

## Mobile World Congress highlights

What was hot at the show this year?

by Stuart Miles published on 14 February 2008

With the World Mobile Congress over for another year, what took my fancy at the show where virtually every major mobile phone manufacturer launched new models?

I think the outright winner has to be Sony Ericsson. The company launched so many phones that looked appealing that they will be hard to beat over the next 6 months.

Whether it was music, camera or business, the offerings in the guise of the X1, the C902 and the W980 will give plenty to consumers.

Nokia's N96 looked equally impressive and certainly an improvement, if not merely a refining, of the Nokia N95.

What was interesting however is that although the N96 looked ready to ship, fans will have to wait almost 6 more months before it becomes available. Has Nokia listened to build quality concerns when it rushed out the N95? It appears so.

Samsung's tactics however appear to be different from those of Nokia and Sony Ericsson.

Hoping to drive sales against a market likely to be heavily affected by an impending recession, the Korean company's plans seem clear: make more phones.

Launching eight designs, with an emphasis on sound and touch, the company is putting most of its faith in the Samsung Soul.

The phone features a touchscreen d-pad that changes depending on what application is running. It is well-built and should sell in bucket loads.

One thing that was apparent at the show was the



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trouble Motorola is in. With just one new handset, adding Wi-Fi to an existent model, the company looks to be struggling and struggling hard.

But it's not just handsets that were being launched. There was plenty of new tech that promises to change the industry moving forward.

Google's Android platform was on display on a number of chipset manufacturers' stands and the operating system will certainly give Apple a run for its money with the interface.

Quick, zippy and graphically lush on technology that isn't cutting edge, this is likely to give manufacturers like Sony Ericsson, Nokia and Samsung the tools to challenge Apple in the interface stakes.

Elsewhere the buzzword on the show floor was the rather feminine sounding Femtocell, a technology that promises to bring perfect 3G coverage in your home.

Due to launch in the UK in 2009 and currently being trialled on O2, the technology has the power to change the entire industry and how we interact with our phones around the home.

More interestingly it also opens up the possibility of new players like Google or Apple entering the operator market.

The show also demonstrated that the market still has plenty of room for innovation with companies like Garmin looking to enter the arena with a GPS phone, a company called Modu launching a modular-based phone system with different jackets for different tasks and one Indian company even going as far as creating a phone with built-in DVD player.

The show was also big on prototypes this year, with stuff from Japanese operator DoCoMo being the strangest. The company was demoing a phone with a bad breath reader and another that

allowed you to open and lock your front door.

Texas Instruments meanwhile had a newer working version of its Pico projector, while one of the most interesting devices on show was RADIUS, a RSS reader complete with foldable LCD display.

The result is a Mobile World Congress that has shown the world of mobile phones is looking forward to an exciting year in 2008, well, unless you're Motorola, that is.