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Mobile phone prototype Onyx dispenses with buttons and keys

Intuitive touch screen makes controls defunct

by Amber Maitland published on 25 August 2006

A prototype phone design by Synaptics and Pilotfish opens up a new way of interacting with a mobile phone. By combining Synaptics ClearPad touch screen technology with a unique user interface, the designers of the prototype, dubbed Onyx, have done away with buttons and switches so that the user must rely on the touch screen of the mobile. The ClearPad recognises points, taps, and gestures, as well as proximity, so that a phone call can be answered simply by holding the mobile to your ear. Two-finger taps can produce different results to one-finger taps; applications can be closed by drawing an "X" over them; messages are sent by swiping them off the screen. The designers also ensured that applications like phone, GPS, music, and calendar events work simultaneously and seamlessly. Unfortunately, Onyx will not be coming to a store near you anytime soon, although ClearPad technology is expected to be available to developers by the end of this year.

