

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2575/datawind-pocketsurfer-web-phone-pda>

Datawind PocketSurfer 2 web surfer - First Look

HSDPA over GPRS? Can it really deliver what it promises?

by Stuart Miles published on 6 September 2007

The Internet's a great thing, whether it's searching for stuff via Google, reading gadget reviews from your favourite gadget site Pocket-lint or merely checking your bank balance: you have to admit it has changed our lives, I think for the better.

So what's the catch? Well you've got to be in front of a computer or mobile phone to access it and while the former means you are desk bound, the latter means you are worrying about data charges every 5 minutes.

In steps the PocketSurfer 2 from Datawind that aims to offer you 20 hours of web surfing free every month for a £180 initial outlay. If 20 hours doesn't sound enough you can even up it to unlimited access for just £5.99.

Doesn't sound that exciting? Already got a similar device on your desk or in your pocket? What if we were to say that the connection is via GPRS and somehow, as if by magic, it's faster than HSDPA?

Now that I've got your attention, this online journalists dream, the Pocket Surfer 2 is a slim, 640 pixel widescreen device that works on quad-band GPRS, promising "true wireless internet" around 90 odd per cent of the country, a very different picture to 3G.

The small device, which looks like a very thin Psion 5 (remember those, arh, those were the days), features an easy to use QWERTY keyboard and a plethora of quick access buttons, but unfortunately no built-in digital camera.

While you can access the Internet on most phones, laptops, computers and a stack of other



...cont.

devices, the selling point here is the speed of access. In our demo of the product at IFA in Berlin, Germany, we were able to access the Pocket-lint website in lightning-fast speed.

In fact any site we tried loaded up really quickly, and we mean quickly, with less graphical sites (like our backend Content Management System loading almost instantly).

Compare this to our GPRS-enabled BlackBerry Curve and it was if we were trying to race the 100m dragging a tire. In fact in most cases we simply gave up.

So how does it work? Well according to the chaps at Datawind everything is accelerated thanks to some clever software and insisting that rather than connect directly to the website in question, everything is routed through a proxy server first. The server grabs all the information before optimising it for the device.

While this instantly threw up security questions of leaving a trace of all our passwords and the like on a server somewhere other than our head, Datawind assures us this isn't the case.

Not just a web surfer, the device also offers a basic text editing and spreadsheet software.

VERDICT

Whether you care how the PocketSurfer does what it does or not doesn't matter, what you should be interested in is that the results are good, and that's the promising bit.

The PocketSurfer has a lot going for it. It is small, thin, allows you to access the Internet quickly.

The catches? Well you won't be able to view any video, nor will you be able to access flash websites. Then, like laptops, the battery isn't great, just a promise of 2 hours surfing the web although you can get more if it's on standby.

At a glance

What is it?

Portable web surfing device

Good

Super fast internet over GPRS, small, thin

Bad

Poor battery life, no digital camera, can't play flash or streaming video

Verdict

Whether you care or not of how the PocketSurfer does what it does, doesn't matter, what you should be interested in is that the results are good, and that's the promising bit

Price £179.99

Your score

7/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2575/datawind-pocketsurfer-web-phone-pda>

...cont.

The PocketSurfer 2 will be available later this year.