

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/1785/lobster-700-tv-mobile-phone>

## Virgin Lobster 700 TV mobile phone

TV goes mobile - but does it work?

by Stuart Miles published on 19 September 2006

Although you have been able to watch TV on your mobile for over a year now via your mobile phone network, the Virgin Mobile's Lobster 700 TV mobile phone, or Tellyphone if you come from a marketing department, is the first handset in the UK to offer such as feature without users having to incur data costs.

At the crux of the device is a DAB digital tuner that means the phone can tune in to over 50 radio channels and currently three simulcast television channels; BBC One, ITV1 and E4 as well as Channel 4, which currently only offers made-for-mobile TV programmes.

Looking like a lobster's claw, the Lobster 700 TV features a large portrait 2.2 inch screen and a direct TV button that also doubles as the interactive button for those "push the red button moments".

Large in size and weight (it's 140 grams and bigger than the early 3G handsets) the phone also offers a 1.3 megapixel camera, tri-band connectivity and is powered by Microsoft Windows Mobile.

As long as you are in a DAB area (currently a reported 85% of the UK) then chances are, say Virgin Mobile, you'll be able to get a signal and enjoy the likes of Eastenders and Coronation Street on the move.

Signal is achieved by the Lobster 700 TV's headphone cable doubling up as the aerial to boost reception and while the use the cable is an obvious one, in a world where more of us are using Bluetooth headsets the need to go back to wires is rather frustrating.

Wire grumbles aside, in our tests we had hugely differing results when it came to tuning in. Stay in one place and as long as you've got coverage



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you can lock on to a signal and watch television to your heart's content. However, as soon as you start moving, like on a bus or a train for example (you aren't going to want to watch this while walking), things start to go downhill.

The problem, like all portable DAB radio players, is that once you start to lose the signal, the signal doesn't just get worse as with FM, it goes altogether. It's either there or its not and so we found that we saw the "Lost Signal" message showing on our screen more than we would have liked. It is especially annoying if you are just about to hear who slept with who before the famous drums come in at the end of Eastenders.

Strangely, and this must be due to data issues, the signal isn't so unforgiving with the radio part of the DAB tuner, although prone to the same problems, considerably more robust.

Virgin Mobile offers the mobile TV phone and service for free for customers on a contract of £25 a month or more, for the life of their contract. The phone is available on pre-pay for £199, when the service will be free for an initial 3-month period, followed by a charge of £5 a month. BBC One will be available on a trial basis for 12 months and will be provided free to consumers regardless.

## VERDICT

As a concept, we love TV on your mobile to kill 5 minutes waiting for a train or Mrs Pocket-lint to get ready, and like garlic bread, as Peter Kay would say, "It's the future". However, for now in September 2006, the Lobster 700 TV is a disappointment.

The biggest problem we found, wasn't the battery life - that was actually very good, it was locking on to a signal to get TV.

If you can do this, then its great and you'll only find yourself grumbling about how bloody big the phone is. However, in our tests around London, Ascot and everywhere in between, we found that

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Mobile phone with DAB TV tuner

### Good

TV on the go, no data costs, easy to access

### Bad

Large, need a good signal, have to have headphones in to work as aerial

### Verdict

One to look out for, but for us getting a signal was too hit and miss

**Price** price dependent on contract

**Our score**

**6/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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getting a decent reception was very hit and miss (however in these areas we could access TV over mobile with no problem).

One to look out for, but if you must be at the cutting edge of the mobile phone world, make sure you can test it in your area first.