

O2 Cocoon mobile phone - First Look

Can O2 produce the goods with its new music phone

by Stuart Miles published on 14 June 2007

At the O2 wireless festival, mobile phone operator O2 has announced a new music-focused mobile phone, which it hopes will steal Sony Ericsson's Walkman range's thunder, but can the operator pull it off? Pocket-lint was given the chance to have a first look at the new handset; the O2 Cocoon.

Looking decidedly different and like no phone we've ever seen before, the clamshell design which measures 94 x 49 x 21mm (L x W x H) is minimalist and retro in its styling and will certainly draw glances in the pub. Encased in white plastic, the simplistic design focuses on being an MP3 player first and a mobile phone second. This emphasis however is completely reversed once you open the handset and O2, has managed to create a really good balance between the two.

Design wise, and the Cocoon will certainly raise some eyebrows. The design, which appears flush at first glance hides a blue LED display under its pure white casing and a series of dedicated buttons on either side for the music player.

Unopened and the phone looks more like an MP3 player out of a futuristic movie than a mobile phone and that blue LED display shines through the casing. It certainly looks cool from the outset.

Volume for the player is controlled via a very retro dial as you used to find on a portable cassette player although volume information is displayed via those LED lights.

The button panel on one of the sides offers the usual array of play, pause, fastforward and reverse while the other side offers a hot swappable microSD slot to complement the already impressive 2GB internal memory that is capable of holding 500 songs.



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Press the button and the track information of your song scrolls along like information on a ticker tape and even pressing pause gives you the word "Pause" making it easy to impress your mates.

According to O2, focus groups when designing the phone said they mostly used their phone as an alarm clock, and so with this in mind, O2 has bundled a docking station with the phone that allows you to stand it on its side and treat it like just that. Ergo, when not in use, that LED display turns into a clock and complete with accompanying software turns your mobile into an alarm clock as well - there are speakers for the music.

Get past the MP3 player and alarm clock element of the phone, by opening the clamshell, and you are presented with 2.1-inch display and a clean keypad for phone dialling and a couple of shortcut keys. Refreshingly, there are no touchscreen elements in sight.

The software interface follows the design of the phone's casing and is very simple to use. Transferring songs is made easy by a drag and drop facility once connected to your computer and this means you can not only opt to use the software of your choice (bar iTunes), but also use it with both Windows and Apple Mac operating systems.

Tech spec wise the O2 Cocoon features 3G connectivity, a 2 megapixel camera, stereo Bluetooth, an FM radio, and the ability to manage calls while listening to music (when a call comes in the music either fades to continues playing in the background, or automatically pauses to be resumed after the call, depending on the user's preference).

O2 boast the Cocoon has a standby time of up to 350 hours and a talk time of up to 5 hours, and up to 15 hours music playback time (certainly in keeping with the iPod), although we were able to test this on our brief first look at the festival.

At a glance

What is it?

Music-focused handset

Good

LED display, simple to use

Bad

Fairly large

Verdict

This is a phone that you'll either love or hate

Price Price dependent on contract

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2410/02-cocoon-music-phone-review>

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refreshing, in fact the only grumble we had was a lack of 3.5mm jack on the phone, meaning this falls into the same trap as the recently launched Samsung SGH-F300, i.e., you can't charge the handset and listen to music via a headphones at the same time unless you are using the docking station.

That aside, this is a phone that "You'll either love it, or hate it".

So has it stolen Sony Ericsson's thunder? Yes, until 3 hours later Sony Ericsson announced its 8GB W960 handset.

The O2 Cocoon is due out in August.