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Motorola Q 9 smartphone

Can Moto take on BlackBerry and Palm?

by Stuart Miles published on 17 May 2007

Email on the go was once just reserved for busy bee workers unable to switch off, now it seems we all want to check our emails on the go. Well that's what Motorola is hoping with the launch of the latest edition of its popular (Stateside) Q handset.

Sporting Windows Mobile 6 and a thin, but wide design even Samsung would be proud of, does it have what it takes to unseat BlackBerry? We get tapping to find out.

The original Q, never released in the UK, might have been claimed by Motorola as being popular, but that hasn't stopped the company changing virtually every element for this version. A new keyboard, better specs and a complete overhaul on the design means the offering is more in line with other smartphones from the likes of BlackBerry and Samsung.

The new slimmer, but wide form factor accommodates a large colour screen, newly designed QWERTY keyboard and a number of other shortcut and menu keys around the unit.

Going, in our mind, over-the-top on the shortcut options there appears to be a number of ways to do a small amount of tasks. The biggest affect this has it to make the device unnecessarily large, while at the same time making the space bar exceptionally small. Do you really need a dedicated keys for your calendar and contacts book in addition to the d-pad, email, music, camera, volume and web buttons?

The keyboard itself is very dry to touch (it's a matt material), flat, but curved - similar to the BlackBerry keyboard and therefore very easy to use compared to the Palm 750, which we found prickly to touch. Size wise and the Q9 sits around the same size as RIM's 8800 model, but



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thinner.

Aping BlackBerry, before it opted to move away from the rocker switch on the side to the pearl interface, Motorola has opted for a three-button affair at the side of the unit for accessing menus - again a bit of a button overkill.

However unlike the BlackBerry, the Motorola Q 9 offers a microSD slot which is hot swappable and will certainly appeal to those hoping to take advantage of the phones MP3 player capabilities, or 2 megapixel camera (there's an additional front facing camera for video calling).

Get inside and the phone sports HSDPA connectivity for decent websurfing on the go as well as running on Microsoft's new Windows Mobile 6 operating system.

For those that are interested, tech specs include a TI OMAP 2420 processor and 96MB of RAM with USB2 for fast syncing and 256MB of on-board flash memory.

To be honest all you have to know is that it runs without glitches, is adequate in its performance and has enough memory to get you started with the multimedia features of the handset.

Motorola says the Q 9 is about enticing new customers rather than focusing on getting people to switch from RIM's BlackBerry or Palm's Treo handsets with 90% of the customers of the original device being new to the smartphone market rather than switchers.

So it's all about simplicity then? Well Microsoft's Windows Mobile 6 isn't the easiest software to work with and we had issues setting up our email on the unit along with other areas (you can set up BlackBerry connect on it for email if you like). If you're used to a Windows Mobile 5 device you should be fine, however we do still personally prefer the BlackBerry interface.

VERDICT

Having lived with the phone for three weeks
Pocket-lint.com, the premier gadget news and reviews website in the UK

At a glance

What is it?

QWERTY keyboard Smartphone

Good

Screen, keyboard, hot swappable memory card, HSDPA

Bad

Windows Mobile 6, large

Verdict

Some nice features, but a large design for a consumer focused handset

Price Price dependent on contract

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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before it was announced on the 16 May in the UK we've warmed to the handset from our initial first impressions however don't feel that its as easy to use as we would have liked it to be.

It is stylish it is looks and the Windows Mobile 6 interface will appeal, but for us, we still prefer the BlackBerry. Now where's that Curve?