

Sony Ericsson W950 mobile phone

Have the Walkman brand found its calling?

by Stuart Miles published on 9 April 2007

Blurring the boundaries between mobile phones and MP3 players even further, Sony Ericsson's W950 is a phone that carries a hidden secret; a 4GB flash drive for storing music. But it is this good enough to replace two devices with one? We take a closer look.

Taking elements from the company's smartphone M600 model, the W950 is a flat fairly large phone.

At the core of the design is a large touchscreen display although Sony Ericsson has still kept a full number pad directly below this. The actual keys are hidden under the casing and we found this made it difficult to determine where one started and the other finished. While on the whole this wasn't really an issue it at times ended up with the wrong button being pressed. Very frustrating.

Also irritating as a right handed person is Sony Ericsson's decision to move the back key found on all its models to the side of the device next to the toggle wheel. We say irritating because is located on the left hand side of the device rather than the right BlackBerry users will be familiar with. It's the same with the M600i and it would be interesting to see if the lead designer on both was a lefty or righty. We suspect he is a righty.

Get into the interface and the phone's menu system is virtually the same as every other Sony Ericsson handset with a couple of tweaks to accommodate that touchscreen. The homepage opts for a PDA-esque approach giving you quick checks on SMS messages, emails and phone calls, while the menu button takes you through to other options such as the music player.

The music offering is powered by Sony Ericsson's Walkman player and accessing tracks on the drive was just like having a large memory stick in



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your card slot. Accessing tunes, thanks to the flash memory rather than hard drive is very quick and as a music player the overall performance and ease of use is great.

VERDICT

The payoff for the 3G and that 4GB flash drive? There's no digital camera.

Also, while living with the phone we did experience issues on more than one occasion with the unit freezing on us.

Sometimes this resulted in it doing nothing and then after numerous button pressing spending the next 30 seconds running through them - a bit like Windows does - or us having to turn the phone off and re-boot so to speak.

Talking to other W950 users we got mixed feedback. Some saying they had never experienced any problems while two said that they had been a victim of the freezing screen as well.

OS issues aside, while the phone does offer a good amount of storage and good playback, we just aren't smitten with the half hearted PDA design.

It's not powerful enough to want to be a PDA to replace your BlackBerry, Palm or iPaq and not straight laced enough to be a small phone to fit in your pocket. Mixed opinions all round then.

At a glance

What is it?

4GB music phone

Good

4GB of storage, touchscreen

Bad

Keypad not great, toggle wheel and back button on the wrong side for right handed users, no digital camera

Verdict

It might have plenty of storage, but the W950 can't decide whether it's just music phone or a PDA

Price Price dependent on contract

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10