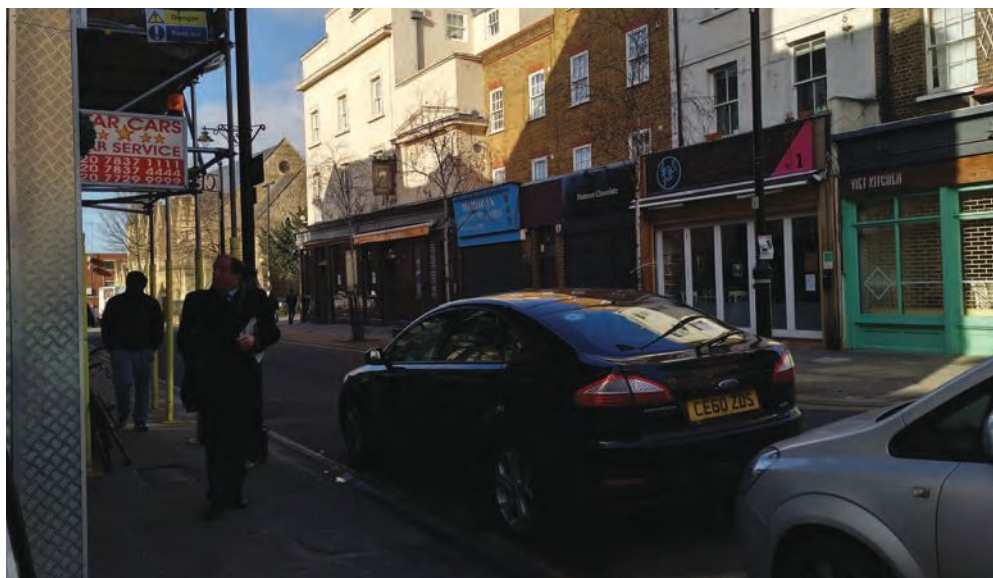
SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.1.1
Processor: 1.5GHz Snapdragon 808
Screen 5.4 inches
Resolution 1440 x 2560 (518ppi)
Memory 3GB
Storage 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 200GB
Rear camera 18MP

Front camera 2MP
Video 4K
Connectivity Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, NFC
Dimensions 152 x 78 x 8.1 mm
Weight 192g
Battery 3,410mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
3 ₅	3 ₅	4 ₅



On raw specs alone the Priv's 18 megapixel camera has a lot going for it but won't win any prizes

BlackBerry almost caved little more than a year ago, with CEO John Chen proclaiming he would kill the handset business if it failed to show profit...And yet here we are, with an Android handset that the world has been eagerly waiting for. The Priv represents the company's attempts at listening to critics and adopting a wider reaching OS, with true flagship specs thrown in. On paper, there's a lot to like about this device and the physical



Low-light performance would be very good if it wasn't for the crispy edges

keyboard will surely attract business users. Still, will this be the start of a new future for BlackBerry, or is too little, too late?

DESIGN

Big, bold but decidedly premium is a way we would use to fondly describe the Priv. While the thickness is unmistakably large, at almost 1cm, the lateral dimensions of the handset are pretty snug thanks to the curved screen that manages to take up quite a bit of the front panel. The rubberised rear case makes it excellent to grip in the hand, with no chance of it falling out by mistake. It certainly feels unique and would stand out in any social situation, especially with the huge BlackBerry logo encompassing the rear.

Underneath the screen lies a huge speaker that pumps out some seriously good sound and that obligatory BlackBerry keyboard, which feels as good as it ever did. The flip out keypad is one of the selling points in the Priv and definitely helps when sending large text documents, while the touchpad integrated directly into the keys makes swiping and editing text a breeze. It's a great feature, though we did notice some rather obvious design flaws apparent when using it.

Flipping the keyboard out is easy thanks to the recessed portion around the speaker, though getting it back in is another task altogether. Your only option is to place your finger over the screen for leverage, meaning you could end up opening apps by mistake as you force the keyboard back

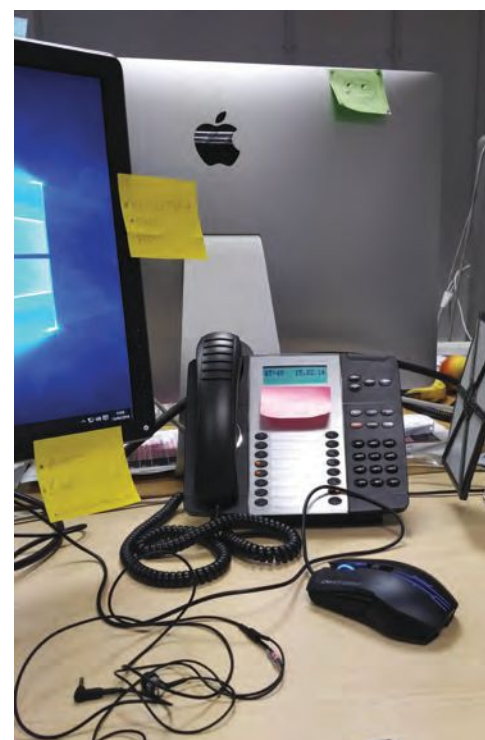
underneath. We're not exactly sure how BlackBerry can remedy this but it definitely needs consideration when the new version inevitably hits the market.

On the top of the device lies a SIM slot and microSD slot, the latter being a welcome addition that should be available on all handsets. The headphone jack has been moved to a slightly awkward position on the bottom of the handset, though this has likely been done to make room for the memory expansion mentioned earlier. In our opinion, it is a worthwhile trade-off despite the added clunkiness. It is accompanied by a Micro-USB slot that supports Quick Charge.

On the sides, the Priv has its power button orientated on the left, while the right-hand side has three buttons rather than the usual two. You get volume up, volume down and a new button that BlackBerry calls 'mute'. Aside from instantly silencing the device when it is playing sound, the button doesn't appear to do anything else... Which is a bit anti-climactic. In fact, it only acts as a mute button when noise is actively playing, so pressing it otherwise will do absolutely nothing except show the volume panel. Very odd.

CAMERA

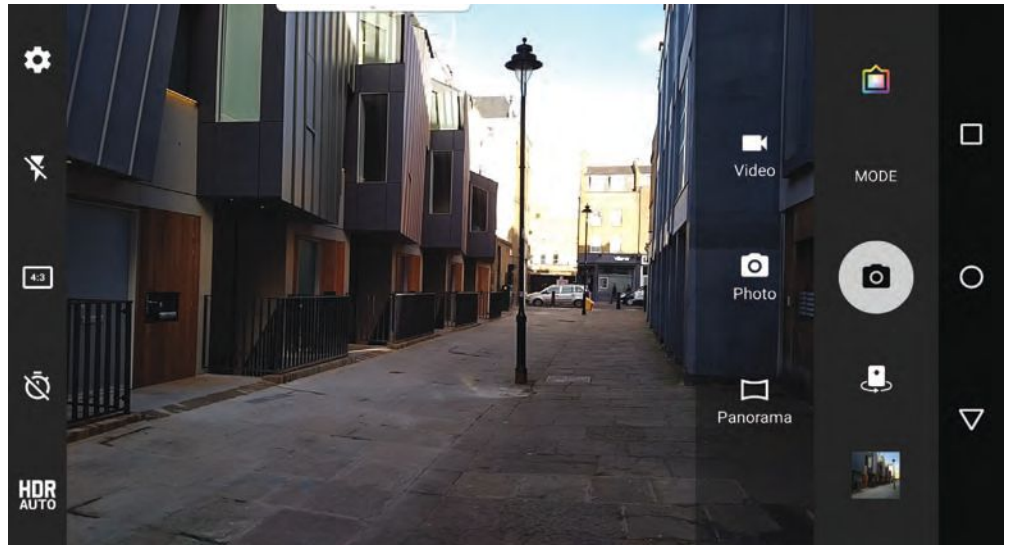
BlackBerry devices have never been



At times images have a tendency to feel over-processed

particularly well known for their camera quality, so it is somewhat surprising to see the company pushing so hard in this area with the Priv. Shipping with an 18 megapixel camera that features Schneider-Kreuznach optics, OIS and phase detection autofocus, it certainly has a lot going for it on raw specs alone. The 1/2.4" sensor size also puts it larger than comparative devices such as the Samsung Galaxy S6 and LG G4, meaning slightly cleaner images in principal. Of course, this is only half the battle, as image processing also makes up a large majority of what to expect.

For all its bells and whistles, the camera is decent but won't necessarily win any awards. You can tell that there's a very capable sensor under the hood but unfortunately image processing is not up to scratch here. Things feel too over-processed at times, with a tendency towards excessive sharpening that is evident on closer inspection. Low-light performance would be very good if it wasn't for the crispy edges, a tell-tale sign that the software is trying to compensate too hard. That said, we were still very impressed with just how much light the sensor manages to absorb in darker situations.



The camera app lacks manual features and highlights BlackBerry's inexperience in this area

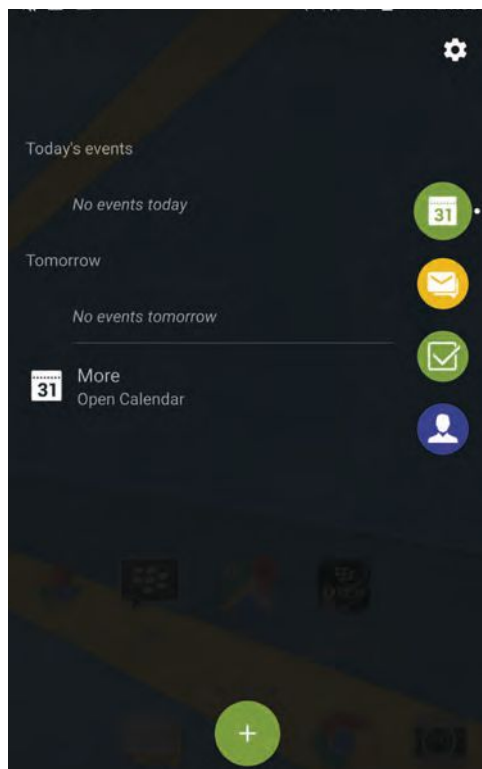
The camera app itself is another area where BlackBerry is still inexperienced, with a complete lack of manual features. Aside from HDR and exposure adjustments, there's really little to see here. Processing is also a little on the slow side, with images taking roughly a half second. This is disappointing since it kind of negates the speediness you feel from that fast phase detection autofocus.

The 2 megapixel front camera isn't that great, with a lot of noise and images that veer on soft. We'd probably be fine with this on a mid-range or budget handset but for flagship level handsets you'd expect a much better quality sensor here. The fact it can't even shoot 1080p video is completely unacceptable, especially at this price-point.

on over-vibrant. Calibration proved this to be true, with an excessively dynamic image that crushed vital highlights and shadows. There was also a distinct green hue that got ironed out during the process. Brightness for the device is excellent, even superseding the likes of the Galaxy S6 in testing. For both indoor and harsh outdoor use, there's not much to dislike here.

PERFORMANCE

The Priv comes with a powerful

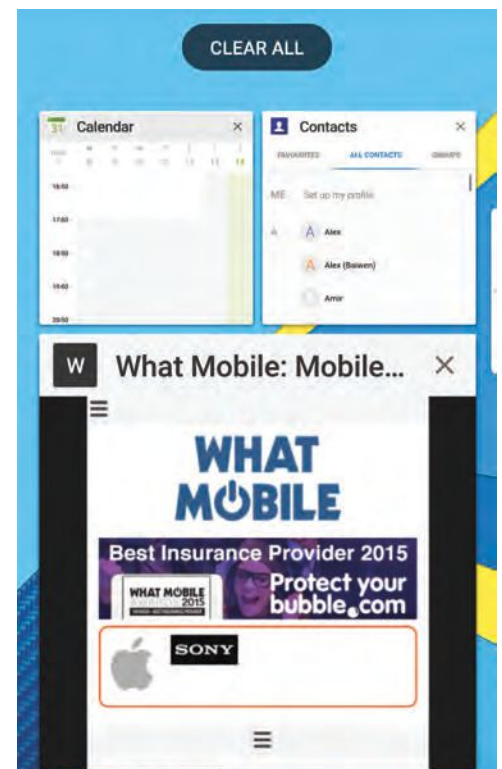


The 'Productivity Tab' feature brings some of BB10's business-orientated features across...

SCREEN

The Priv comes with a beautifully curved 5.4-inch 1440 x 2560 AMOLED display that's similar in design to that featured in the excellent Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge. On this device, the curve is much more subtle and arguably a little better, as it feels far less intrusive when you're trying to use the handset as say, as normal device. The Edge was a great device to look at and even better to hold, but the sheer amount of curve that Samsung shoved into that panel did make some tasks a little more difficult. BlackBerry seems to have got the balance right here, with just enough to enhance the experience and make it look cool without overdoing it.

In terms of actual performance, the screen really makes colours pop and has a noticeably rich contrast ratio which borders

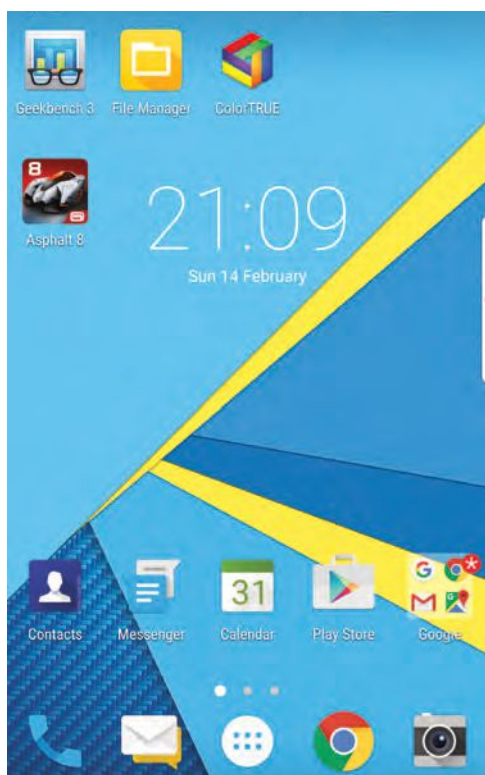


... It can show calendar info, messages, appointments and favourite contacts

Snapdragon 808 processor but as we know, performance from this chip is a little hit and miss at higher resolutions. For anything above, you are looking at the 810 as the only viable option for a smooth experience. We've seen it happen in the past with devices such as the LG G4 and it is replicated here, with generally smooth performance hampered by app hangs and subtle delays. While it never got to the point where it was an outright distraction, it is noticeable enough that some users will feel frustrated, especially considering the stonking price tag for the device.

Our Geekbench tests reflected this, with a strong but still underpowered 3373 for multi-core and 1239 for single-core. This puts it at the top end of the chart but behind front runners such as the OnePlus 2, Nexus 6P and Samsung Galaxy S6.

Gaming performance was once again



The modified Android OS is the perfect blend of stock and additional features

a mixed kettle of fish, with smooth performance occasionally interrupted by frame-drops. Less intensive titles such as *Clash of Clans* seemed to run fine and we can only assume that the 1440p panel is putting exceptionally large amounts of stress on the chipset. There's a reason why most handsets with that sort of resolution opt for the Snapdragon 810, and it definitely shows here.

SOFTWARE

Software is one area where the new BlackBerry Priv really excels, as the modified Android OS is the perfect blend of stock and additional features. Moving away from the BlackBerry 10 OS was always going to be a big decision for the company, but the lucrative chance to dip into that huge user base has obviously influenced it to make the jump.

Shipping with Android 5.1.1 Lollipop, you won't be getting the latest and greatest version of the OS, but for most people it is highly likely they won't notice the subtle differences between this and Marshmallow anyway. Lollipop was the last big jump for the Android OS, bringing with it the material design and updates to notification management and the quick settings menu. This, on top of many other additions, made it a big improvement over the previous KitKat version that preceded it.

BlackBerry's attempt at the Android OS feels very close to stock and is reflected in performance, with definite fluidity when using the device day-to-day. The features it has added are subtle enough that they don't overshadow the basic design principles and it is nice to use a device that has arguably the best of both worlds.

Access to the full Google Play Store is perhaps the biggest saving grace for this handset, as the stripped-back version available on BB10 only allowed a handful of apps to actually be downloaded. Not only that, but BlackBerry has managed to pay heritage to its own OS in the Android

design language. Splat notifications and that familiar keyboard are present, as is the blinking LED above the screen that changes colour according to the notification received.

It has also included a new 'Productivity Tab' feature, which feels like an attempt to bring some of BB10's business-orientated features across. Fairly simple in nature, it lingers on the side of the screen and can be swiped out to show calendar info, messages, appointments and favourite contacts. It is quite a neat feature that feels an awful lot like what Samsung tried with the Edge, though the implantation is far, far better.

BATTERY

The battery in the Priv is a huge 3,410mAh, one of the biggest on test so far. The device can easily go through a day of moderate use and sometimes an extra half day on top providing you don't do too much gaming, which appears to be a major killer. Our 30-minute intense *Asphalt 8: Airborne* test drained the battery by 18%, quite a high result for such a large capacity cell. We have no doubt that this is down to the heat issues experienced while using the device during the gaming.

The device carries Qualcomm's Quick Charge 2.0, though from what we could tell the included charger doesn't support it. Thankfully, it still seemed to charge the device pretty damn fast, going from around 20% to 100% in just over two hours.

CONCLUSION

Incredibly expensive for what it is, the Priv is a good handset that will satisfy most users' needs for a BlackBerry device running Android. While it does have its fair share of issues, the underlying experience is very fluid and the additional features help to enhance the experience. As a first attempt, this is a decent effort and we look forward to seeing what it brings in the future.

VERDICT

There's a lot to like about the Priv... But there's also a lot to dislike. It costs a bomb, the camera is only decent and the Snapdragon 808 struggles to handle the high resolution at times. That said, the stock Android experience and added features provided by BlackBerry, plus obligatory keyboard, make this a joy to use. This is a good handset and it will be interesting to see how BlackBerry progresses.

- + Excellent OS
- + Physical keyboard
- + Great screen
- Bulky
- Performance issues
- Horrifically expensive

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

Honor 5X

Huawei's sub brand is back with another mid-range device for you to consider. It has a fingerprint sensor but is let down by lag and a below average camera.

Price: £190.00 Reviewer: Manny Pham



Honor introduced the 5X in sparkly fashion. The sparks didn't come from a sparkler but from a chainsaw, which was taken to the 5X at its official unveiling. It was a statement from Honor to say its new device is a departure from the 4X, offering premium features for less than £200.

It has always been the Honor way to bring premium features at low costs, the surprising inclusion here is the fingerprint sensor on offer. It is almost unknown to see one on a mid-range device. This one is conveniently located on the back of the device. Is it overwhelming itself? Let's find out.

DESIGN

The look of the 5X is what you are first going to notice. It is striking compared with the plastic Honor 4X. This is thanks to the gleaming aluminium body, a massive departure from the 4X. The design borrows heavily from the Honor 7. Side-by-side they look near identical.

The Honor 7 feels the more quality device, despite the best efforts of the 5X. The sand-blasted aluminium on the 5X gives it a cheap feel despite its premium look. We really do like the look of it, just not the feel. The full-metal aluminium unibody is not only just to look pretty, it does what Honor intends and that is to maintain performance with heavy usage. We'll get to that later.

The dimpled antenna sections on the

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.1.1 (upgradeable to Marshmallow 6.0)
Processor Snapdragon 616
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels (401ppi)
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Rear camera 13 megapixels
Front camera 5 megapixels
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G, 4G, LTE
Dimensions 151 x 78 x 8.2mm
Weight 158g
Battery 3,000 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3⁵

Camera



2⁵

Battery



4⁵



Asphalt 8 ran smoothly thanks to the 5X's 1.5GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 616 processor

top and bottom protrude a little to give it a classy edge, connected to the also protruding camera lens. The camera lens is only slightly protruding to protect the sand-blasted body when laying it on a table.

The fingerprint sensor is just below the camera, at a better height than the Honor 7, just the perfect spot for our fingers. The positioning goes well with the power and

volume button down the right-hand side of the 5X, so you won't be fiddling the phone around in one hand to adjust yourself.

Dual sim cards are supported, offering the convenience of having two numbers. Which of course means you can have two daily drivers, one for business and one for personal use, and not have to carry two devices.

CAMERA

With a 13 megapixel camera in tow, decent pictures are what you get, excellent pictures depend on where you are. This is the case for most cameras. Outside shots are full of clarity and can only be bettered by high-range smartphones.

HDR mode is where the camera performs best. Darker areas are brightened up and over-lit areas such as skies are corrected so as to not be too overexposed. The difference between HDR and normal modes is contrasting. It is really recommended to have HDR on at all times when taking shots in the park.

Night shots look OK but there is noticeable noise, which is quite disappointing. You don't have to zoom in too much to notice the grainy texture of objects not focused.

Noise is always a problem in poor lighting situations. Indoor shots also suffer. Things are improved a lot by simply turning on the flash but this can lead to overexposed shots, probably not the image you had in mind when taking it.



Shots can be improved by turning on the flash

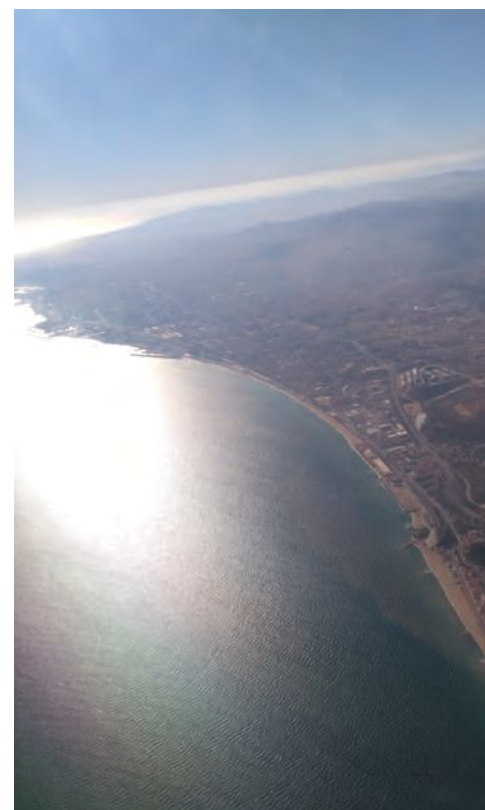
SCREEN

Honor is really making an effort with the 5X and you can tell this with the pre-applied screen protector it has nicely left on for every 5X. This saved our 5X's moneymaker in the first few days of using it as our daily driver, but it really does feel miles better to use without the protector, or with a tempered glass protector.

The display itself isn't the best at the price point but it is certainly bright with details fine. Only the eagle-eyed can point out a fault. Readability in the sun (when it actually is sunny) is excellent and viewing angles are no problem, especially with a massive 5.5-inch screen.

PERFORMANCE

Impressively the 5X comes with a 1.5GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 616 processor and 2GB of RAM. Again you are getting value for money as this chipset is not often seen at this process point. Thankfully Huawei's in-house Kirin processor isn't in the 5X as it is terrible for gaming. With the Snapdragon 616, *Asphalt 8* ran buttery smooth with no hint of lag, even when carnage rained down. The aluminium body really helped out with intense gaming as the 5X did not overheat and carried on like a champ.



The camera performs best in HDR mode



The design borrows heavily from the Honor 7

In Geekbench 3, the 5X scored a decent 693 in the single core test and 3006 in multicore. The Snapdragon 617-powered HTC One A9 scored 746 in our review, showing that the 616 is still a worthy old chip.

Even though the 5X scored decently, actually using the device tells a different story. The keyboard can be quite slow and unresponsive at times, which proved to be extremely irritating. It is not a massive issue as you can just download the Google keyboard. There's more frustration to come; the 5X at times just fails to perform when you need your phone in immediacy. Pulling it out to quickly check an email proved to be annoying as the 5X stutters to your commands.

Another issue that's probably the biggest flaw we found is the dropping Wi-Fi. A serious flaw that we're pretty sure isn't a

hardware issue, an update is needed ASAP. We experienced a drop in Wi-Fi every day, forcing us to manually go into Wi-Fi settings and reconnect to the internet. An update should sort this out and hopefully it will be rectified soon.

Android Marshmallow is rumoured to launch soon for the 5X and that will hopefully sort out the slow down and, more importantly, the Wi-Fi.

SOFTWARE

Having a fingerprint sensor on the 5X was a pleasant surprise, especially for a device at this price point. Honor paid special attention to it on the 5X, making it extremely fast and responsive to the touch. It surpasses the Honor 7 and is on par with the Huawei Nexus 6P.

The fingerprint scanner can be used to conveniently go back a page, pick up calls and stop alarms. To counteract the awkward 5.5-inch screen you can flick through the UI with the fingerprint sensor – a brilliant idea and it would have been excellent had it been more responsive. It kind of feels like the sensor isn't big enough or that it is temperamental and it doesn't feel like doing it. We had more luck flicking downwards to bring down the notification tab, but it shouldn't feel like a game of roulette.

Emotion isn't everyone's cup of tea and almost everyone wishes stock Android was available on every Android device. The lack of an app tray is infuriating at first but you will get used to it as it is similar to iOS, but with widgets.

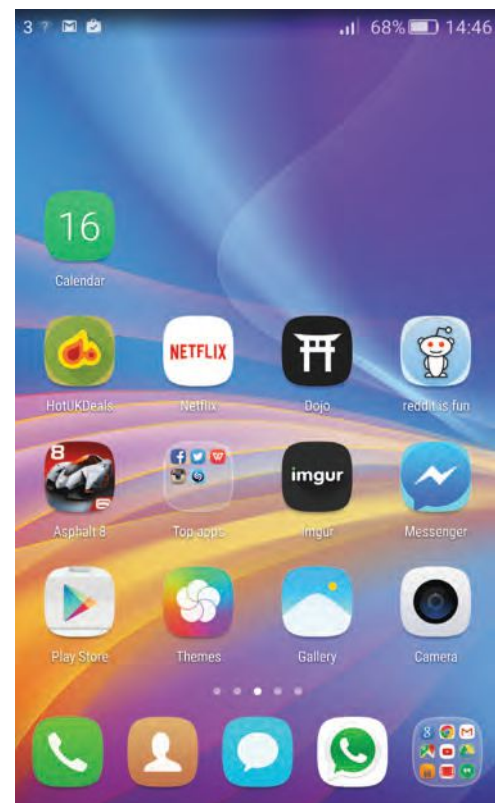
BATTERY

The 3,000 mAh battery is hefty and more than enough for daily use. Often we found ourselves with more battery than we need when getting home from work. We unplug the 5X from charge in the morning and don't have to charge it again until bedtime. Thirty minutes of intense gaming only drained 16%, a measly chunk of your daily power

consumption. An improvement very much needed is fast charging. It takes what feels like an age to get 100% charge but that's to be expected with a 3,000 mAh battery. Don't be afraid to walk out with 70%, you'll be more than fine for the rest of the day.

CONCLUSION

A solid handset with a lot of great features for a device below £200. It's definitely a looker (albeit similar to the Honor 7) with a convenient fingerprint sensor on the back, although the feature won't really drive you to buy the 5X. If you want an excellent device within the same price range or lower, opt for the Moto G 3rd Gen. But if you really want that super convenient fingerprint sensor, without paying too much, the 5X is just for you. Give it a little time though as niggling software issues affect the UI and all important Wi-Fi.



The UI is affected by niggling software glitches

VERDICT

A good smartphone with that all-convenient fingerprint sensor. But the slowdown in the UI and general use can be bothersome and really puts us on the fence with the 5X. The drop in Wi-Fi is a massive party foul and can be annoying to those who are playing online or going on Skype. Software fixes are needed before really recommending the 5X. Rumours are swirling of Marshmallow 6.0 being around the corner for the 5X. Let's hope it is sooner rather than later.

- + Fingerprint sensor
- + Smooth gaming
- + Decent price
- Wi-Fi keeps dropping (a bug that should be fixed in an update)
- Design is a bit uninspired
- Slow down with constant use

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★



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Microsoft Lumia 650

Microsoft has revealed what could be its last Lumia handset and it's quite the looker, but does it perform up to scratch?

Price: £150.00 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

The Lumia line is in a bit of a difficult situation, with sales declining at a catastrophic rate. Back in late January, Microsoft released figures that showed a whopping 57 percent decline in Lumia handset purchases, which is pretty much a death sentence. As the woes continue to build, perhaps its only hope is the rumoured Surface Phone... And that's probably not going to be around for a while. With all this, you'd be expecting Microsoft to be focusing on producing some solid handsets to bolster their flagging Lumia line, yet it has released a budget phone that's billed as a premium device. Hardware specs are not in its favour here, with a lowly processor and nothing to really catch our eye. Could it surprise us? Lets find out.

DESIGN

This is probably the most premium looking Windows 10 Mobile device that we've seen to date, which is odd considering that it only costs £160. If there's any further proof needed about just how confused Microsoft's product team is right now, let this be the final piece of the puzzle. The Lumia 950 and 950XL were both flagship devices with middling aesthetics and yet here we have a budget handset with design that resembled something much more expensive. There's really no cohesion in the product line whatsoever and it is a



real shame that Microsoft didn't adopt this styling from the beginning because, in a nutshell, it looks fantastic.

We have no problem with plastic on a handset generally, as long as it's matted and has a somewhat premium finish. In fact, we often find that it helps to make the handset much easier to grip than the slippery glass materials used on the high-end Apple and Android handsets.

On the Lumia 650, Microsoft has managed to create the perfect blend of metal, glass and plastic to create something that is not only attractive but very light. At only 122g, it is one of the lightest devices we've ever held and at times it's possible to forget that you're even holding anything at all. The same goes for thickness, with the Lumia 650 managing to somehow hit a razor-thin 6.9mm. These are both very desirable qualities that most people wouldn't expect in a cheaper handset.

In terms of dimensions, the good news continues as it is almost a mirror of the Samsung Galaxy S6, a device that in our opinion is one of the most perfectly proportioned devices you can find. It fits in the hand like a glove and we were able to reach the top of the screen without stretching our thumb unnaturally. On the bottom you get a Micro-USB slot, which is to be expected, while a headphone jack lurks on the top of the device. The back case carries a chrome Microsoft logo and can be easily removed to reveal the battery, SIM slot and microSD slot. Those

SPEC SHEET

OS Windows 10 Mobile
Processor: 1.3 GHz Snapdragon 212
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 (518ppi)
Memory 1GB
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 200GB
Rear camera 8MP

Front camera 5MP
Video 720p 30FPS
Connectivity Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, NFC
Dimensions 142 x 71 x 6.9 mm
Weight 122g
Battery 2,000mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3/5

Camera



3/5

Battery



3/5



Low-light camera performance very good - captured a surprising amount of detail

is only just below the 300 dpi print standard and as such, images are totally free of pixilation. In fact, the screen is surprisingly detailed with vibrant, punchy colours. Typical of an AMOLED display, things are incredibly well saturated and blacks are deep, helped in no part thanks to Microsoft's (formerly Nokia's) ClearBlack display technology. Colour deviation at extreme angles is only very subtle, with a slight red hue that mostly goes unnoticed. You really shouldn't have any problems seeing what's going on here and it's much better panel than those found on the Motorola Moto G.

Maximum brightness levels were also very impressive, matching that found on other top handsets such as the Samsung Galaxy S6. For outdoor and indoor use, we have no doubt that this will be more than bright enough to see under direct lighting sources.

PERFORMANCE

The Lumia 650 comes with a pretty basic Snapdragon 212 processor, which is not the kind of chip you'd expect to see in a handset at this price point. Quite why Microsoft has decided to put such an underpowered chip within a handset that is priced to compete with devices such as the Moto G remains to be seen, especially when aesthetically the phone is so brilliant. The chip really limits what you can do as unfortunately, there's

wanting to easily replace the phone's innards while on the move will likely be overjoyed.

CAMERA

The Lumia 650 has an 8 megapixel sensor without all the bells and whistles you'll find on flagship handsets. That means no Carl Zeiss optics, no optical image stabilisation and no Pureview technology. Still, given the price it is hard to complain as the shooter on this handset isn't too bad. The f/2.2 aperture is fairly high and you'll get surprisingly

good low-light performance, though the lack of image stabilisation will make those long shutter photographs pretty blurry.

Daytime detail is good, with evenly lit images that have a pretty natural exposure curve. Even in images that had a stark contrast between shadows and highlights, the Lumia 650 seemed to do an admirable job of exposing the scene. Picture processing seemed to veer on over-sharpening as a way to pull out the fine details; this was clearly visible when zooming in on the edges of objects.

Also included with all Lumia handsets is the brilliant Lumia Camera application, which has a plethora of manual features and one of the best interfaces we have encountered on a mobile app. Even on a budget handset such as this, it works brilliantly and allows you to take much better pictures than relying on automatic settings alone.

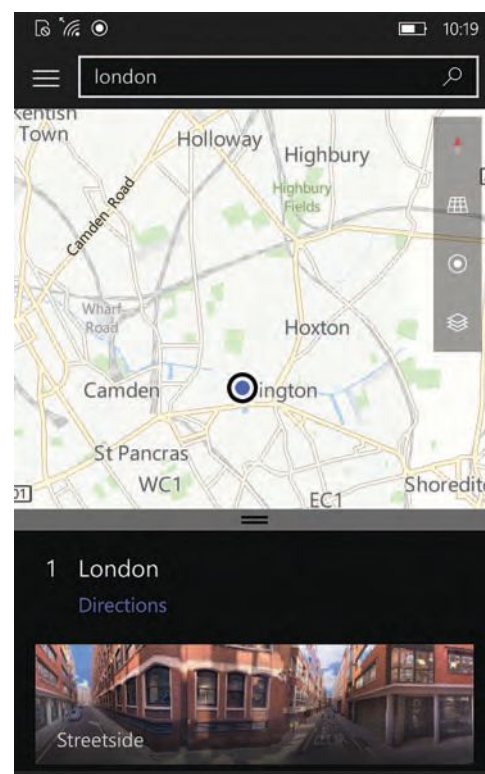
The 5 megapixel front selfie cam is a nice addition at this price point and really does take some great pictures. Even in low light it's not half bad, with a bit of noticeable noise being the only real issue. Only thing that could be classed as a negative is the lens, which doesn't appear to be as wide as other competitors. That said, you can just hold the phone further back. You also get the benefit of using that fantastic Lumia camera app for the selfie cam too, meaning you don't have to rely on automatic settings.



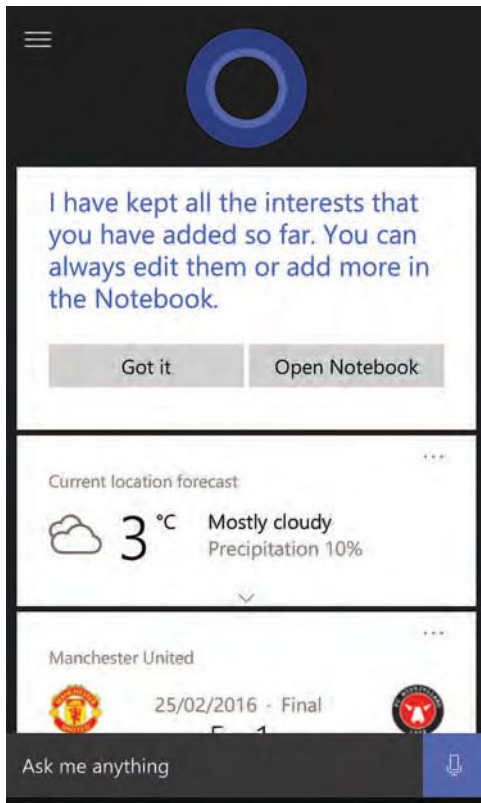
Sensor results in evenly-exposed shots

SCREEN

The Lumia 650 comes equipped with a 5.0-inch 1280 x 720 AMOLED panel, which equates to roughly 297 pixels per inch. This



Bing Maps replaces HERE in bundled apps



Cortana voice recognition comes as standard

no continuum option. This means one of the major selling points in Microsoft's new OS is completely absent, leaving only the core features available to the user.

Browsing the UI and handling the device day-to-day didn't seem to feel too slow, with the lowly Snapdragon 212 holding up reasonably well. We wouldn't exactly call it a stellar experience, with big web pages causing noticeable stutter and app loading times veering on annoying but general performance was not affected. Using the PhoneMark benchmarking tool highlighted this lack of power even further, with the device scoring a very lowly 646. This is even lower than the Lumia 625, a device which launched almost three years ago! Gaming was a bit of a write-off, with *Asphalt 8* just about playable on medium settings and totally unplayable on high. Even on the former, there was still plenty of stuttering

VERDICT

A good smartphone with that all convenient fingerprint sensor. But the slowdown in the UI and general use can be bothersome and really puts us on the fence with the 5X. The drop in Wi-Fi is a massive party foul and can be annoying to those who are playing online or going on Skype. Software fixes are needed before really recommending the 5X. Rumours are swirling of Marshmallow 6.0 being around the corner for the 5X. Let's hope it's sooner rather than later.

- + Beautiful design
- + Decent camera
- + Good screen
- That processor
- Lack of continuum support
- Software still buggy

and frame-rate issues, though it would be possible to at least have a race.

SOFTWARE

Windows 10 Mobile is the newest evolution of Microsoft's mobile operating system, which last saw light as version 8.1. That update brought a number of notable features, though this is the first true major overhaul we've seen since the debut of Windows Phone 8. The Windows Store is still lacking but there are plenty of third party apps that are viable alternatives to the official versions. Unfortunately, Snapchat is still a glaring hole in the app portfolio and there's currently no third party version available. The Lumia 650 has a newer version of the OS than the 950/950XL we reviewed previously, but there's still numerous smaller niggles.

The store app is still somewhat broken, though it's better than what was on the Lumia 950/950XL. We did eventually manage to get things working, though having to force download all the apps was somewhat tedious. Previewing photos was another area where things seemed to mess up, though we can't say for sure if the problem is software related or just that awful processor. This and other strange bugs hamper what is otherwise a fluid experience.

BATTERY

The battery on the Lumia 650 is a decent 2,000mAh, which is fine for this price point but not incredible. Still, we found that it managed just about a full day of normal use, which is no doubt a result of that extremely frugal processor. Our 30 minute intensive gaming session barely sapped anything at all, only draining 11% from the device. That's a very good score that should mean you're okay to fit in a bit of light gaming while out. There was also very little thermal issues which we can only assume is once again down to that very underpowered chipset which Microsoft chose to employ

There's no mention of quick-charge on the spec sheet but the Lumia 650 does seem to

juice up pretty fast. We noticed a full charge take little over two-and-a-half hours, which is definitely up there with handsets that have that capability. Thanks to the removable rear case, you'll also be able to easily swap out the battery when it dies, meaning this a good handset to take on those long journeys.

CONCLUSION

For a device that looks so beautiful, it's a shame the innards didn't get that same level of attention. The Snapdragon 212 is just about the most chipset you can get and it shows. Windows 10 usually runs buttery smooth on even the most low-end hardware, yet on the 650 we see slow loading times and stuttering under load. The Lumia line has fallen into disarray and it only seems to be getting more confusing; billing a device as premium but putting such a terrible processor inside is only another example of this.



Windows 10 works well as a mobile OS

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★



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SAMSUNG GALAXY S7



SAMSUNG GALAXY S7 EDGE

Honor Band Z1

A fitness wearable with an attractive price with the guise of a smartwatch. For either iOS or Android, it's ordinary but expected at the price point

Price: £59.00 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

Smartwatches and fitness wearables are everywhere at the moment. Every jogger stomping by is pretty much wearing something to keep track of their progress. If we were betting men, we would say they're all wearing Fitbits – Fitbit has become synonymous with fitness wearables, in the same way iPods are with MP3 and Hoover with vacuum cleaners. Honor is chipping in with the Honor Band Z1 for £59. It's not a bad effort considering it offers the same features as the £79.99 Fitbit Flex. It differs drastically in look, adopting a minimal smartwatch design. We found out how it compares.

DESIGN

We really enjoyed wearing the Honor Band Z1. At no point was it a hindrance to activities. Almost every smartwatch and fitness wearable we've tested eventually grinds our gears and we've had to take it off – particularly at the desk and after a lengthy time of typing. It happened rarely with the Band Z1, the lightweight 24g is barely noticeable on your wrist. It's designed to be small but the lack of real estate is quite detrimental, the bezels around the Band Z1

are quite big and if it was cut down for more screen space, reading messages would be so much better. When reading WhatsApp messages we found ourselves having to flick through the screen a lot just to read a couple of cut-off words.

Fans of bigger watches will probably be deterred by its size, some even see it as a 'lady watch'. But as said earlier, its size contributes to the comfort and that's what the Band Z1

gets right, that some high-end fitness trackers get wrong – the Microsoft Band 2 being a case in point. The slim smartwatch design got us treating it more as a smartwatch than a fitness wearable.

It goes with pretty much any wardrobe ensemble you can put together.

The rubber bands themselves are quite stylish, with a classic ribbed lozenge pattern and fashioned from a special hypoallergenic TPU fabric for that comfort factor.

The Band Z1 is IP68-rated water resistant, so running in the rain is not a problem. Neither is accidentally jumping

into the shower with it. It's a shame there isn't a swimming app to go with it – we tested it during a swim and it came out alright. The light weight helps here as you'll barely notice it between strokes. But then there isn't a reason to do it as there is no swimming feature!

SCREEN

More than an inch of screen space isn't really ideal. As mentioned we could have done with more, at least half an inch more. But hey, it's what's on the inside that counts, right? Powering up the P-OLED screen brings up a pixel display reminiscent of an early Pebble Watch. Graphics are also similar to the Fitbit Flex, with the difference of course being the Flex's even tinier screen.

It may not have 3D Touch like the Apple Watch but it does have an iteration of Huawei's Knuckle Sense Technology. It's the best way to check the time as it doesn't have an 'always on screen'. The screen is quite temperamental, often we've had to knock it a couple of times to actually wake it up. On rare occasions we've literally punched it in frustration as the screen fails to come on at all. Once awoken you can flick through the UI via the touchscreen, which you can't expect to be as responsive as a Fitbit Surge. You have to drag your finger through the entire screen to navigate the interface,

SPEC SHEET

Sensors Pedometer, gyroscope, sleep, running

Processor Cortex M4 STM32G411

Screen 1.06-inches

Resolution 128 x 128

Memory N/A

Storage N/A

Connectivity Bluetooth

Dimensions 38 x 9.5 mm

Weight 24g

Battery N/A

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3⁵

Comfort



4⁵

Battery



4⁵



The Honor Band Z1 adopts a minimal design and is IP68-rated water resistant

which is frustrating as you'll find yourself having to repeat actions to get where you want to be. There is the option to navigate through the gyroscope with a simple wrist flick. You can move from watch faces to settings with a simple wrist movement, but you have to do it with certain force for it to recognise movement. This is reminiscent of the Pebble Time, both devices require enough force to create physical kinetic energy that can singe arm hairs, to light up the display.

PERFORMANCE

You'll have no problem navigating the UI once you get the hang of its temperamental nature. There isn't a lot that needs to be explained as the Band Z1 is pretty lacklustre. What you'll find in the Band Z1 is workout, calorie burner, pedometer, sleep monitor, stopwatch, settings and watch faces.

The workout and pedometer are very basic, offering you just the numbers. More info is available on the Huawei Wear app. The pedometer is not as accurate as the likes of the Fitbit Surge; in our test wearing both wearables, the Band Z1 showed how we walked an extra 200 steps from home to the

office. On a small scale test we found it still to be in accurate with 18 steps apparently taken when we counted 10. The Fitbit Surge recorded 13.

The Honor Band Z1 is powered by a Cortex M4 STM32G411 processor and connects to your smartphone via bluetooth. Connection is always strong and stable, with no disconnections suffered during our time with it. The battery is a strong point for the Z1; with the lack of a heart sensor and basic screen, it will last you up to three days. On days we used the Band Z1 to go for a run, we did of course drain a bit quicker, but not to the point where the Z1 died at the end of the day. Charging takes a long while, two hours is needed to get it up to 100% (bed time charging recommended).

Just like the Huawei Watch the Band Z1 uses a magnetic latching

VERDICT

A basic wearable for those that don't demand too much. If you want to be told the time, how many steps you've taken, how well you slept, the Band Z1 is for you. We stress again, don't expect too much – physically active folk should look elsewhere to dedicated fitness wearables. Notifications are quick and clear, we just wish it was a bit bigger so we can see entire messages.

- + Lightweight and enjoyable to wear
- + Responsive notifications
- + Great battery life
- Lacklustre and very basic
- Tiny screen
- Temperamental screen

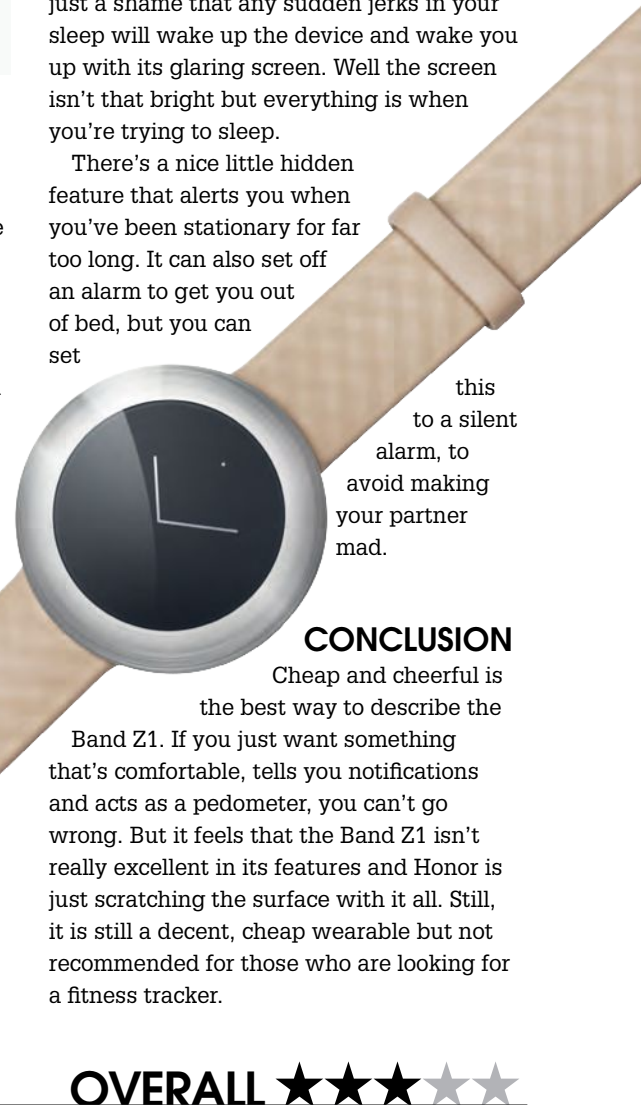
SOFTWARE

An important part of a smartwatch is the watch faces on offer. In all honesty the default watch face is all you need as it displays the time, date, bluetooth and battery. The other watch faces simply display the time in different styles. Notifications from text messages and WhatsApp are punctual with a 0.2 second delay from your phone to the Band Z1. It works as well as you'd expect – just don't expect the ability to reply with it.

The companion app goes into detail with your data, displaying your most active periods and how deep your sleep was. It's just a shame that any sudden jerks in your sleep will wake up the device and wake you up with its glaring screen. Well the screen isn't that bright but everything is when you're trying to sleep.

There's a nice little hidden feature that alerts you when you've been stationary for far too long. It can also set off an alarm to get you out of bed, but you can set

this to a silent alarm, to avoid making your partner mad.



proprietary charger.

CONCLUSION

Cheap and cheerful is the best way to describe the Band Z1. If you just want something that's comfortable, tells you notifications and acts as a pedometer, you can't go wrong. But it feels that the Band Z1 isn't really excellent in its features and Honor is just scratching the surface with it all. Still, it is still a decent, cheap wearable but not recommended for those who are looking for a fitness tracker.

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

Huawei TalkBand B2

Half fitness band, half bluetooth headset and not much else. Huawei's comfy effort is quite lacking.

Price: £99.00 Reviewer: Manny Pham

Fitness wearables are still so new to the market that classifying them is a bit of a pain, especially for us reviewers. We have the likes of the Apple and Huawei Watch, which are smartwatches; there as an extension of your smartphone so you'll spend less time reaching into your pocket to see a notification from a WhatsApp group you've been meaning to delete. You then have the Fitbit Surge and Microsoft Band, with dedicated features and sensors to cater to your fitness needs and wants. This isn't necessarily a complaint; if a wearable can do everything at a master level we'd classify it in their own league.

Huawei's TalkBand B2 is



more a fitness band but it really tries to be that notification centre that it is not. What makes the TalkBand B2 unique is the detachable bluetooth headset that doubles as your screen. But apart from that it is pretty lacklustre and key things seem to have been omitted with a bigger emphasis on the bluetooth headset.

DESIGN

Comfort is the make or break for all wearables, unless they can make up for it stupendously with unique features or advanced refinement of existing key ones. The TalkBand B2 is a comfortable device to wear with the rubber strap more desirable for those who want to use it more as a fitness wearable. There's the more stylish leather band that looks great but isn't really recommended for a really sweaty session at the gym. The leather option also comes with a screen that has a light hue to it. While it gives off a facade of a gold face (making it look quite classy actually) it attracts fingerprints and ruins said facade. The rubber strap version does not have this problem with the hue not present.

The TalkBand B2 isn't going to win any beauty pageants as it's more counting on you seeing what's on the inside. We're of course referring to the bluetooth headset. It's easy enough to remove the headset from its resting point but putting it on can be a massive pain at first.

Of course no one has the same shaped ear, if you find someone who

does, well one of you is encroaching on the other's dimension. With a few minutes of fiddling around with our ears, it gets a lot easier to instinctively put it on when receiving a call. A bluetooth headset is meant to free your hands up and that's exactly what it does. It was incredibly useful to use when driving or having to get mucky with some dishes. Although you don't have to worry about getting it wet as it has an IP57 water- and dust-resistance rating.




SCREEN

The screen is extremely deceiving, it seems to have a lot of real estate but the real screen is around 50% of what you expect. A screen within a screen is what you're getting here. Quite disappointing but the band has that rectangular shape to accommodate the bluetooth headset, so it makes sense. The display itself is minimal, showing only black and white with pixel graphic. Not awe-inspiringly gorgeous but clear enough to read information displayed. A bit too bright at night especially when we

SPEC SHEET

OS Compatibility Android 4.0+, iOS 7+
Processor N/A
Screen 0.73-inches
Resolution N/A
Memory N/A
Sensors Sleep, Pedometer, Running,
Storage N/A
Micro SD Compatible? No
Connectivity Bluetooth
Dimensions 11.88 x 22.0 x 242.85 mm
Battery 95 mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed	Comfort	Battery
		
4 ⁵	4 ⁵	3 ⁵



accidentally pressed the home button and woke up to its glaring display. An ambient sensor would have been welcomed, especially for a device that boasts a sleep sensor (you can't adjust the brightness). But it is readable in sunlight with excellent viewing angles, very handy when going out for a run and your arm can only muster so much energy.

PERFORMANCE

Call quality isn't as clear as you'd be used to on an actual handset but it's clear enough to relay what you're trying to say and vice versa. We did notice that sometimes it can drop but by no means was it detrimental, not every phone call you make is perfect, bluetooth headset or not. It needs to be

mentioned though that you shouldn't really use the headset when going for a run – it doesn't sit firmly enough in your ear and is prone to falling off! As a fitness tracker it performs well to a decent degree of accuracy. It tracks running, walking and cycling all in the one

physical activity option. It automatically detects what activity you are doing with the six-axis motion sensor. Starting your workout is easy enough with just a simple three second hold of the screen to get started. We had problems with the sleeping features unfortunately; it activates automatically when it detects you've been prone for a while but sometimes it fails to even recognise you were asleep.

With a basic screen the battery life is long lasting, more so than the OLED screen Microsoft Band 2. Huawei says you can get up to six days of battery life out of it and we more or less got that, as we opted to use our actual phones to pick up a call, using the bluetooth headset uses more of the battery of course.

SOFTWARE

What it fails to do is offer a variety in terms of notifications. At its current price we'd expect to be notified from all forms of communication. WhatsApp, emails, text messages are not available for notification, disappointing from a device that costs £99.99. The Honor Band Z1 (also reviewed in this issue) has the ability to notify us on all fronts and has the same fitness features.

There isn't much detail in terms of fitness analysis on the wearable itself, the Huawei Wear app displays all of that information. It is broken down into categories; fitness and sleep. The design of it is really easy to understand and navigate, workouts are broken up in different coloured bar charts and so is the sleep tracker. The sleep tracker shows when you're falling asleep, in light and deep sleep. Which then gets aggregated into a sleep quality score (when it works).

In terms of interface, the app and the band itself are fast and intuitive. You won't get confused flicking through either and they can keep up with your nimble fingers. A nice little feature for Huawei device users is you can use the TalkBand B2 as a camera shutter button.

CONCLUSION

We're still unsure what to classify the TalkBand B2. Is it a smartwatch? Fitness band? We're finding it hard because it doesn't necessarily excel in either area. It's decent enough to track your workout but as a notification centre it's below average and as a sleep tracker it doesn't turn up sometimes. For it's price we recommend looking elsewhere. You can get the Pebble Time for nearer to the TalkBand B2's price if you look hard enough and for fitness freaks there's the FitBit Charge HR.

VERDICT

Not much of an extension of your phone and not a complete fitness tracker. While it does perform well for actual workouts, the sleep tracker seems to be temperamental. There isn't notifications for WhatsApp, texts and emails but if you spend more of your time driving, the bluetooth headset does come in handy with decent quality calls.

- + Unique idea with bluetooth headset, handy for driving
- + Easy to use interface
- + Workouts are nicely presented
- Sleep tracker is not reliable
- Bluetooth headset not advisable for jogging
- Too pricey for what you get

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★	USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★	FEATURES	★★★★★
INNOVATION	★★★★★	VALUE	★★★★★



Lord of the Spies...

Steve Lord is a White Hat hacker and runs his own company, Mandalorian Security Services Ltd. With over a decade of experience on information security, he works for good and would choose to destroy the Sith, not join them. Join us every month as he gives his view on the world of privacy.

Keeping the kids satisfied

If you want wifi in your car to keep the kids amused on long journeys there are three options: Buy a SIM for the phone, plug in a MiFi hotspot, or tether your in-car phone to your smartphone. The simplest trick is to get a dedicated SIM. This also lets you tether from your current smartphone or Wi-Fi tablet.

SIM-Only data deals

There are some great SIM only deals around. GiffGaff's £10 Goodybag gives you 500 minutes, 1GB of UK data and unlimited texts per month. 3 Mobile offer a SIM-only Pay-As-You-Go deal at £10 for 1GB, but a penny per megabyte if you use less. 3 have an all-you-can-eat monthly plan starting at £20/month including 12Gb per month available to use your old phone as a Wifi Hotspot.



Watch out for Samsung

Samsung Smart TV Listens To Customers
Samsung's smart TV privacy policy has been updated again after complaints that Samsung was using the tech to spy on viewers. The question remains, is your Smart TV watching you?



The remote chance of getting your phone back



When driving, you could keep an older phone plugged into a charger as batteries in older phones tend to be worse at holding their charge. Even if you're not worried about an old phone being stolen keep it out of sight. If your car is actually stolen an phone hidden in it inknown to the thieves could help police locate it.

Track it - find it

Apple's Find my iPhone tracks a phone. It comes bundled with every iPhone but make sure you activate it and link it to your iCloud account. Windows Phone users can use the free find my phone service, enabled in settings, while Android users can use the Android Device Manager and their Google account.

Back to the 1970's for a bricked iPhone

In other bad news for Apple owners, manually setting your iPhone's date to 1 January 1970 will cause it to become permanently stuck on reboot. Why you'd want to do this is a separate question, although pranksters have taken to bricking demo units in Apple Stores with the bug.



HOW TO

Remotely lock and deactivate your device

We like to think that our smartphones will be safe in our pockets but all it takes is one small lapse in judgement to lose a device full of memories and personal data. We fell victim to this while attending MWC in Barcelona but luckily were savvy enough to cancel everything within the half hour. Most people probably don't have a clue that with your smartphone you actually have a quite a few options in your quest against the thieves. Here's our rundown on how to successfully nerf a stolen handset.



SECURITY

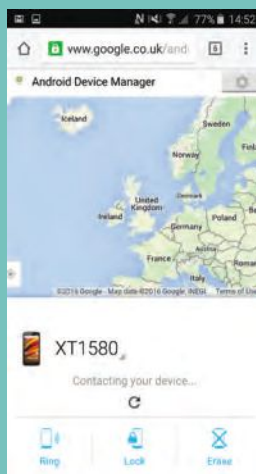
1



Ring your mobile operator

The first port of call should always be your SIM card, as that's the place where nasty charges can be applied quickly and easily. All mobile providers will have a direct line for lost or stolen devices; from there it's simply a case of answering some security questions and confirming that you want your SIM blocked.

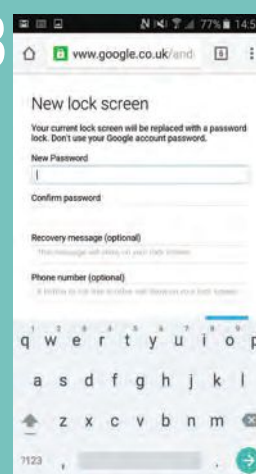
2



Head to Android Device Manager

Android Device Manager is a newish tool introduced back in 2013 as a way of safeguarding your shiny new piece of technology. By signing into the device on your Google Account, it will automatically place it within the Device Manager list. From here you play with an all manner of settings, which we'll get to below.

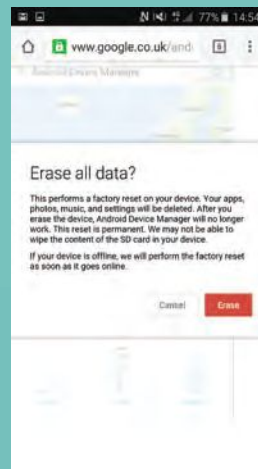
3



Lock the device

Head to Android Device Manager (likely on the web version since you've lost your handset!) and pick the device from the dropdown menu on the left. You'll have three options underneath the handset: Ring, Lock and Erase. The second one is your first line of defence and will replace the passcode with a lock code of your choice,

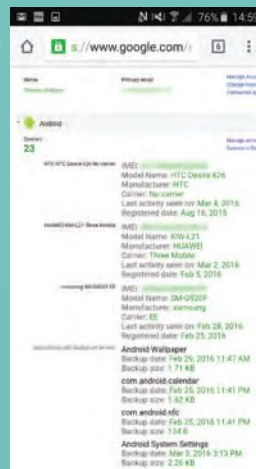
4



Erase the device

This one is slightly more drastic but if you know the crook has gotten away with it, you're best off deleting all those embarrassing selfies and bathroom pictures. Head to the Device Manager once again, pick your device and this time choose 'Erase'. You'll see a pop-up warning after clicking it which lets you know that all personal data, apps and accounts will be removed from the handset. If you're happy, simply click yes and a request will be sent to the device. Once it reconnects to the cellular network, the erase will begin.

5



Locate your IMEI number

Now that the device is ready to get erased once they try to use it like a proper phone again, you need to locate a specific number in preparation for your visit to the police. The IMEI number is a unique identifier for your handset and it's likely you won't know it off by heart. Thankfully, Android offers an easy way to locate it through your Google Account. Log into a browser and navigate to the <https://www.google.com/android/devicemanager> link for access to all your registered Android devices. Then it's simply a case of clicking on the little green Android man to reveal a dropdown box containing the relevant IMEI information for all your registered handsets.

ON TOP OF THE WEATHER

Living in the UK has its positives. A good curry isn't hard to come by, tea is everywhere and football at all levels is damn entertaining. And then the weather comes along and just messes everything up. It has become a part of our identity and it is not so strange to hear the phrase "typical British weather". Have no fear as we at What Mobile have compiled a list of apps to help you stay one step ahead in the love/hate relationship we all have with the weather.

No more will you have to carry a jacket unnecessarily on a nice day. No more will you roast on the train looking like an inuit/idiot. No more will you be that guy everyone thinks is a little mental, walking around in a T-shirt in temperatures below double digits (it was warmer during the day we know).



GOOGLE NOW FREE/ANDROID AND IOS THE SIMPLEST

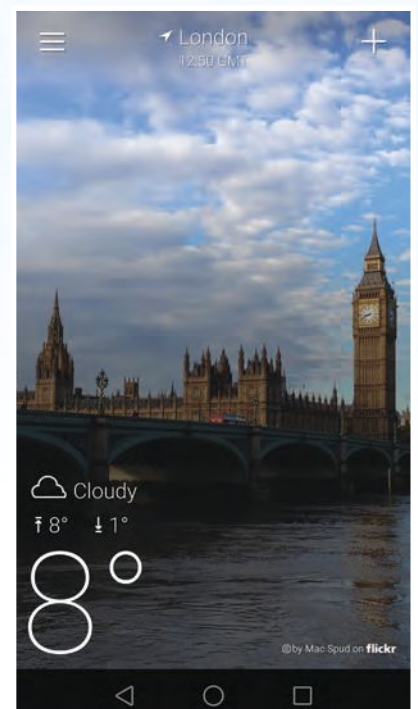


YAHOO WEATHER FREE/ANDROID AND IOS THE FRESHEST

➤ Already installed on your phone (Android) and the easiest one to comprehend of the lot. Hold down your home button and state your desire for the weather. Google will flash you the weather card and read it out for you. Perfect for on the go and a quick overview. Hourly updates are also available with useful info such as today's sunset time, and how much daylight is left in the day. Google's card layout makes this the easiest on your eyes too with not a lot going on, just simply what you want to know and more info available if you so desire. Definitely more favoured for Android users, a lot more hoops and hurdles to go through just for the weather on iOS.



➤ With a recent update and a simple interface, you can't go wrong with Yahoo's effort at a Sián Lloyd impression. Using photographs from Flickr, Yahoo Weather will show you random pictures of your current city location. More cities can be added. Really one for the eyes as new pictures are seen everyday. There is an emphasis on the aesthetics here, evident from the wind barometer and sun down graph. All are animated and give off that classy factor (like Sián Lloyd). As a widget it looks even better, definitely recommended for your home screen, although it clashes with certain wallpapers. Our only niggle is the sponsored adverts, but they're integrated into the interface so it doesn't look an eye sore.

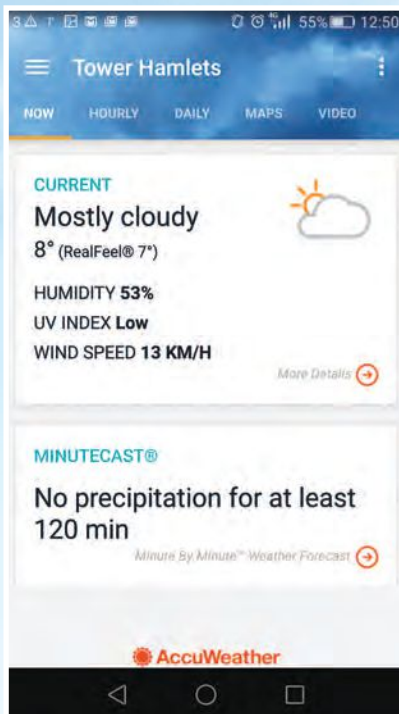


3

ACCUWEATHER

FREE/ANDROID AND IOS
FOR STORM CHASERS

▶ A weather app for serious weather addicts. Some of the apps on the list display what the temperature feels like outside. But with Accuweather's ReelFeel index, we found it to be much more accurate. On average Accuweather got it right when we whipped out the thermometer. In the looks department it isn't as glossy as others, opting for a simple look like Google Now cards but less polished. Adverts take up the bottom half of the app and are a bit of an eyesore but nothing detrimental to its purpose. There's a video section but it's not to watch a broadcast about your area. It is more for the morbidly curious, showing tornadoes and other extreme conditions, collated from Facebook and other video outlets.

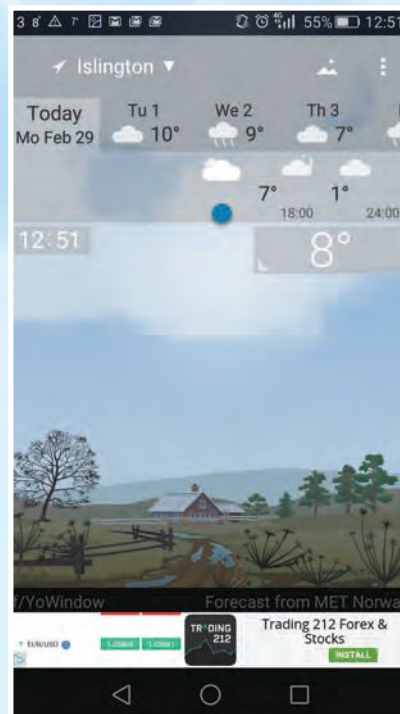


4

YOWINDOW

FREE/ANDROID AND IOS
FOR THOSE CRAVING INTERACTIVITY

▶ If you need to know minute for minute what the weather is going to be like, YoWindow let's you bend time Chronos style. By dragging your finger across the screen you can adjust the time to see what the weather will be like throughout the day. It's a bit fiddly and by no means perfect but with a little adjusting we got used to it. The point of knowing when it will rain or not minute for minute is the accuracy. It feels gimmicky because predicting exactly minute for minute when it will rain is a task even the best meteorologist will struggle to do. But it is accurate as can be if you look at the weather by the hour. The ads are annoying but they take up a bit more space on YoWindow. The scenery on display is animated and customisable to your desires.

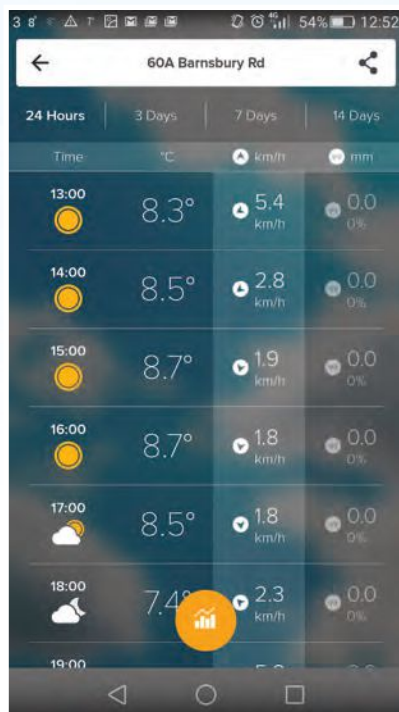


5

MORECAST

FREE/ANDROID AND IOS
THE MOST INTUITIVE

▶ Morecast offers a very natural experience with its vertical interface. Transitioning from today's weather to tomorrow is very fluid and gives the impression of a very well-built app, which it is. You get the usual today's weather and a forecast for the next day and day after, offering the usual details of wind pressure, temperature and forecast. Morecast puts all this information in graphs to offer even more detail for those that really want to get to the nitty gritty of the weather. Aiding to the experience is the unobtrusive advert, thoughtfully found only in the last panel. This gives Morecast a more cleaner look that isn't in your face with adverts. There's a social element for those that want to share a selfie with a tornado (not recommended).



6

WEATHERBUG

FREE/ANDORID, IOS AND WINDOWS PHONE
THE MOST GENEROUS

▶ WeatherBug offers extra features that you'd be expected to upgrade for. The most handy of the lot is a pollen counter, rejoice hay fever sufferers. Hay fever is singlehandedly the most evil thing nature has ever produced to mess with your day (narrowly beating mosquitos). Granted it's necessary for plant reproduction (and the small matter of keeping the human race alive), but it is a serious day killer if you forget your antihistamines. A strange but pleasant surprise; there's a live traffic camera to aid you in the dreaded morning commute. A complaint would be that it's not the prettiest app with a busy interface. It has all your usual information so you really can't go wrong with WeatherBug.



THE MAIN EVENT



The Mobile World Congress is held every year in Barcelona. It is the world's biggest gathering of the mobile industry. Imagine more than 100,000 people wandering around a venue several times bigger than Wembley Stadium and you'll understand the huge scale. What Mobile's team was there to burn shoe leather and bring you news of all the big product and phone launches.



BIG ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SAMSUNG GALAXY S7

Samsung were under pressure to deliver after the roaring success that was the Galaxy S6. To put it shortly they've done it. The S7 is a beautiful albeit familiar device that borrows heavily in design from the S6. Old features such as water resistance and an SD card slot return, much to the joy of fans everywhere. The S7 has arguably the best screen on show at Mobile World Congress with a QHD super AMOLED display. The standard S7 retains the comfy 5.1-inch screen whilst the edge version is upgraded to 5.5-inches.

Under the hood Samsung will be using Qualcomm Snapdragon 820 and their own Exynos chipset. The US is confirmed to receive the Snapdragon 820 version with Europe most likely receiving Samsung's new Exynos chip. A massive 4GB of RAM will be in tow, a standard for all the major flagship announcements.

The S7 seems more of a refinement than a true upgrade from the S6, an "S6s" if you will. But the camera is the standout upgrade. Last Year's S6 had 16 megapixels and S7 with just 12 megapixels. Sounds like a downgrade? Far from it. Samsung are getting more out of the 12 megapixels making them wider and overall perform significantly better than the S6's snapper. Samsung showed us a presentation where the S7's camera spanked the iPhone 6s in terms of camera quality, particularly in low light. That's what Samsung are trying to do this year not only to have the best camera, but the best low light camera. With a wider $f/1.7$ aperture lens, more light is allowed in to produce pictures that are distinctively clear in low light. This also means pictures in good lighting conditions do more than impress, it's awe-inspiring how impressive pictures turn out.

Android 6.0 Marshmallow will be ready out of the box with improvements (finally) on the edge screen. Samsung has also introduced the new Always-On display, which third party developers can produce for. Space Invaders display please. Pre-orders for the S7 or S7 Edge start now, doing so will bag you a free GEAR VR. The S7 will be £569, and the S7 edge £639.



HUAWEI MATEBOOK

Kicking things off first at Mobile World Congress we get a shiny new entry from Huawei. The new Huawei MateBook 2 in 1 is adding to the growing laptop and tablet hybrid devices we've been seeing lately. Huawei's new device is up against the Microsoft Surface Pro 4 and the iPad Pro. It will do so by offering a range of features that has productivity in mind and style.

With a 12-inch IPC LCD display and 2160 x 1440 resolution it offers an incredible looking screen. The screen has plenty of real estate, bezels are only 10mm around the screen, with Huawei claiming the screen takes up 84% of space. It's not only what's on-screen that catches the eye, the body is only 6.9mm thick making it as thick as an iPhone 6.

Huawei really has productivity in mind, squeezing a lot of useful features into the MateBook. One of the biggest applauses came from the announcement that the MateBook will last 9 hours of video playback or 13 hours of light use (average standard for laptops). Powering the MateBook is an Intel Core M3, M5 or M7 processor with the ability to run Windows 10 Home and Pro. The standout feature of the MateBook is hidden in the volume keys. There you will find the fingerprint sensor from the Mate 8, giving you the ability to access the new "laptop" instantly and adding security.

Staying on the productivity line, Huawei also announced the MatePen. It has 2048 levels of pressure and can be used to create some imaginative works of art (depending on your art skills of course). Weirdly there is no convenient way to store the MatePen which the Surface Pen and Apple Pencil are able to do. But it does have a laser pointer for presentations and will last you 100 hours from only 1 hour of charging.

A release date has not been disclosed but prices will range from \$699 (£500) to \$1599 (£1150) for the tablet. The keyboard and pen will be \$129 (£92) and \$59 (£42) respectively, and both will be sold separately or as bundles with the MateBook.



LG G5

With regards to design and performance, LG has taken a completely different approach to the G5 when compared with its predecessor. It probably has more in common with the Nexus 5X and 6P than anything else, which is no bad thing. Unibody design, hidden antennas and an all-metal design with those buttery smooth edges on the rear.

LG has forgone placing buttons on the rear of the device this time round, instead opting for a more traditional placement on the sides. The fingerprint sensor retains a position on the back much like the Nexus 5X, though this time around it also doubles up as a nifty power button.

The company was keen to stress that it struggled to keep up with camera technology, but it felt that this was one area where improvement could be made. With the front camera especially, it can be hard to fit everybody in shot when using a standard shooter. Our field of vision is roughly 120 degrees, while most cameras can only reproduce a fraction of that. LG did the smart thing and made their front camera ultra-wide-angle - higher than human vision. With 135 degree field, you should be able to get more of them group photos with less effort. The rear camera was 16 megapixels and felt like a good performer but a true hands-on will be needed to truly put it through the paces.

Unsurprisingly, the G5 uses top level components and from what we could tell, it flew in our short time with it. Animations were snappy, the UI felt modern (though the app tray has vanished!) and the screen was excellent. Using a 5.3-inch QHD IPS Quantum display, it ranks among one of the best panels we've seen. The Snapdragon 820 coupled with 4GB RAM is lavish and should help it to remain future-proof for a good amount of time. Add to this expandable storage via microSD (which no doubt doubles up as a dual-sim) and you've got a pretty complete package.



XIAOMI MI5

Anounced via video stream direct from China, the Mi5 looks set to be another winner for Xiaomi. Much like the Samsung Galaxy S7, it has a 3D glass back helps which helps to make it feel flush in your hand, while a fingerprint reader is now found on the front and replaces the middle capacitive button. At 69.20 x 144.55 x 7.25mm, it's only a little thicker than the Mi Note... And at 129g in weight it's perhaps one of the lightest devices in its category. Xiaomi also a different variant, the Xiaomi Mi5 Pro, which includes a premium ceramic back rather than glass.

The company was keen to emphasise just how fast the Mi5 is, which is down to the Snapdragon 820 and 4GB LPDDR4 RAM. Interestingly, the larger 64GB version has a faster clock speed of 2.15GHz versus 1.8GHz for the 32GB variant. It's also bursting with other connectivity options, offering Bluetooth, NFC, Netcom 3.0 and 4G+ up to 600Mbps. Perhaps the only area where the company hasn't matched leaders is in the battery, where the Mi5 has a large but not awe-inspiring 3,000 mAh cell.

Not to be outdone on the camera, the Mi5 has a 16 megapixel sensor that includes optical image stabilisation. Phase detection autofocus is included and the lens is Sapphire glass to avoid scratches. Naturally, it also records in 4K for good measure.

The front camera is another area where the company has really excelled, with a 4 megapixel UltraPixel sensor that has 2 micron pixels for better image quality. It also has a wide f/2.0 aperture lens, which is pretty unusual for a front facing shooter.

The Xiaomi Mi5 will be available for a modest \$352 which converts to roughly £253, a very cheap price for such a powerful handset. The bigger The bigger Mi5 Pro will cost roughly \$413, which equates to around £297. Release dates for both are yet to be confirmed.



SONY XPERIA

Sony has brought two new handsets to the line-up; the Xperia X and the Xperia XA. The Xperia X is a mid-range handset featuring the new Qualcomm Snapdragon 650 processor; a chip that sits right in the middle on performance benchmarks. Along with 3GB RAM, it should be a decent performer for most intermediate users. The device has a curved glass display and rounded frame that is a stark design change from the current monolithic Xperia aesthetics. The 5.0-inch 1080p panel is plenty for a mid-range device, with the only disappointment being the rather low 2,620mAh battery.

The XA is technically below the X but aesthetically much nicer. With an edge-to-edge display that appears almost bezel-less, it caught our eye big time at MWC. Powered by a Mediatek P10 processor and 2GB RAM, this sits at the lower end of the mid-range but should still be a capable handset. Battery capacity is a little lower at 2,300mAh, while the screen resolution has also been decreased to 720p. It's worth noting that both of these devices feature new battery technology brought across by Qnovo, which allows the cells to charge much more dynamically, avoiding damage and prolonging the life of the battery by "up to twice as much".

They also come equipped with photography in mind; with the X featuring the same 23 megapixel Exmor sensor found in the Z5, while the front camera is a ridiculous 13 megapixels. The rear sensor features an all-new Predictive Hybrid Autofocus, developed in close collaboration with Sony's Alpha camera engineers, that lets the user predictively capture action before it's happened to avoid blur in fast moving shots.

Pre-orders are available now, with the Xperia X priced at a rather high £529, while the XA goes for a more affordable £249.



HTC

HTC may not have had an official launch event at this year's MWC, but that didn't stop them from announcing three new handsets and a global roll-out for the One X9. The latter was an Asia-only variant of the very impressive A9 that included Boomsound and dropped the fingerprint sensor.

The other two turned out to be budget Desire handsets, with the 530 taking up the bottom of the range. Featuring a small 5-inch screen with a 720p panel and lowly Snapdragon 210 processor, it makes more sense to call this a budget handset since the specs seem to dictate so, yet HTC wants this line associated with the mid-range. Like previous Desire devices, it comes with a plastic body that still feels better than most other plastic handsets on the market... Even if it doesn't quite compare to the premium metal finishes we're all mostly used to by now. The Desire 630 makes up the middle of the line and is essentially the same device from the outside, but it benefits from a beefier Snapdragon 400 processor, BoomSound and a much better 13 megapixel camera.

Moving up to the top device in the range we have the Desire 825, which is visually a bit different and lies half way between the A9 and lesser Desire handsets (it's still plastic for the record). The device will come packaged with a Hi-Res headset and features BoomSound with true stereo speakers. Other than this, it ships with a larger 5.5-inch screen with the same 720p resolution and Snapdragon 400. RAM is also the same as the 630, at 2GB. In fact, even the camera is the same, with the only true difference being the battery, which gets a nice bump to 2,700mAh.

The HTC Desire 825, 630 and 530 will be hit stores in March for money. No info on pricing as of yet, but we'll keep our eyes out in the coming days.



LENOVO VIBE K5 AND K5 PLUS

Lenovo may not be able to compete with the big boys but it does cater to those who can't fork out almost half a month's wage for a new smartphone. At Mobile World Congress Lenovo announced two new handsets; the Vibe K5 and Vibe K5 Plus. Octa-core processors are present in both, the K5 has a Snapdragon 415 (low-range) and the K5 Plus a Snapdragon 616 (mid-range). Lenovo are confusing some with the naming scheme, just to clarify the K5 Plus does not have a bigger screen, both will sport an IPS 5-inch display.

There really isn't anything else to separate the two Lenovo devices, apart from their names. 2GB of RAM will accompany the octa-core processors and 16GB of internal memory (expandable via micro SD up to 32GB). 13-megapixels will be on the snappers and the front facing has 5-megapixels. 2,750 mAh replaceable battery in tow.

A UK release has not been confirmed, we can see Lenovo intending to cater to emerging markets India and China. Catering to such markets has brought Lenovo up to being the fourth largest manufacturers in the world. The Vibe K5 will retail for \$129 and the Vibe K5 Plus will go for \$149.

ZTE

ZTE announced two new devices that will add to the company's mid-range Blade line. Out of the two the Blade V7 is most striking with an all-metal design that instantly catches the eye. It has a 1080p, 5.2-inch curved glass display. Under the hood is an octa-core Mediatek processor complimented with 2GB of RAM and 13 megapixels for the main snapper.

The Blade V7 Lite is the smaller and less powerful of the two with a 5-inch, 720p display. Noticeably it will not sport the all-metal body seen on the Blade V7. What it does have over the Blade V7 Lite is a fingerprint sensor. The V7 Lite has an 8-megapixel main camera and a Mediatek quad-core processor. Both devices will run Android 6.0 Marshmallow.

Currently there are no plans to release the aesthetically pleasing Blade V7 in the UK. Confirmed territories are: Germany, Spain, South Africa, Ethiopia and Mexico. The Blade V7 Lite is confirmed for Russia, Mexico, Spain, Germany and Thailand. The aforementioned countries can expect a Spring release but sadly UK consumers can't.



HP ELITE X3

HP's new smartphone packs a lot of power to be your one and only device across the board - your phone, tablet and computer, it wants to replace it all. The American computing giants are back with the HP Elite x3, it's an interesting device as manufacturers nowadays shy away from creating a device for Windows Phone.



The Elite x3 is a high-end device with a massive phablet 6-inch quad HD display. Power by the Snapdragon 820 with a 4GB of RAM. Bigger is better seems to be the theme here, internal memory is 64GB, expandable up to 2TB, and 4,150 mAh battery capacity. There is an iris scanner on the front, with a fingerprint scanner on the back (although it wasn't present on the models at MWC).

From the spec sheets and features it's pretty much a Lumia 950 on steroids. It needs to be this powerful to run Continuum as intended, but the hurdle Windows 10 on smartphones run into - is the inability to full desktop apps.

Desk Dock and Mobile Extender are the accessories announced to turn the Elite x3 into a "PC." Desk Dock has many ports to function like a PC including; ethernet, 2 USB ports, display port and USB-C. Mobile Extender looks like a little laptop, but when connected to an Elite x3 it becomes an extension of it and you can use it like a PC. Pricing and availability yet to be confirmed.

ALCATEL IDOL 4 AND 4S

We all know Alcatel to create budget devices that are friendly on the wallet but not high on the quality list. This year we see Alcatel continuing to forge a new reputation by creating new high-end devices after success with the Idol 3. The Idol 4 is the direct sequel to the Idol 3 sporting a 5.2-inch 1080p display. An octa-core processor is in tow with 3GB of RAM. On the snapper we have 13 megapixels to play with. What we really want to look at is the Idol 4S, the more upmarket of the two.

It has a bigger 5.5-inch display, octa-core processor, quad HD display, 3GB of RAM and a 16 megapixel camera. Internal memory is minuscule with 16GB off the bat, but expandable memory is supported via micro SD. On the design front Alcatel are taking a note from Samsung adopting curved edges for the screen.

No points for originality but it does the job in giving a premium look. The chrome trim of the Idol 3 has now been replaced with aluminium, an impressive effort. A noticeable addition is the "Boom Key" which looks quite like the Sony Xperia series power buttons. The "Boom Key" is used to take pictures and boost bass when listening to music.

With a high-end target comes a higher price. The Idol 4 will be \$310 (£220) and the 4S jumps to \$500 (£360), release date to be confirmed.



ARCHOS

Archos took the wraps off a new pair of Diamond range handsets, including the monster spec Diamond 2 Note. With a Quad HD screen, Helio X10 processor, 3GB of RAM and a massive 3,610mAh battery, it's an absolute steal at only £249. CAT 4 speeds mean it won't be the fastest browsing device but who cares?

They also revealed the lesser Archos Diamond 2 Plus, which carries 4GB RAM but a less powerful Helio P10. The screen is only Full HD but the camera is much more impressive than the Note; it uses the same 20.7 megapixel Sony sensor found in the Xperia Z5 range. This handset will be available for just £199, another absolute steal.

Both are expected to launch in May and will launch with Stock Android 6.0, though in our hands-on experience there did seem to be a few subtle modifications... The keyboard being one.



ACER LIQUID JADE 2

It's always nice to see another Android device without a heavily skinned interface. Acer presents us just that with what seems to be a mid-range device with a lot more under the hood. We use the term mid-range lightly especially with a Snapdragon 808 and 3GB of RAM powering the impressive device.

Android 6.0 Marshmallow is available right off the bat with a pretty much stock Android experience. 32GB is on-board and is expandable up to 200GB via micro SD card. If that isn't enough Acer are offering something called 'Hybrid Storage,' a cloud based storage system offered by Nextbit. We didn't really see it in action on the floor but looking to have a closer look in a review.

The body is all plastic with a brush metal effect all over the back. Battery capacity was not revealed but there is a massive 21-megapixel snapper with an equally impressive 5-megapixel selfie snapper. Display is full of clarity with excellent colour contrast thanks to the super AMOLED panel. Meaning we can expect good battery life and deep black colours. Pricing and release has not been confirmed, but if it does see release in the UK, Acer are making a very impressive case for your attention. Providing the price is right.

DORO

Doro announced two clamshell feature phones; the 6525 and 6530. Both come with an external display which can be viewed when closed. The main screen on all devices is a 2.8" colour display and you also get additional options such as Hearing Aid Compatibility, amplified sound and HD Voice for better call quality.

The Doro 6530 leads the way as the most powerful device, with GPS technology and the company's support service Doro Connect & Care.

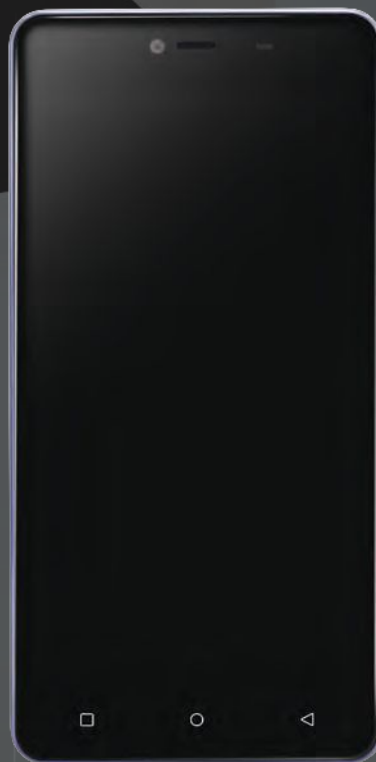
The service allows a network of friends and family to be contacted when the user needs help. It's a useful tool that really benefits elderly people who may be physically impaired but still want to get around with peace of mind.



GIONEE

Relatively unknown Chinese smartphone manufacturer Gionee announced their new flagship device, the S8. With an all-metal design featuring no antenna lines and a mid-range Helio P10 for processing duties, it should be an attractive handset. RAM is a large 4GB, while the 16 megapixel camera features phase detection and laser autofocus. A large 3,000mAh battery.

It's expected to arrive in Europe by the end of March and will be priced around £350. This puts it in contention with Google and other premium devices, though with its own take on Force Touch it does at least have something to make it stand out from the pack.



WIKO U FEEL

You won't have heard of Wiko before and you'll have probably called them Wilkos by accident. They're a French mobile manufacturer who only entered the British market in 2016. At MWC Wiko debuted the U Feel and U Feel Lite.

The U Feel is very much a mid-range device with a quad-core Mediatek processor, and 3GB of RAM. A 5-inch IPS display is slapped on the front offering a decent screen. Wiko are fans of dual-sim card slots, possible because they're owned by Chinese technology group Tinno Mobile. Yes the U Feel has it too. An impressive 2900 mAh of battery capacity is in tow and surprisingly Android 6.0 Marshmallow will be available from launch.



HAIER

Haier announced two budget devices with mid-range specs, the L56 and V6. Both devices are finished in brushed metal, with the L56 featuring a subtle 2.5D screen curve. The L56 has a 5.0-inch 720p display and 1.3GHz MediaTek processor; a good mid-range chip capable of moderate performance. It's also backed by 2GB RAM and slightly a low 2,200mAh battery... But it was somewhat expected for a mid-range/budget handset.

The flagship V6 has a slightly faster MediaTek processor clocked at 1.5-1.8GHz and 3GB RAM. The 5.5-inch FullHD resolution panel uses 'Incell' technology for a much thinner device. Battery life gets a bump to 2,900mAh, which is much better. Both devices house the same cameras; a 13 megapixel rear sensor with Phase Detection Auto Focus and a 5 megapixel fixed focus front shooter.

WEARABLES:

ZTE AXON WATCH

ZTE announced their own smartwatch variant which runs on the Tencent TOS+ platform, essentially a carbon copy of Android Wear. In fact, the two are so similar that at times we thought it was Android Wear. Granted, it is closely modelled on the traditional Android operating system but the two are almost indistinguishable. In terms of design, we're sure that you'll notice a few passing resemblances to the Huawei Watch. The thick metal design is pretty bulky but still looks premium, while the Gold trim around the watch face is a nice touch that at least makes it look a little different.

Inside, specifications are pretty staggering. You'll get a 1.4-inch Sapphire coated 400 x 400 display which equates to a large 286ppi, a 1.2GHz quad-core Snapdragon 400 processor, 512MB Ram and 4GB Storage. The battery is also a large 300mAh. This puts the ZTE Axon Watch toe-to-toe with some of the best wearables out there, meaning it should perform very well indeed. The added benefit of IP67 certification also means you'll be able to drop the watch into 1 meter of water for up to 30 minutes without any damage to the internal components.

It's likely that the device won't see light here in the UK, with the wearable only scheduled to release in China currently. Equally, with the Tencent OS, you're probably only going to see apps that cater to the Asian market, as it's highly unlikely that western developers will jump on board.



HAIER WATCH

Possibly one of the biggest surprises at MWC, Haier came equipped with a lot of products, though the most impressive was arguably their wearable. Another device that seems to bear close resemblance to the Huawei Watch, it has a very unique feature that currently separates it from any device out there; it's running full-blown Android 6.0 Marshmallow. This means that theoretically, you'll be able to run any app from the Google Play Store on the wearable, though how exactly they will perform is a different matter altogether.

Retailing at just €200, they haven't compromised on the design aesthetics, with a full metal body and several premium strap designs. Much like the Huawei Watch, a single button on the side is used for selection, while the touchscreen does the majority of the navigation.

The screen is of the 1.4-inch variety, with a high 400 x 400 resolution that puts it on a par with the ZTE Watch. These two manufacturers definitely brought with them some of the best panels we've seen on a smart wearable yet. In terms of performance, it pretty much sits at the peak of what current wearables contain, with what we believe to be a Snapdragon 400, 1GB RAM and 8GB storage. Quite how they've managed to pack all this in at such an attractive price is pretty remarkable, though it's probably a necessary inclusion to comfortably drive that fully-fledged version of Android. You'll also get IP56 water resistance, which isn't as high as the ZTE but still enough to protect it from rain and the odd little splash.

GARMIN VIVOFIT 3 & VIVOACTIVE HR

Garmin has released more wearables for us to strap on and get going with the fitness plan. The Vivofit 3 caught our eyes with its year long battery life. That's right a year's worth of battery life from a single charge, making it even easier for you to track your fitness 24/7. It's more of a casual fitness wearable, able to recognise the activity you're doing automatically. Walking, running, cycling and swimming are all recorded and synced to the Garmin app, with no need for you to do anything.

For aspiring Olympic athletes and marathon trainers there is the smartwatch-esque Vivoactive HR. It's a departure in design from the Garmin Vivoactive, sporting a more quality band and a premium feel. A colour touchscreen is slapped on, showing a prettier display with customisable watch faces. It can track the usual running, biking, swimming with golfing, rowing and snowboarding onboard too. Battery will last you up to 7 days with use or 13 hours with GPS enabled for marathon runners. Prices for the Vivofit 3 start at \$100 and Vivoactive HR, \$249.



MYKRONOZ ZEROUND

Wearables aren't the roaring success we thought they'd be, overall consumers feel it's a bit overhyped with features that aren't truly innovating. Plus the retail prices are very off putting. MyKronoz has introduced what is being described as a cheaper Apple Watch, but do not let the word cheaper deter you. Introduced at MWC is the ZeRound, a stainless steel timepiece that is an extension of your smartphone without breaking the bank.

It's a familiar wearable, the interface does remind us of the Apple Watch, but that's not a bad thing. It's simple and easy to scroll through, which is what you want from a wearable. ZeRound is compatible with iOS and Android, giving you notifications from WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and much more. Basically it's your go to place for notifications. With a larger display than the Apple Watch, it proves to be more attractive on the wrist (depending on taste of course). We can expect MyKronoz to release ZeRound in the UK at the end of April for the amazing price of £89. MyKronoz also announced at MWC the ZeKid and ZeSport

Expect our reviews soon.

GUESS CONNECT

Fashion brand Guess announced their foray into smartwatches back at CES and the updated Connect is their second attempt at blending traditional mechanical design with more modern smart integration. Two sizes were shown – 41mm and 45mm, and all came in a variety of finishes. Guess will offer around 20 different styles before the end of the year, which is a lot to choose from.

The updated version shown at MWC ditches the small screen on earlier models in favour of a notification light, which will illuminate for things such as notifications. You'll be able to customise the alert colour for specific contacts, which is a nice touch. As with the earlier model, you'll need the companion application to get the most out of the wearable. Since it doesn't run on Android Wear, don't expect the same level of interaction as true smartwatch competitors.

It's still possible to tap the glass for things like recalling calls and a vibration function is there for further feedback when notifications arrive.



ACCESSORIES:

SAMSUNG ACCESSORIES

Samsung weren't quite as trigger-happy as LG in the accessories department, instead focusing most of their attention on the newly announced Gear 360 camera. Looking somewhat like a webcam, the 360 has an unmistakably minimal design that is both functional and attractive. The tripod on the bottom helps to elevate the camera and it can also be folded to double as a carry handle. It's larger than other 360 cameras on the market and not quite as well suited for say, pinning to a shirt, but you could hardly call it large. Housing two 15 megapixel sensors with F/2.0 aperture for better low-light performance, it has the edge over the LG 360 Cam on raw specs alone. Video recording can be captured in resolutions up to 3840 x 1920, which is practically 4K.

Each lens overlaps slightly by about 15 degrees in its field of view, this is apparently done to create more accurate 360 degree images when the two photos are stitched together in post. The device works in conjunction with the newly announced Samsung Galaxy S7; images are captured on the camera and then processed using the processing power found in the smartphone. Once this is done, you can then share your images/videos straight onto the internet. Connection between devices can be done in either Wi-Fi Direct, NFC or Bluetooth. The battery is also a decent size at 1,350mAh; this is again slightly ahead of LG's own efforts.

Other than this, the company showed of a range of accessories for the upcoming Galaxy S7, including various cases and lens attachments. There was also a bunch of Bluetooth speakers, headphones and wearables such as the Charm. A stripped back smartwatch that looks like a piece of jewellery, it offers basic functions such as step counting and calorie tracking information.



LG ACCESSORIES

LG joined the virtual reality race with their own headset, the 360 VR. Similar in design to the Samsung Gear VR, the headset is powered by a smartphone and is priced much more affordable. Perhaps the key difference between this and other variants is its incredibly lightweight design, with the headset slotting onto your face rather than devouring it. Connecting to your smartphone via USB-C, it eliminates the bulky bulge protruding from your head. The design has its own share of pros and cons; one of which being a lack of overall immersion in the VR world. Since they don't have the rubber seals to lock out light and the world around you, there's still a bit of bleed in your peripheral vision that can greatly reduce the overall effect of being 'in' the virtual world.

The Korean tech giant also revealed their take on the 360 cam, rather predictably titled 'LG 360 Cam'. Featuring two 13 megapixel fisheye sensors, it's capable of taking both stills and video up to 2K in resolution. Three microphones allow omnidirectional sound pickup, which should be good for those open environments you'll likely be taking it to. The 1200mAh battery can record up to 70 minutes of video on a single charge, while the microSD slot allows expandable storage.

The last and weirdest thing LG announced was the Rolling Bot, a Sphero-type robot that can be controlled via smartphone and a companion app. The nifty thing about Rolling Bot is the built-in 8 megapixel camera and allows users to get a first-person view of the world record footage. The addition of a laser pointer also use with

app. The nifty thing about microphones, which around them and makes it a great toy to pets, as I'm sure cat owners will appreciate.



SONY ACCESSORIES

Not content with just announcing smartphones, the company added a plethora of new accessories to its range; with a camera, earpiece projector and assistant joining the Xperia family.

The Xperia Eye joins what other companies have already shown this year, a 360 degree camera to be worn on the move. The device integrates facial and voice detection to allow hands-free capturing of images; it's even smart enough to snap away all by itself. The Xperia Projector is perhaps the most interesting of the bunch, allowing users to control the device with touch, voice and hand gestures. It will project onto any surface, clear or otherwise and offer some form of interaction.

Xperia Ear is essentially Google Glass minus the glass; a wireless ear-piece that provides you with information such as your schedule, weather and the latest news while on the move. Rated as IPX2, it should be able to withstand a bit of rain here in the UK, though you can't exactly go swimming in it. One of the nifty things about the Xperia Ear is that the case doubles as a charging bay, so you can essentially charge the thing while you have it in your pocket. The device connects to your phone via both NFC and Bluetooth but you'll need the application installed to use it.

Lastly, and not to be outdone in the personal assistant field, Sony has announced their own version of Siri, Google Now and Cortana... Dubbed the "Xperia Agent". There's a catch though, as Xperia Agent is an actual physical unit that can be added to your current smarthome setup. Powered by Sony's voice technology, it can respond to a number of commands and has a built-in camera and projector display for projecting content onto surfaces.



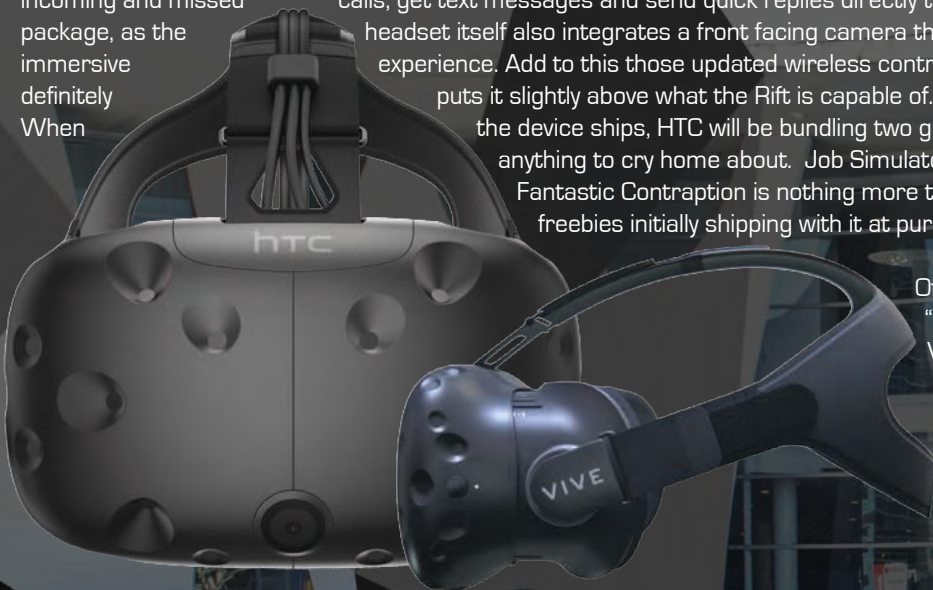
HTC VIVE

VR was a big part of congress this year, with many companies announcing their own version of the Oculus headset. The HTC VIVE has perhaps been the most anticipated of the bunch, after a much touted collaboration between themselves and Valve. Today, the company announced that the consumer edition would officially be available to pre-order from 29th February, with full availability starting in early April. Priced at 799 USD, it puts the VIVE in the same category as that of the Oculus Rift and other premium VR headsets.

The device will be powered by SteamVR and integrates directly into your smartphone, allowing allowing you to receive and respond to both incoming and missed calls, get text messages and send quick replies directly through the headset. Of course, this is only part of the package, as the headset itself also integrates a front facing camera that can scan the space around the user for a more immersive experience. Add to this those updated wireless controllers and you have quite an attractive package that puts it slightly above what the Rift is capable of.

When the device ships, HTC will be bundling two games with the headset... Though they're not really anything to cry home about. Job Simulator: The 2050 Archives hardly sounds inspiring, while Fantastic Contraption is nothing more than a tech demo if anything. Still, it's nice to have some freebies initially shipping with it at purchase.

Of course, HTC has said that they are doing their best to "foster the creation of content", though we're sure that Valve already has this sorted to some degree.



ORAL-B GENIUS

Oral-B are front runners in the \$5 billion brush market and they have innovated yet again with an electric toothbrush that works with your smartphone. Oral-B first introduced bluetooth electric toothbrushes in 2014, now in 2016 they've refined it immensely with the Genius. Using phase detection technology, the Genius knows which part of your mouth is brushing and will instruct where to brush with the use of the Oral-B app.

The app collates data showing users which areas need more cleaning and how long they should be cleaned. Price and availability is unknown but we can expect a release in July.



AKYUMEN HOLOFONE

Samsung had a go at making a projector phone, it didn't really take off but that didn't deter Akyumen from making one. Akyumen are calling it a phablet as it will have 4G capabilities. It's a massive 7-inches with a thickness of one and a half iPhone 6s. Projections are displayed in 720p so not as good as a normal projector, but the portability will make up for that.

Not only can you display your films but you can also project an Xbox One using the Holofone's mini-HDMI slot. Projection time is estimated to be around two hours of continuous use. UK price and release has not been confirmed yet.

CAT S60

CAT are known for making heavy machinery and they're still relatively new in the smartphone world. Catering to their niche of service workers CAT has innovated and produced a thermal imaging phone to help engineers and builders. Using the device builders can use it to check if installations are properly installed. It can see up to 30 metres and will come with a decent 13-megapixel standard camera. Like other CAT smartphones it can take a beating, able to withstand drops of 1.8 metres on concrete floors.

Under the hood it will run Marshmallow on release with a octa-core Snapdragon 617 processor. 3GB of RAM and an impressive 3,800 mAh battery. No word on a UK price yet but we can expect a release this year.



Psyche yourself up

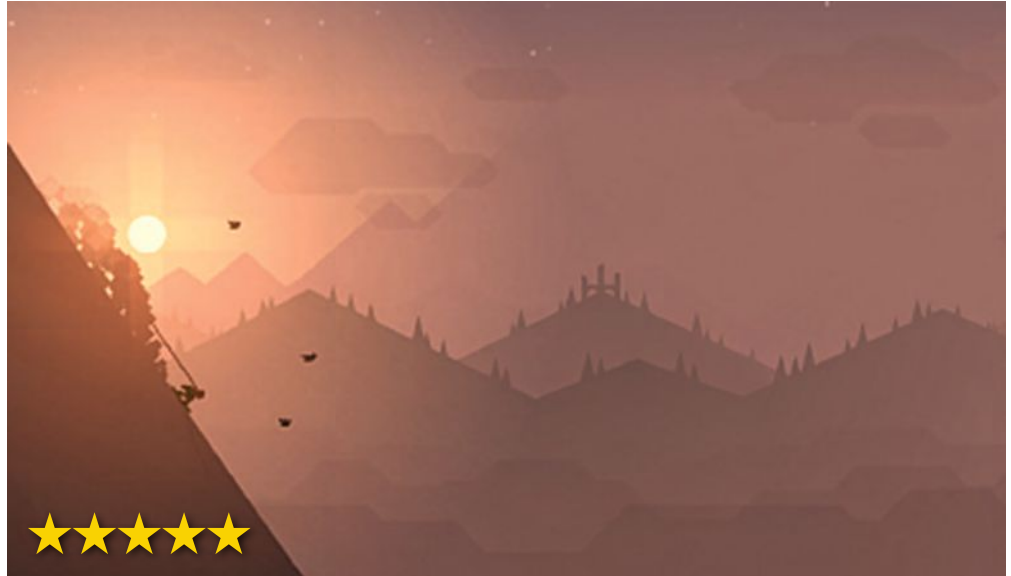
A round-up of the latest games we've been playing on our iOS and Android devices this month.

Reviewer: **Manny Pham** – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Alto's Adventure

£2.29 Android, iOS and Amazon Kindle

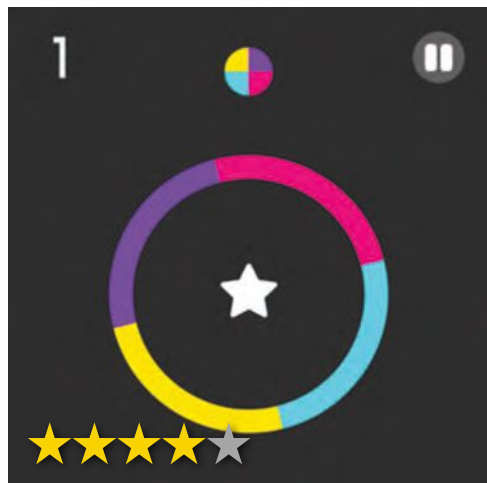
It's quite rare to come across a mobile game that has atmosphere and a resounding effect on your psyche. That's what you get with *Alto's Adventure*. It has qualities that remind you of Sony's indie hit *Journey*. You control Alto as he slides down hills, front flips over crevices and collects his llamas. There isn't an end to the game, simply go as far as you can, grab power ups and garner as much points as possible. Visually one of the best games we've seen on a smartphone, not because of raw power but because of the distinctive art style. The music that'll calm the nerves in any situation.



Color Switch

Free, Android and iOS

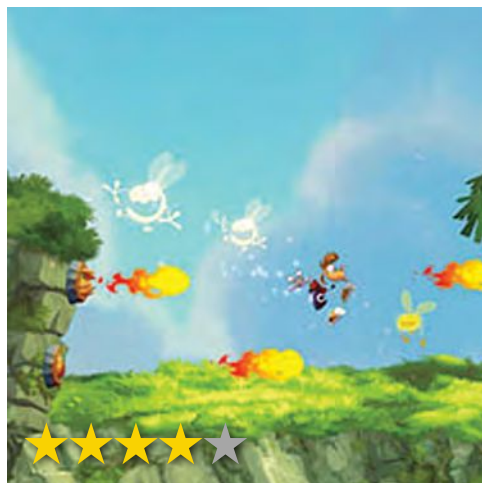
Just when we got over *Flappy Birds*, someone had to go and make a vertical version. Nothing to do but sigh, download and waste more hours. Some brain power and arguably more skill is required as you jump through hurdles while matching colours. Horribly addictive, we love it.



Rayman Jungle Run

£2.29 Android and iOS

We don't really pay for games but *Rayman Jungle Run* is one of those that are worth every penny. The best way to describe *Rayman Jungle Run* is Sonic The Hedgehog on automatic. Rayman runs for you while you punch, fly and run through obstacles while collecting orbs. A lot of levels to go through and of great variety.



44

Free iOS

A tricky game that requires precision and a steady hand. Using your phone's gyroscope you control your square little hero through a series of obstacle to collect 44 keys. It's a daunting game proclaiming "you'll never get all 44 keys." Well designed with cheeky messages in areas where you're destined to die.



Heroes Tactics: War and Strategy

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

Turn-based strategy games are classics that aren't overly complicated and span into epic games when done right. While this may not be the next *Final Fantasy* (it doesn't try to be), it's a fun attempt at being a collectible RPG. Battle and collect new heroes to destroy the forces of evil!



iSlash Heroes

Free Android and iOS

Simple and challenging is always a great combination. From the start you will know what to do and pretty soon you will be slicing through boards like a master. Reminiscent of *Fruit Ninja*, you're slicing through boards while avoiding shurikens. Touch controls are responsive in this colourful, fun game.



Top Eleven 2016

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

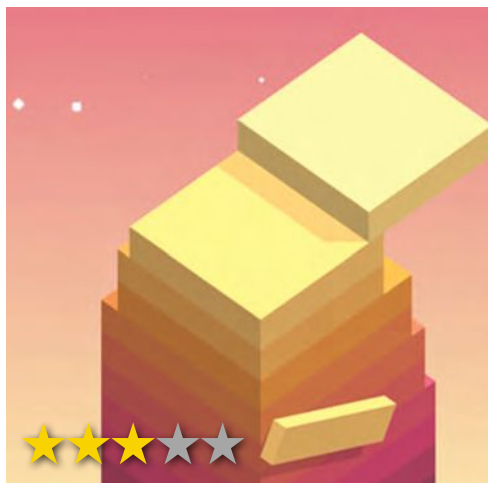
Quite like the 2015 edition we reviewed last year but a lot more polished and 'special'. Jose Mourinho is on the cover for this addictive football manager sim. It's not as in-depth as *Football Manager* but there's enough here to get you thinking, from tactics to preparation. Engrossing if you love your football.



Stack

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

Ever played Jenga and that block game in the arcade offering PlayStations? *Stack* is a combination of the two on your smartphone. No tutorial needed as you're expected to stack square slabs and climb as high as you can. Try to be accurate as any bits not within range will be sliced off, giving you less of a target to aim for.



Star Chef

Free (in-app purchases) Android and iOS

A micro-managing restaurant simulator that offers the dream of running your own restaurant. Micro-managing sims aren't everyone's cup of tea but this one isn't particularly enjoyable. Gameplay is quite dull, at least give us more gratifying lights and sound to make us feel like we've achieved something. Not very responsive at times.



Digimon Heroes

Free (in-app purchases) Android

If you're waiting for a decent Digimon game for your smartphone, well you're going to have to carry on waiting. At first you'll get a massive nostalgia rush playing through *Digimon Heroes* but it eventually gets repetitive. Gameplay is simply matching cards and a lot of it is done for you by the artificial intelligence.



The main event

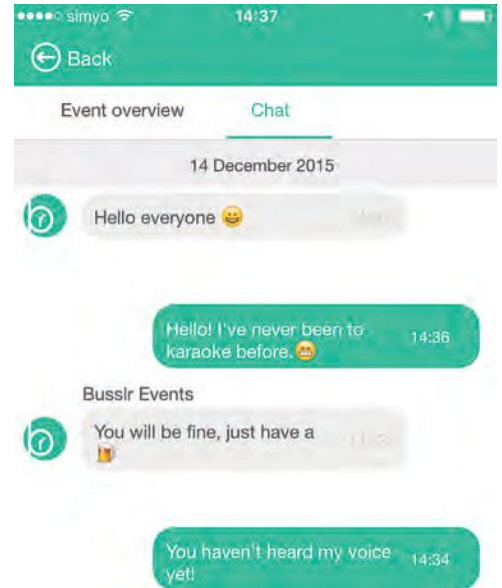
This month's pick of the iOS and Android apps includes the latest social media platforms.

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Busslr

(Android and iOS) Free (In-app purchases)

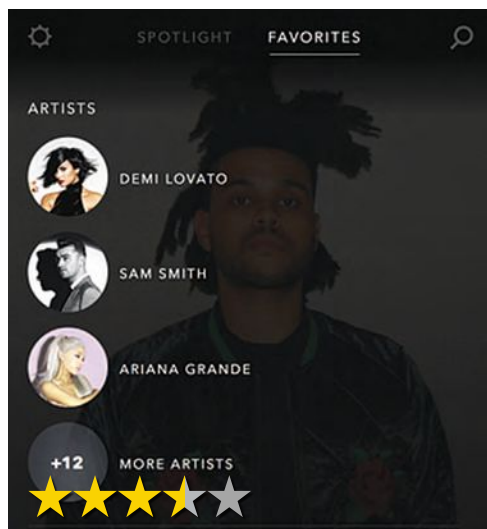
Busslr is a social media application that connects people by focusing on the events they love. With options for music, family, sports and more, there's plenty of ways to meet like-minded people and strike up a conversation. Once you're there, a handy chat bar will allow you to keep it flowing, much like any conventional messenger.



Vevo

(Android and iOS) Free (In-app purchases)

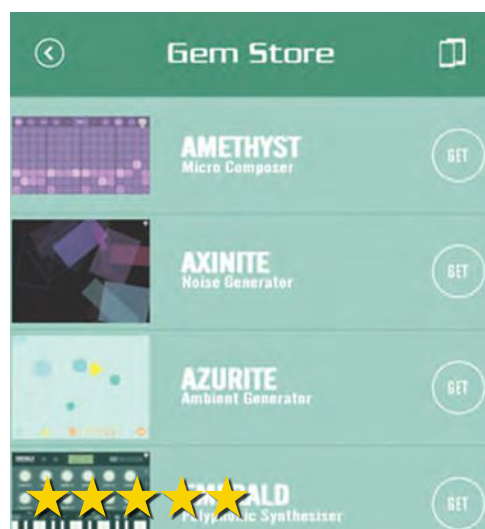
Vevo has updated its Android application to provide much more personalisation, similar to that found in the iOS version. The new version includes a new recommendation algorithm similar to Spotify, a favourites section for keeping track of your songs and new playlists for expanding your listening horizons.



Gemma

(Android and iOS) Free (In-app purchases)

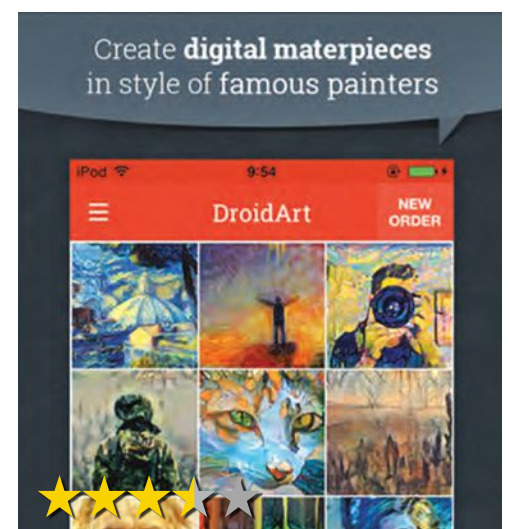
A new way to create electronic and experimental instruments on your mobile device, while also offering a platform in which to share them with other people. Using the new programming language 'Pure Data', it's possible to create and construct your very own synthesizers with ease.



Droidart

(iOS only) Free (In-app purchases)

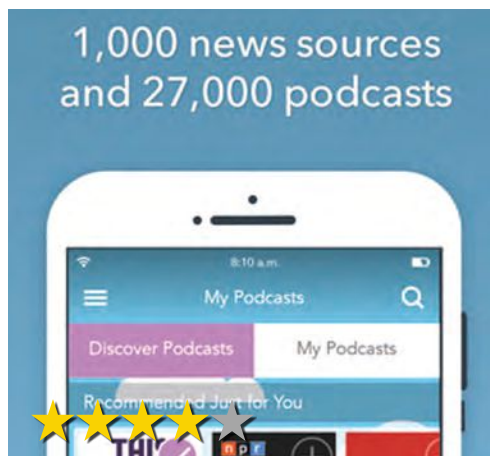
A unique spin on the traditional filter application. Turn photos into works of art, in the style of your favourite artists. The service is free and the results are impressive, though the processing is slow and speeding things up will cost you extra. Still, it's a nice app that manages to be a little different.



Otto

(iOS only) Free

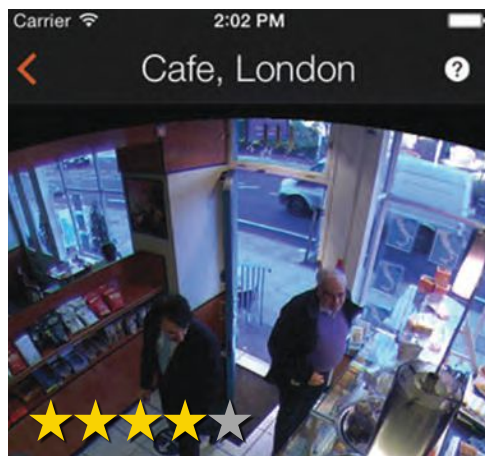
A podcasting application that takes the difficulty out of finding your favourite shows. By browsing through thousands of potential sources based on your own criteria, you should be able to find something interesting. If you've ever used Pandora for music, you'll be quite at home with this one.



OnVu360

(Android only) Free

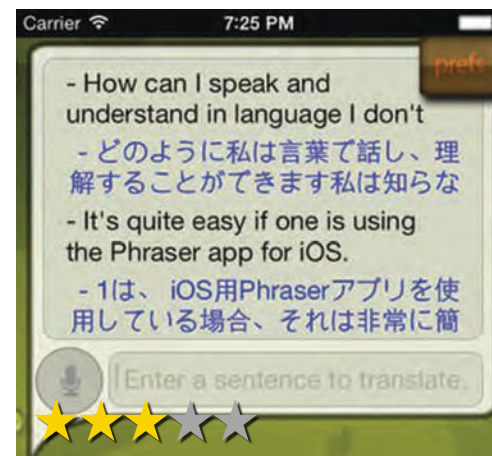
Oncam has updated its OnVu360 application to support their latest line of 360 degree cameras. The app allows livestream recording and the ability to tap straight into demo cams for a little showcase of what the company's products are capable of. In-app purchasing has also been dropped, allowing users to now add multiple camera profiles.



Phraser

(Android only) Free

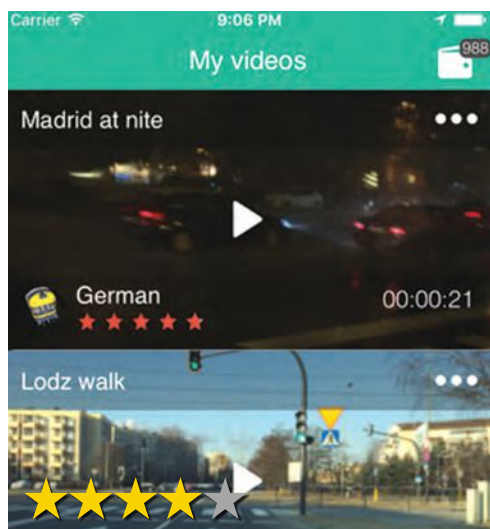
Perhaps a bit gimmicky, a basic word learning application that sticks non-removable notifications into your tray. These little snippets contain a word and definition, so you can increase your vocabulary while also seeing how many people on WhatsApp still want to speak to you. Options for frequency and study mode are also available.



Eyethere

(iOS only) Free

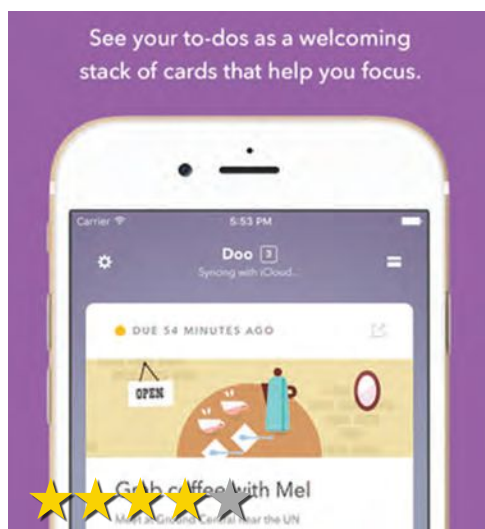
A social platform that integrates video and users together, Eyethere allows you to request clips of locations from anywhere in the world. In essence, think of it as an interactive travel map provided by the community themselves, allowing you to view landmarks and popular locations with ease.



Doo - Get Things Done

(iOS only)

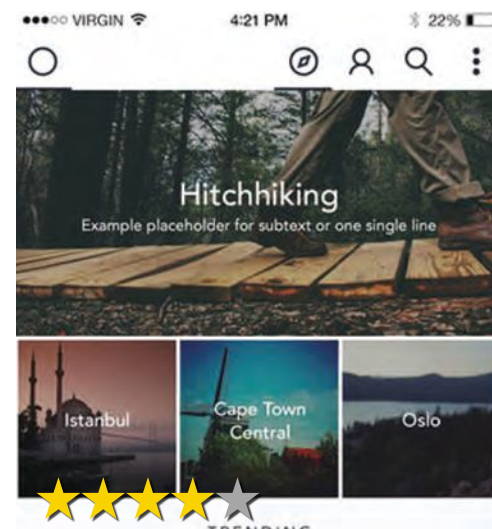
Doo is a reminder application with a twist; it priorities tasks in a much more bite-sized manner, encouraging you do more and focus on tasks much easier. If you have an especially big task, Doo will offer recommendations based on how to succeed, while the Tinder-esque card swiping format



Helium

(iOS only)

Another cool social network where users can quickly find fun and exciting activities, recommended by people all across the world. The app allows the community to review each location in a Tripadvisor style fashion, allowing concise opinions about landmarks and popular locations.



Nintendo 3DS

What fate awaits as you prepare to do battle in the latest instalment in the Fire Emblem series?

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Fire Emblem Fates: Birthright and Conquest editions ★★★★★

Publisher: Nintendo **Developer:** Intelligent Systems

Where to buy: In-Store **Cost:** £29.99,

Special Edition including both versions

We don't usually review games in this manner but since there's a fair bit of crossover in these two titles, we decided it was probably the best way to go about things. After the excellent *Fire Emblem Awakening*, Intelligent Systems is back with another instalment, though it is now divided into two titles whereby the player is given a choice about halfway through; either cough up the dough and play the other or continue on the existing tale.

The story is fairly basic in Fates, centring around two warring kingdoms that each have their own tales to tell. Depending on which title you buy, you'll be assigned to either the Nohr (Conquest) or Hoshido (Birthright) kingdoms. The former has the darker story of the two, though neither are exactly light-hearted.

In terms of gameplay, things are pretty unforgiving. Conquest is definitely the harder version of the two, with Birthright carrying simpler objectives with bigger rewards. Much like previous titles in the series, you're going to spend a large majority of your time cursing as characters get chopped down. If you're playing on Classic Mode, you also won't be able to get those characters back, leading to some pretty emotional situations where you lose one of your strongest members for good.

Battle mechanics are the same as titles of old, which is to say

that they continue to be fantastic. The combat and movement takes place on the top screen, while the bottom shows an overview of the battlefield in a handy map. Movement is done in a grid-based style and everything is carefully balanced with that staple weapon triangle to ensure tactical gameplay.

The big new feature added to combat in Fates is 'Dragon Veins', which allow players to manipulate the environment in unique ways. This could be anything from a change in weather to moving a wall or creating a bridge. This simple addition completely alters the flow of battles, opening them up to some refreshing strategic possibilities. You've also got the relationship mechanic, which offers battle bonuses for specific characters who have gained affinity from fighting together.

The last big addition in this title is the 'My Castle' system, which allows players to literally craft their own base from scratch. You can place specific buildings and use the mode as an opportunity to scavenge for resources; these are essential for upgrading your weapons and items. This is done while walking around your creation, which all happens in full 3D. If you have the right Amiibo's at your disposal, you'll also be able to unlock additional characters such as Marth who'll appear in My Castle. You'll be able to chat to them and occasionally battle them, with the ultimate goal of gaining an extra ally to help you in those tricky battles.

Fire Emblem Fates is another great entry in a series that has just enough new editions to make it feel fresh. If you're new to the series, we'd advise going for Birthright as it's the easiest of the two. For everyone else (or those who want a challenge), head to Conquest for something a little more difficult.



Mega Man Legacy Collection



Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom

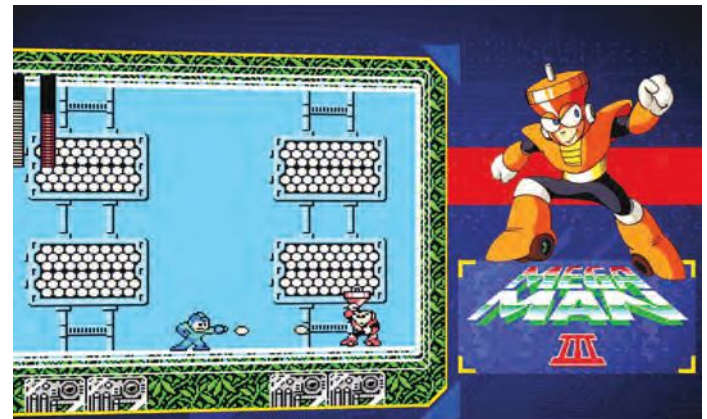
Where to buy: In-Store **Cost:** Free (In-app purchases)

Faithful ports are a beautiful thing for nostalgic retro gamers such as ourselves, so when *Mega Man Legacy Collection* was officially released this month, we had to try it out. Those looking for a more modern gaming experience should probably look elsewhere but that's really not the point here; what you're getting is plenty of titles in an incredibly affordable package.

The title is available on 3DS, PC, PS4 and Xbox One, though it's worth noting that in a surprisingly rare instance, the 3DS version actually has some exclusive content. You'll find scans of old manuals on the cartridge itself and if you have the Mega Man Amiibo, you'll be able to unlock an extra 11 Challenge Mode trials designed by fans in a contest.

Onto the game itself and if you've played the older Mega Man games before, you'll feel right at home here. These are 100% faithful ports of the originals, right down to the slowdown encountered when facing certain enemies. That means borders and no widescreen, but there is an option to overlay them with some. The only difference you'll see here is the addition of a manual save function for ensuring that the crippling difficulty doesn't make you throw the handheld into a wall.

Challenge mode is possibly the most lucrative reason to buy the Legacy Collection if you're a Mega Man veteran, as it takes the original titles and mixes them up to provide plenty of replay value.



Project X Zone 2



Publisher: Bandai Namco **Developer:** Monolith Soft

Where to buy: In-Store **Cost:** £11.99

The original *Project X Zone* was a pretty neat title, combining the universes of three huge Japanese games developers into a dream team-style cast. The newest version isn't exactly a huge jump over the original but offers enough differences to make it a valid purchase. As a turn-based tactical RPG, you'll be duelling with enemies and forming strange alliances, all of which are performed in a very tongue-in-cheek manner. The story of how these universes collide is incredibly vague at best and you'll often hear the characters themselves poking fun at the situation.

Developed by the guys behind *Xenoblade*, it has some relatively deep battle dynamics. Those who have played *Final Fantasy Tactics* will probably feel at home here, as the majority of the game is spent in various arenas. Character positioning is crucial, as is picking the right person for the right job. Do it badly and you'll likely set your team up for failure, which means keeping an eye out for those sneak attacks so you can maximise damage points. It's not quite as deep as say, *Fire Emblem*, but it still manages to give you enough options for things such as team-up bonuses and progression.

Frankly, the most fun from this title isn't necessarily the gameplay itself but rather the experience of creating your own dream team. With so many franchise favourites to choose from, you can easily get lost in sheer fandom of it all.

PlayStation Vita

Let your imagination run riot as the Minecraft phenomenon makes its long-awaited handheld debut.

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Minecraft



Developer: 4J Studios **Publisher:** Mojang Entertainment

Where to Buy: In-Store **Price:** £14.99

Minecraft needs no introduction. It has taken the world by storm and accumulated millions of fans around the world. It has been ported to almost every console known to man, so it was inevitably only a matter of time before it made its way to the PlayStation Vita.

First-time players will find the game a slightly confusing process, with no goals to achieve and a massive world to explore for hours. The best way to describe *Minecraft* is to imagine you've been put in a world made of *LEGO*, *LEGO* that can be broken down and moulded by your imagination. Without the mess and agonising pain from stepping in said mess.

It's a mix between a survival and adventure game where you build your own house to survive, hunt cows and pigs to keep your health up and fight off intruders trying to blow your house up. But what gamers have really been using *Minecraft* for is its more imaginative side.

You can select creative mode to build anything you can think of. Your experience of *Minecraft* depends on how good your imagination is. Building a skyscraper with a roller coaster surrounding it is probably one of the best things that we felt we have ever achieved. It also made us think that we would make

inventive and flashy super villains, if only we had Donald Trump's money... if we were Donald Trump we'd so do that.

We really recommend playing survival mode as there are consequences and more of a sense of purpose, especially for those trying to get into the game. Within survival mode you have to take a lot of things into account such as hunger, dangers and defence. Playing on the Vita just makes sense as you can spend hours at a time on it just building things. Stuck on the tube for a while? Finish off that giant dragon you got going on your front garden.

This is an updated version from the Pocket Edition previously released on the Vita. It has all of the updates the PS3 version has, bringing the full *Minecraft* experience. The biggest addition is that the world is much bigger, hitting invisible walls will take you a lot longer and the draw distance is incredible. But there are drawbacks – as the PS3 is more powerful, you will see some slowdown at times but it doesn't affect the gameplay too much.

It looks how *Minecraft* has always looked and the distinctive 3D pixel graphics are present with no changes despite being on a handheld console.

If you are tired of objective-based games where you're being told to kill this, shoot that, go to A and B etc, *Minecraft* is a refreshing experience for those that want to escape and truly enjoy a game down to its core. There's almost nothing else like it out there. It drives you to play on with rewarding gameplay and captures the imagination beautifully.



Crypt of the Necrodancer



Developer: Brace Yourself Games **Publisher:** Klei Entertainment **Where to Buy:** PlayStation Store **Price:** £9.49

It's rare when a game really grabs your attention and latches onto it like a rampaging monkey that's lost its bananas. Usually it's the mesmerising graphics you or compelling storyline. With *Crypt of the Necrodancer* it is the innovative gameplay and soundtrack that deserves a lot of praise.

Your protagonist is Cadence, the daughter of a famous treasure hunter who's gone missing. You guide her on a mission to find her father. But on her journey, a necrodancer steals her heart and challenges her to battle his minions to get it back. Cadence has to move through the dungeon to the beat, earn point multipliers, which are important to buy upgrades to get through the hardest sections. It's seriously ingenious how Brace Yourself Games got us playing an RPG mixed with a rhythm game. Think *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Legend of Zelda*, sprinkled with a bit of *Bomberman*.

Graphically it's 16-bit as seen from the glorious Super Nintendo days. But that isn't what grabs your attention, it's the rampaging and addictive beat of the soundtrack. This game is all about the music, it steals the show from the gameplay in pretty much the same style as Hotline Miami's soundtrack did. It's a euphoric experience. When we play, we're constantly nodding along and partially dancing when navigating through dungeons.



LEGO Marvel's Avengers



Developer: TT Games **Publisher:** Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment **Where to Buy:** In-Store **Price:** £14.99

Movie tie-ins are usually horrible. This is due to the short amount of time developers have to whip something passable together before the movie's release. *LEGO Marvel's Avengers* is thankfully not a victim of money-driven pushy executives. A lot of effort and love has gone into this game, which is evident in the small things like quips and jokes.

The storyline focuses primarily on the two films, *The Avengers* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, with defining moments from *Captain America*, *Iron Man 3* and *Thor* included. If you've been living under a rock this entire time and haven't seen the Marvel fest bestowed upon the world, you're in for a treat. If you're consumer of all things Marvel it's over-familiar.

On the Vita *LEGO Marvel's Avengers* looks quite close to its home console counterparts. It holds up really well, especially with the whole of New York City for you to explore. Controls are really tight with the second analogue stick being very handy for flying missions with Iron Man. What superhero game would it be without beating up bad guys? A bad one. Combat is tight thanks to the aforementioned controls but it's not all button bashing as a slight element of skill is needed. But it does get a bit repetitive. More original ideas and story elements would have made this game better, but still, not a bad effort from a film tie-in.

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 Jade

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £199

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 with bigger brands such as 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 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
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 2,100 mAh

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

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



Acer Z220

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £50

www.acer.co.uk

The Acer Z220 performs solidly as a communications device but anything extra-curricular is asking too much. Should you decide to purchase one, there are too many add-ons you have to buy externally, which defeats the purpose of a budget phone. If you're looking for a basic device that can connect to the internet, make calls and text, this could be for you.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor 1.2 GHz Qualcomm MSM8210 Dual-core
Screen 4.0-inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 125.3 x 64 x 9.6 mm
Weight 120g
Battery 1300mAh

VERDICT: A solid budget phone for calls and texts, but that's all it's really good for.

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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123 x 64.4 x 9.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,000 mAh

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 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 138 x 66.6 x 7.5mm
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

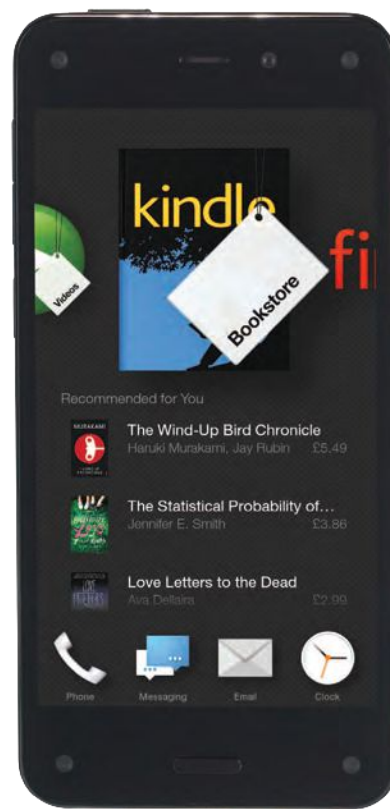
We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to 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 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

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

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 1280 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 2,400 mAh

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 8MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080
Connectivity 4G
Size 12.4 x 59.2 x 9mm
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, a 64-bit A7 chip and delivering 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 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing,

1.2MP 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
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

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 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138.1 x 67 x 6.9mm
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
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

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, while still beautiful, is slightly less sharp than its little brother's. Similarly it might be tough for smaller hands to hold. But then you do get to see more things on screen at once. It's still a remarkable phone though, make no mistake.

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

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

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

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



Apple iPhone 6s

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £539
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

The iPhone 6s may not offer that much to warrant an immediate upgrade but it still has enough new features to welcome new adopters to the platform. Force Touch genuinely works well and has plenty of future potential, while the hardware and low-light camera improvements make this more than just a simple cash cow.

OS iOS 9
Processor 1.84 GHz Dual Core Apple A9
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 12MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing

Video 4K at 30FPS
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138 x 67 x 7.1 mm
Weight 143g
Battery 1,712 mAh

VERDICT: Plenty of new features make this another sure-fire hit for Apple.

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



Archos 50 Helium

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £199
archos.com

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

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

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

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
Processor Dual-core 1.5GHz Krait
Screen 3.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p @ 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 131 x 72.4 x 10.2mm
Weight 177g
Battery 2,515 mAh

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 1440 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD 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 3,450 mAh

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 eye 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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 133 x 69 x 20mm
Weight 230g
Battery 2,800 mAh

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 3MP 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, while 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 5MP 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 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
MicroSD 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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 2MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 102 x 52 x 19mm
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
MicroSD 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 2,000 mAh

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

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
Processor 2.7 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.96 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 4K

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 82.98mm x 159.26mm x 10.06mm
Weight 184g
Battery 3,220 mAh

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

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



Honor 7

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £250
www.hihonor.com/en/pages/products/honor7

The Honor 7 is a solid handset that has the looks and appeal to captivate many buyers. It's got a great screen and impressive camera that has a few unique features up its sleeve. Unfortunately, it also suffers from mixed performance that seems to be a result of the Kirin chipset. If you're a keen mobile gamer, this could be an issue.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor Kirin 935 (8 cores: 2.2 GHz quad core + 1.5 GHz quad-core)
Screen 5.2-inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB
Storage 16GB/ 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Camera 20MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 143 x 72 x 8.5 mm
Weight 157g
Battery 3,100mAh

VERDICT: Great looks and impressive camera but performance could be an issue.

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



HTC Desire 626

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £150
www.htc.com/uk

The HTC Desire 626 is a solid handset that performs fine in most areas. Should you decide to purchase one, it will likely serve you very well under most conditions. The only problem arises from the £150 retail price, which puts it squarely in the firing line of budget superstars such as the Vodafone Smart Ultra 6. Had HTC priced it slightly cheaper, it may well have been worth more serious consideration.

OS Android 5.1
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 512GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 147 x 71 x 8.2 mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: There are better deals out there. Still, this is a perfectly capable phone.

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
MicroSD 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 820

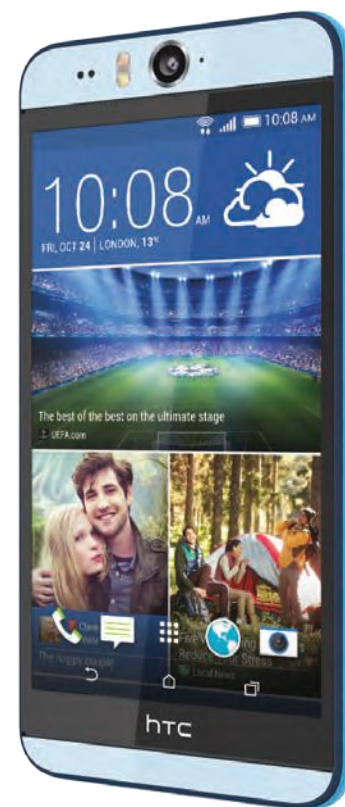
Reviewed: June 2015, price: £299
www.htc.com/uk

A large display, fantastic cameras and attractive design makes the HTC Desire 820 an ideal choice if you're after an affordable phone with plenty of features. It's only been let down by the fact that it doesn't pack an HD screen and that it doesn't run the latest Android software. It's also quite pricey compared to the OnePlus One; a phone that is a serious rival.

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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.7 x 78.7 x 7.7mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, attractive and packed full of features.

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



HTC Desire Eye

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

While 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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 13MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5mm
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 9.35mm
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 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5MP 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

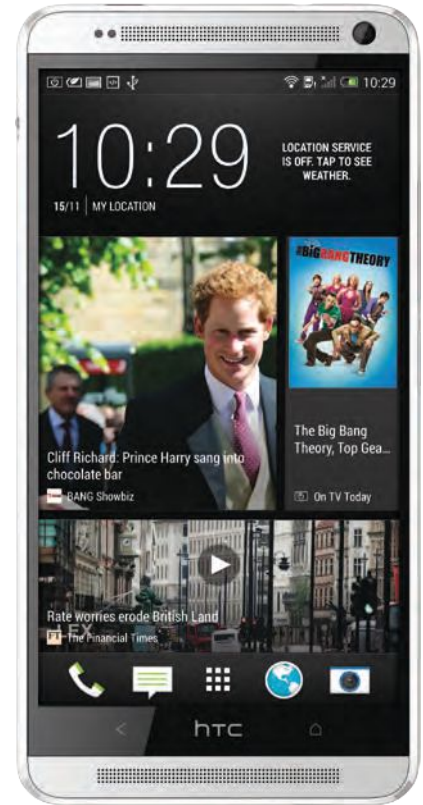
Reviewed: May 2015, price: £580
www.htc.com/uk

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 3GB RAM	Battery 2,840 mAh
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 3,300 mAh
Storage 16GB or 32GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1MP 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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

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

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 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing

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

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

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 its 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 1920 x 1080 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 2,500 mAh

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

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





Huawei P8

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £395
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An attractive device that gives you top-of-the-range specs and a fantastic camera for half the price of the Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone. The performance isn't as slick as its major rivals, but that isn't a deal breaker. Especially when the phone costs half the price of the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16/64GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 144x72x6.4mm
Weight 144g
Battery 2,680 mAh

VERDICT: Flagship specs for half the price of a Galaxy S6 or iPhone.

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



Huawei Honor 4x

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £144.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An affordable phone that offers solid battery life and plenty of features. The build quality even feels better than the LG G4, a smartphone that costs double its recommended retail price. Honor isn't a big name over in the West, but phones like the 4X are helping it head in that direction. It's just a shame that the processor is a little on the weak side.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor HiSilicon Kirin 620
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 153x77x8.7mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A solid phone at a bargain price, you'll be surprised at how good it looks.

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



Huawei Honor 6+

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £299.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

If you're after an affordable device with plenty of top-notch features, you can't really go wrong with the Huawei Honor 6+. The camera is unique, the performance is fantastic and battery life is better than more expensive phones. Its slow camera and inability to handle certain apps are only minor negatives – the Honor 6+ is well worth the money.

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2
Processor Kirin octo-core 925
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera Dual 8MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 151x76x7.5mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,600 mAh

VERDICT: A flagship phone with excellent battery life that doesn't break the bank.

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	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.7Ghz octa-core	Dimensions 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm
Screen 4.8 inches	Weight 95.5g
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels	Battery 2,050 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

VERDICT: Standout design and performance at an attractive price.

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



Kazam Thunder Q4.5

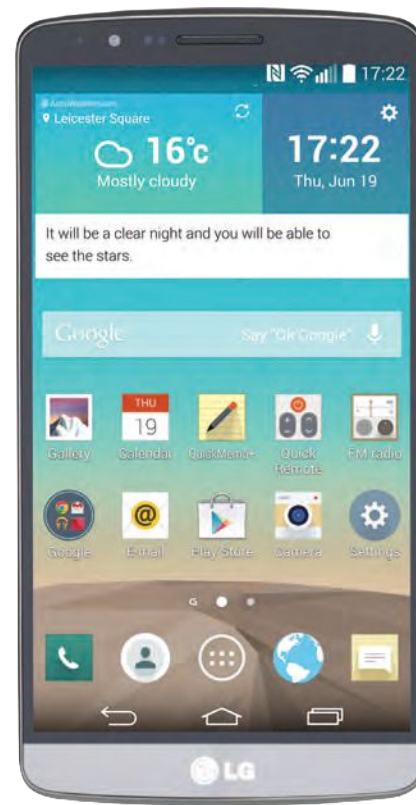
Reviewed: April 2014, price: £TBC
www.kazam.mobi

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	Connectivity 3G
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core	Dimensions 136 x 64.6 x 8.9mm
Screen 4.5 inches	Weight 137g
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels	Battery 1,800 mAh
Memory 1GB RAM	
Storage 1.74GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 720p	

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

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)	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core	Dimensions 146.3 x 74.6 x 8.9mm
Screen 5.5 inches	Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM	Weight 149g
Storage 16GB or 32GB	Battery 3,000 mAh
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing	
Video 2160p	

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

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





LG G4

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £500
www.lg.com/uk

The unique leather design and incredible camera certainly helps the LG G4 stand out against rivals like the iPhone 6. However, the fact it doesn't have the strongest processor on the market, alongside an average battery and awkward button placement, means it doesn't really stand up as a true iPhone and Galaxy smasher.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.4GHz quad core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 149 x 76 x 9.8mm
Weight 155g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A monster device let down by a weak processor. Not a Galaxy S6 killer.

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



LG G4c

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £229
www.lg.com/uk

The LG G4c is solidly average, with a few fun gimmicks that don't quite make up for the photo quality. For those who simply want a day-to-day workhorse, it is not a bad option, but it's not for those who are looking for something heavy-duty.

OS Android
Processor Quad-core 1.3 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280-pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.7 x 69.9 x 10.2 mm
Weight 139g
Battery 2,540 mAh

VERDICT: Solidly average for everyday use, but not for heavy-duty users.

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 believes 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 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

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

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

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





LG Spirit 4G

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £129.99
www.lg.com/uk

At only £129.99, there's little to criticise in this budget mid-range device that looks a lot like a shrunken down LG G4. It has enough performance for most users and comes with Android 5.0 right out of the box. The only problem is the weak front and rear cameras, which distract from an otherwise competent package.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.3 Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 133x66x10mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A competent mid-range device with Android Lollipop and good specs.

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 (1st Gen)

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 (2nd Gen)

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 2,070 mAh

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

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



Motorola Moto G 4G (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £150
www.motorola.co.uk

One of the best value smartphones on the market, the large display, 4G connectivity and latest Android operating software makes it well worth the price. Combine all of this with the phone's fantastic build quality and the Motorola Moto G 4G is well worth keeping after your contract expires.

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
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2390 mAh

VERDICT: Priced between £200-£400, this smartphone undermines the competition.

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



Motorola Moto G (3rd Gen)

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £159
www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola has done it again with another device that punches above its weight and mostly improves on its predecessor. Every area is catered for here, offering impressive battery life, a brilliant camera and adequate performance. If you're looking for a solid Android device that won't break the bank, the Moto G is worth consideration.

OS Android Lollipop v5.1.1
Processor 1.4 GHz Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible?
 Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142 x 72 x 11.6 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,470mAh

VERDICT: Solid device that offers perfectly fine performance across the board.

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





Motorola Moto X (2nd Gen)

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

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

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

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



Motorola Moto X (2014) (1st Gen)

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

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

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Connectivity 4G
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core	Dimensions 140.8 x 72.4 x 10mm
Screen 5.2 inches	Weight 144g
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels	Battery 2,300 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16/32GB	
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Video 2160p	

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

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



Nokia Asha 503

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £70
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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 5MP 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 435

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £40
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

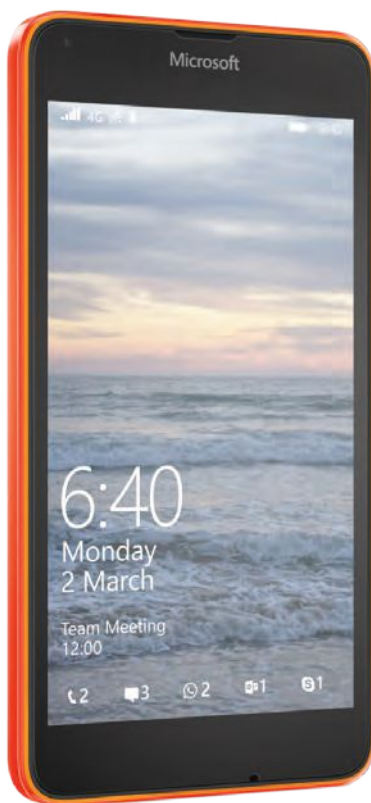
It won't shake the world but for 40 quid you can hardly expect it to. This is a very cheap phone that has all the features you would expect from more expensive handsets. While it doesn't excel in any particular area and the camera is pretty terrible, you'll be lucky if you find anything that performs this well for the price. A genuine bargain.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 800 x 480
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Cameras 2MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 480p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 118 x 65 x 11.7mm
Weight 131g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: A bargain-bin handset that still manages to run Windows Phone very well.

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



Nokia Lumia 640

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £109.99
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

It's incredible what Microsoft has managed to cram into such a cheap, inconspicuous phone. It has nailed all the major points internally, with a great camera, excellent battery and an adequate processor for the well-optimised Windows Phone OS. The only problem is Windows Phone itself, which still struggles to convince the sceptics.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 141 x 72 x 8.8mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: A brilliant battery and solid performance make this a bargain device.

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



Nokia Lumia 640 XL

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £180
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Although it is more expensive than the 640, you get the advantage of a much bigger screen and some seriously good battery life. The camera has also gotten a bump too, producing some excellent images for this price-point. It's just a shame that the processor hasn't been improved to complement them.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.9 x 81.5 x 9mm
Weight 171g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Not a huge leap up but the camera and battery are worth the money.

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





Nokia Lumia 735

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £299
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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
MicroSD 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 2,200 mAh

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

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



Nokia Lumia 830

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £267
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Nokia Lumia 830 is not quite the swansong 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
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 0.9MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5mm
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.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

With the Lumia 925 Nokia hasn't set out to reinvent the wheel, it has just built on its 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 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129 x 70.6 x 8.5mm
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.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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
MicroSD 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 2,420 mAh

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.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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 10.4mm
Weight: 158g
Battery 2,000 mAh

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.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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.

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

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

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





Nokia Lumia 1520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £550
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

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.

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

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

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



OnePlus One

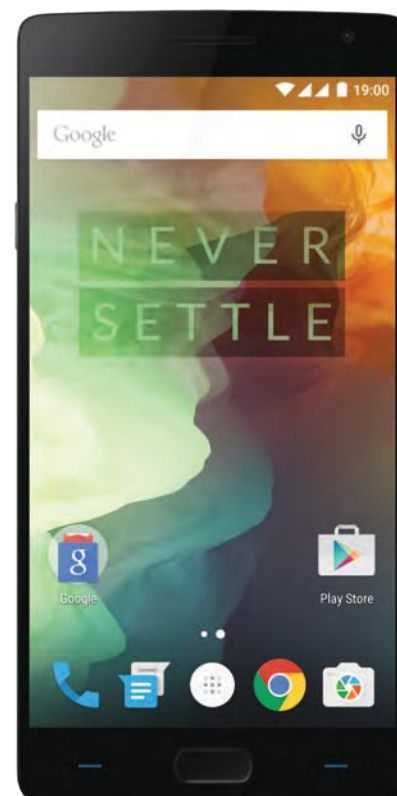
Reviewed: June 2015, price: £269
www.oneplus.net

If you're not bothered about Samsung, Apple or any of the other big brand names, then we highly recommend the OnePlus One. It offers class-leading specs for half the price of an iPhone 6 or Samsung Galaxy S6. That attractive price is topped off by excellent build quality and unlimited customisation options.

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
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
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

VERDICT: A top-spec smartphone for half the price of the iPhone 6? Yes please!

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



OnePlus Two

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £289
www.oneplus.net

With only its second device ever, OnePlus has knocked it out of the park with the OnePlus 2. It has improved a lot on the OnePlus One with the seemingly endless battery life, souped-up specs and, of course, the incredible price.

OS Lollipop v5.1
Processor Quad-core 1.56 GHz and 1.82, Snapdragon 810
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels (401 ppi pixel density)
Memory 4GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 2160p@30fps, 720p@120fps
Connectivity 3G & 4G
Dimensions 151.8 x 74.9 x 9.9 mm
Weight 175 g
Battery Non-removable 3300 mAh

VERDICT: A phone so affordable for the specs on offer it would be foolish to pass up.

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





Panasonic Lumix DMC-CM1

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £799
www.panasonic.com/uk/consumer

This is by no means a cheap device but you most definitely get what you pay for. Considering when it first released, the Panasonic DMC-CM1 had flagship specifications and a true camera sensor to match even the best compact/bridge cameras. Fast forward to now and little has changed; this is still the best camera phone you can get and by quite some distance

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2 (upgradable to 5.0)
Processor 2.3 GHz Snapdragon 801
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 128GB
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.1MP front-facing
Video 2160p (15fps only)
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 135.4 x 68 x 21.1 mm
Weight 204g
Battery 2,600mAh

VERDICT: If you've got the wallet and pocket space for it, you'll be blown away.

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



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

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



Samsung Galaxy A7

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £319.99
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy A7 is an attractive proposition. But looks aren't everything. The cheaper £269 OnePlus One offers more power, a similar screen size and up-to-date software. And the £129 Vodafone Smart 4 Max with a bigger screen is less than half the price. If it's about power, not just looking powerful, perhaps look elsewhere.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.5GHz Quad-core
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 151 x 76.2 x 6.3mm
Weight 141g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An attractive device but it has less power than similar devices.

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

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

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



Samsung Galaxy K Zoom

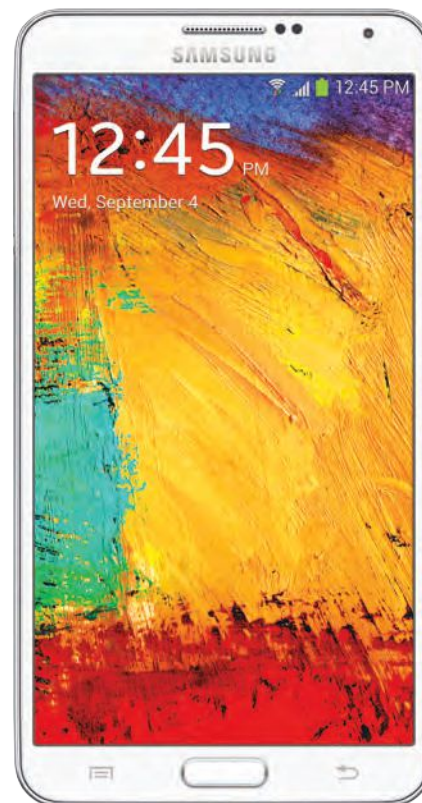
Reviewed: October 2014, price: £400
www.samsung.com/uk

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

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

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	Dimensions 151.2 x 79.2 x 8.3mm
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core	Weight 168g
Screen 5.7 inches	Battery 3,200 mAh
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels	
Memory 3GB RAM	
Storage 16/32/64GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP front-facing, 2MP rear-facing	
Video 4K	

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
MicroSD 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 3,220 mAh

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 3,000 mAh

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

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 9.9mm
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 7.9mm
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 9.1mm
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 142mm x 72.5mm x 8.1mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,800 mAh

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

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





Samsung Galaxy S6 edge

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £760
www.samsung.com/uk

This is currently one of the best looking smartphones on the market. That dual-curved screen makes the iPhone 6 Plus and HTC One M9 look boring in comparison. An insanely fast camera and superb performance means that the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge isn't just about looks either.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420
Screen 5.1-inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 16MP rear-facing 5MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.11 x 70.1 x 7mm
Weight 132g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: A phone that grabs attention with both its looks and performance.

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 MicroSD
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports MicroSD, microUSB
Battery 3000mAh
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 is your only choice, and a great one at that. Sony has 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 3,200 mAh

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
MicroSD 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 3,100 mAh

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
MicroSD 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 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: The definitive small-sized Android smartphone. The most powerful yet.

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





Vodafone Smart 4 Max

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £129.99
www.vodafone.co.uk

If you crave a 6-inch 4G phablet for the equivalent of £2.50 a week over a year the Smart 4 Max is the only game in town. Purists will sneer at its elderly processor, low-res screen and lack of 'Lollipop'. You'll be the one with around £400 more in your bank account. Just bear in mind it can only connect to Vodafone 4G network and you can't remove the Vodafone embedded software.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Snapdragon MSM8926
Screen 6-inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 164x83.4x7.9mm

Weight 170g
Battery 3,800 mAh

VERDICT: A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

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 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141 x 71.4 x 9.5mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Poor specs distract from what is an ergonomic and capable 4G starter.

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



Vodafone Smart Ultra 6

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £125
www.vodafone.co.uk

Packing a fast processor, excellent screen and plenty of battery life, you'll be hard-pressed to find a rival phone which offers quite this much for the money. Even the camera is pretty good, offering full manual controls and a high megapixel count. If you're after a true bargain Android device and are happy to forgo the big brands, this is well worth a look.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 1.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p 30fps

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 154 x 77 x 8.4mm
Weight 159g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Excellent specs and great battery life make this seriously good value.

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





Wileyfox Swift

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £129
www.wileyfox.com

A good budget handset that struggles to stand out from the crowd, the Wileyfox Swift faces stiff competition from the likes of Motorola. Punch-for-punch, it has features to match similar handsets but the difficulty of being an entirely new brand will make it hard to claw loyal fans away from other devices.

OS Android (Cyanogen 12.1)
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing
Video 1080p at 30fps

Connectivity Dual-SIM, 4G
Dimensions 141.15mm x 71mm x 9.37mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: A solid performer that can't quite make itself stand out from the rest.

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 2,000 mAh

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 2,500 mAh

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
MicroSD 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 for you.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor Snapdragon S4 Play
Screen 480 x 800, 4 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Camera 5MP
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 ★★★★★



ZTE Blade S6

Reviewed: August 2015 price: £169.99
www.ztedevices.co.uk

The ZTE Blade S6 is definitely more than just a cheap iPhone 6 rip off. A decent camera helps it stand out from the rest of the mid-range crowd, while performance is surprisingly decent for a phone of this price. It's let down by poor build quality and software that lacks certain features. The price is the most attractive, however, and those negatives shouldn't put you off this decent mid-range phone.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor Snapdragon 615
Screen 5-inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 144 x 70.7 x 7.7mm
Weight 154g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: An affordable phone with surprisingly decent performance.

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 8.8mm	RAM 1GB RAM
OS Customized Android 4.0	Storage 16GB/32GB
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 that 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 4,600 mAh
MicroSD 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
- Screen** 1902 x 1200 pixels, 7 inches
- Processor** Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core
- Memory** 2GB RAM
- Storage** 16/ 32/64GB versions available
- Camera** 8MP front-facing
- Video** 720HD
- Wireless** Wi-fi (optional Vodafone 4G version)
- Ports** microUSB
- Dimensions** 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9mm
- 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 that 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 16/32/64GB 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 9.4mm
Weight 662 g

VERDICT: The best tablet money can buy.

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



Archos 79 Platinum

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £150
www.archos.com

With so many budget tablets to choose from the Archos 79 Platinum has no features or unique selling points to attract the consumer in a saturated market. Its hardware is woefully underpowered, its features are bog standard and it is at least £10 too expensive. Its attractive looks are not enough to redeem it. The bottom line is that it should have never been conceived.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean **Weight** 366g
Processor Quad-core A9 **Battery** Lithium Polymer 1.6GHz
Screen 7.85 inches
Resolution 1024 x 768 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 2MP rear-facing
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth
Dimensions 201 x 137 x 8mm

VERDICT: There is no reason you ever would, or should, buy it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

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



Archos 101 XS 2

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250
www.archos.com

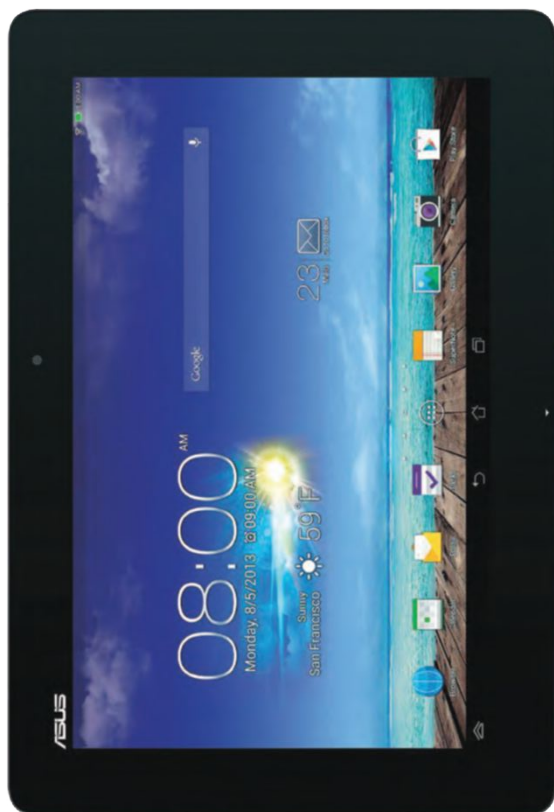
A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

OS Android 4.2.2 **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-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video Record/playback

Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Memory 32/64GB

Battery Tablet 31Wh, dock 16Wh



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



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)

Dimensions 263.9 x 177.6 x 8.9mm, 603g

Screen 10 inch

Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels

Input Super PLS TFT

capacitive touch-screen

CPU Exynos 5, Dual-core ARM

Cortex-A15

RAM 2GB

Cameras 5MP (main), 1.9MP (front)

Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth

NFC Android Beam

Storage 16GB/32GB

Connectivity Micro

USB, Micro HDMI, 3.5mm

headphone jack

Battery 9,000 mAh

VERDICT: It packs fast hardware but can't compete with the iPad Air or Nexus range

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



VERDICT: The best tablet on the market – if you insist on Android, that is.

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



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
Processor Dual-core 1.6 GHz Cortex-A9
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7.0 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB expandable to 32GB via SD card
Camera 3.15MP pixel rear-facing, VGA front-facing

Video 720p
Dimensions 197.1 x 116.1 x 10.7mm
Weight 372 g
Battery non-removable, 5h media time

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
Processor 2.4GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1200 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 8.83 x 5.2 x 0.35 inches
Weight 439g

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 4,730 mAh

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 10.1inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 4G optional
Dimensions 255 x 183 x 7.2mm
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/1920 x 1080 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
Processor 1.5GHz Intel core i3/2.9GHz Intel core i5/3.7GHz Intel core i7
Screen 12 inches
Resolution 2160 x 1440 pixels
Memory 4/8GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 292.1mm x 201.4mm x 9.1mm
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
Screen 10.1 inches, 1920 x 1080 pixels, 218PPI
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Memory 2GB
Camera 6.7MP with Carl Zeiss lens
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Dimensions 168 x 267 x 8.9mm, 615g
Battery 8120 mAh

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
Processor Dual-core 1.2GHz
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB, expandable up to 64GB
Camera 3.15MP (back), 1.3MP (front)
Video 720p@30fps

Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0
Ports micro-USB, MicroSD
Dimensions 188 x 111.1 x 9.9mm
Weight 306g
Battery Li-Ion 4,000 mAh

VERDICT: A little too premium for the market it is 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.

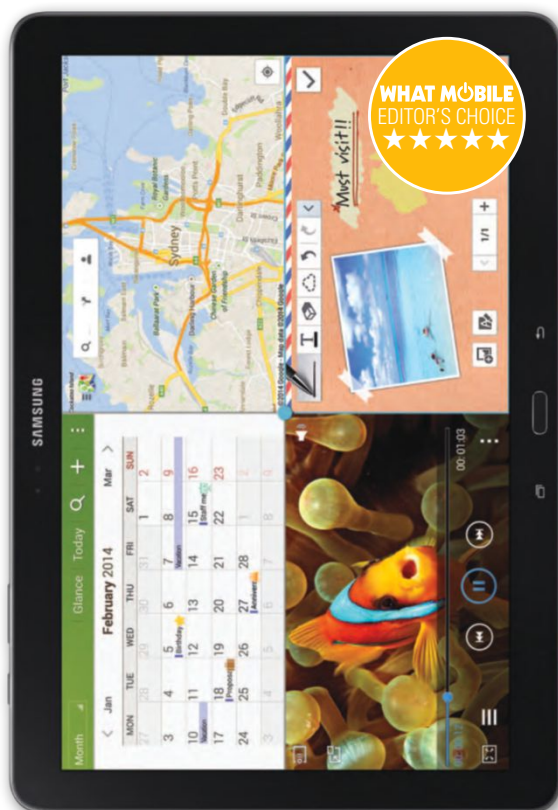
OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8.4 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB, 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 125.6 x 212.8 x 6.6mm
Weight 294g
Battery 4,900 mAh

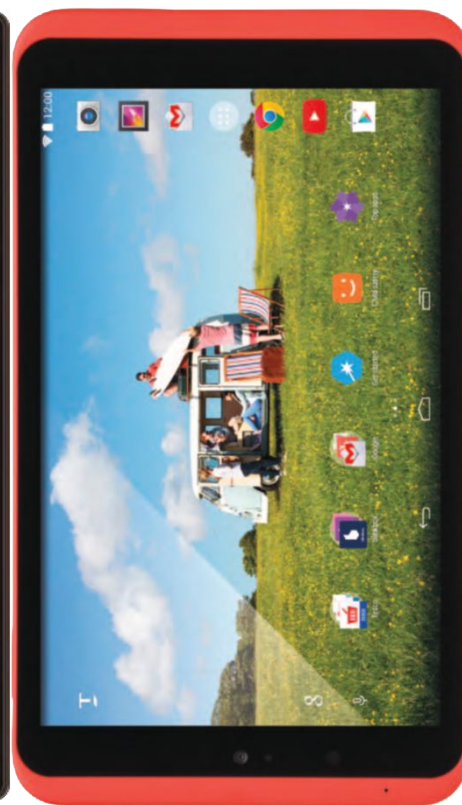
VERDICT: Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

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





WHAT MOBILE EDITOR'S CHOICE
★★★★★



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 2560 x 1600 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 9,500 mAh

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

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



Sony Xperia Z4 Tablet

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £499
www.sony.co.uk

The Sony Xperia Z4 is a beautifully engineered tablet with more than enough power to run even the most demanding app smoothly. Unfortunately, while slimline and lightweight, its listed price of £499.00 is surprisingly high for its provided specifications. Powerful but pricey.

OS Android 5.0 (Lollipop)
Processor Octa-core 2.0 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 810, 64 bit
Screen 10.1 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
up to 128GB
Camera 8.1MP rear-facing, 5.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G, Wi-Fi
Dimensions 167 x 254 x 6.1 mm
Weight 393g
Battery 6,000 mAh

VERDICT: Beautifully engineered, slimline tablet but pricey considering specification.

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



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.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.83GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity Wi-fi
Dimensions 224 x 128 x 9mm
Weight 410g
Battery 4,900 mAh

VERDICT: Don't be fooled – Tesco is now a serious contender in the tablet space.

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





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 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: It's got a cheap price tag but the poor display and tech shows why.

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



Vodafone Smart Tab 4G

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £125
www.vodafone.co.uk

Attractive, cheap and feature-packed; the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G looks more upmarket than its affordable £125 pricing suggests. It's let down by a slow processor, but that shouldn't put you off what is basically well-designed and ideal family tablet.

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 1.2 GHz Quad-Core
Screen 8.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 800-pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Connectivity GSM/EDGE/3G/4G/HSPA+/LTE
Dimensions 209 x 128 x 7.99mm
Weight 309g
Battery 4060 mAh

VERDICT: An affordable and easy-to-use tablet that offers something for everyone.

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



Vodafone Smart Tab 6

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £150
www.vodafone.co.uk

The Smart Tab 6 is definitely cheap but we'd suggest looking elsewhere for a good budget tablet. The screen isn't that great and performance can't quite keep up with more intensive tasks and games. It has a large battery and the build quality is definitely better than the price suggests, but these points aren't enough to redeem what is an average tablet at best.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop
Processor Quad-core 1.3GHz
Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 9.6 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB, expandable up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 4.1
Ports micro-USB, MicroSD
Dimensions 146 x 244 x 7.9mm
Weight 406g
Battery Li-Ion 4,600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap but not quite good enough to worry the competition.

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.

OS Android Wear
Processor Snapdragon 400 1.2GHz
Screen 1.63 inches
Resolution 320 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? No

Camera N/A
Video N/A
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 51 x 39.9 x 9.4mm
Weight 75g
Battery 369mAh

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



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 addict's 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.

OS N/A
Processor N/A
Screen N/A
Resolution N/A

Memory N/A
Storage N/A
Camera N/A

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



Vector Smartwatch

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £80
www.vectorwatch.com

An ambitious attempt to inject some much-needed class into the smartwatch. It's beautiful. But the level of interactivity is minimal and its software lacking. Ultimately, we came away wondering what a Pebble Time with Vector's hardware and battery life might be like. We can only hope this becomes just that, but the company has a long road to travel first.

OS Custom
Storage No
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera No
Video No

Connectivity Bluetooth LE
Dimensions 44 x 44 x 11mm
Weight 142g
Battery 30 days

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



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.

OS Android Wear
Processor Snapdragon 400 1.2GHz
Screen 1.3 inches
Resolution 320 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? No

Camera No
Video No
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 46.4 x 53.6 x 9.7mm
Weight 62g
Battery 410mAh

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



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

Display 1.63-inch Super AMOLED (320 x 320)

Dimensions 36.9 x 58.4 x 10.0mm, 68g

Processor 1GHz dual-core

Memory 512MB + 4GB storage

Battery 300mAh; 2 to 3 days'

average usage

Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0, IR

Water resistance Rated IP67

Camera 2MP, 720p, 30fps video

OS Tizen-based OS

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



Fitbit Flex

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £79.99
www.fitbit.com

Minor niggles aside, the Fitbit Flex is possibly the best fitness wearable on the market. Its features are so diverse, and its app so beautiful and intuitive, that it can be tailored to just about anyone's lifestyle. With interchangeable bands in a variety of colours, and a low price, the Flex is practically a must-buy.

OS N/A
Processor N/A
Screen N/A
Resolution N/A
Memory N/A

Storage N/A
Camera N/A

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



Microsoft Band 2

Reviewed: January 2016, price: £199
http://www.microsoftstore.com/

Microsoft really believes that wearables are the future. It has banked quite heavily on fitness devices with lots of sensors and the Band 2 is its next iteration of this. Retailing at £199, it is by no means cheap but offers more sensors than any other device currently on the market. The main question is, has it solved the issues that plagued the original?

OS Custom Windows Phone OS
Number of sensors 11
Processor N/A
Screen 1.26 x 0.50 inches
Resolution 320 x 128 pixels
Memory N/A

Storage N/A
Connectivity Bluetooth
Dimensions 159 x 78 x 7.3 mm
Weight N/A
Battery 48 hours

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



Samsung Galaxy Gear S2

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £649
www.samsung.com/uk

The Gear S2 Classic is a device you'll definitely wear daily and won't be bored of any time soon. But Samsung needs to make due on its promise of apps to establish itself as king of the wearables. That said, Samsung has provided us with an excellent smartwatch that is arguably the best on the market.

OS Tizen
Processor Exynos 3250
Screen 1.2 inches
Resolution 360 x 360 pixels
Memory 512MB
Storage 4GB

MicroSD compatible? No
Connectivity Wi-Fi
Dimensions 43.6 x 39.9 x 11.4 mm
Weight 42g
Battery 250 mAh

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



Wearable compatibility guide



LG
G Watch R



Pebble
Watch



Samsung
Gear Live



Sony
Smartwatch 3



Garmin
Vivofit



Archos
Activity Tracker



iPhone
6 / 6 plus



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One M8



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Galaxy S5



Sony Xperia
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