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Palm Treo 680 smartphone

Palm goes budget with the Treo

by Stuart Miles published on 5 January 2007

Palm's latest Treo handset - the Palm Treo 680 promises the same form factor as its Treo 750v model launched last year but without the 3G connectivity and without the Windows Mobile 5 operating system.

It's a sort of cheaper, less punchy, version for those still wanting to use the Palm OS and not really fussed about having 3G connectivity to surf the web or download your emails.

The Treo 680 smartphone is the fourth smartphone launched by Palm in 2006 and comes hot on the heels of the recently announced 3G enabled Treo 750v smartphone, Palm's business-oriented smartphone for Europe, that's still awaiting a US launch.

Like the 750v the Treo 680 sports a full QWERTY keyboard, a 320 x 320 screen and loses the stubby aerial on the top. However is quad-band rather than 3G.

Size wise, it's identical to the 750v however while we could forgive the 750v due to its 3G connectivity, here the Treo 680 comes across as a rather bulky phone that won't offer you that speed as a "sorry I'm so large" consolidation.

However due to a more curvier design your hand will wrap around it naturally and the Treo 680 loses that lovely dark-blue soft touch rubber paint used on the outside of the device that made it so very touchy feely to hold.

In use we found the small buttons on the QWERTY still difficult to use and certainly harder to use over the flatter keypads found on other smart phone devices such as the HP 6915, Samsung i320 and the BlackBerry devices.

Other features include a built-in camera with a maximum still image resolution of 640 x 480



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pixels compared to the 750v 1.3-megapixel digital camera, Pocket Tunes rather than Windows Media Player 10 Mobile for music and video, Bluetooth connectivity but no Wi-Fi, 64MB of memory expandable to up to 2GB with memory cards via the Mini-SD expansion slot.

The Palm user interface allows users to respond to calls with preset text messages, add new numbers easily to contacts, and carry out three-way conference calls. While text messages can be displayed more like IM conversations in a threaded chat.

VERDICT

Like the 750v Palm is hoping to stem the huge success of RIM's BlackBerry, especially the company's consumer friendly BlackBerry Pearl with the 680 however compared to both the handset is a let down.

Why? Because the form factor is over large, the qwerty keyboard awkward to use and the camera lacking the now defacto megapixel count.

If you can muster up the extra cash and must have a Treo then the 750v the one for you.

However the smartphone world moves so fast that there is now such a choice, that Treo, especially with this model is fast falling behind the times.

At a glance

What is it?

Palm smartphone

Good

QWERTY keyboard, quad-band

Bad

Digital camera not up to standard, keyboard fiddly to use, bulky

Verdict

If you can muster up the extra cash and must have a Treo then the opt for the 750v rather than this 680

Price price dependent on contract

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10