

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2705/3-skype-phone-mobile-handset>

## 3 "Skypephone" mobile phone

Will this change mobile phones forever?

by Stuart Miles published on 6 November 2007

The mobile phone is changing, mobile network operator 3 would have you believe. But is it for the better? We take a look at the company's new Skype phone and see whether this is the future of mobile phone calls. Skype as you probably know is an enhanced messaging service that comes complete with video calling, chat, the ability to phone mobile or landline phones with SkypeOut and installed on 246 million computers around the world. The trouble is that you'll be stuck in your home if you want to use it. Skype has managed to break away from the computer in recent years with dual supporting landline handsets from the likes of Philips and Netgear, but never beyond a Wi-Fi connection, until now. In steps the Skype phone from 3, a mobile phone that has a dedicated Skype button so you can phone your Skype contacts when you are out and about. The black handset is fairly basic. Made by Chinese firm Amoi, it has a "Sony Ericsson" feel about it, a large screen, large simple keypad and light on the applications. Hardware-wise it has a 2 megapixel camera, a dedicated camera button, an application switcher button and your usual volume controls. You'll also get a 256MB card in the box. Software-wise there is an MP3 player, games, web browser and 3's Launcher app that gives you shortcuts to sites like YouTube and Facebook. Very much a case of don't expect too much and overall the phone is well-built, simple, but effective in its performance. Taking centre stage is that dedicated Skype button directly under the screen. Being a Skype product, the idea is that it's always on, so once you've created an account or simply logged in, you're always online whenever the phone is switched on. So what of performance? Well it's business as usual. You log in, get your list of Skype contacts and then start making your calls. If you are already logged in on your PC or Mac, this acts as a second connection and you can choose which one you answer when they both ring. If you're a



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regular user of Skype you won't notice any difference from making a call from your PC or Skype-enabled landline. The quality is good, but not crystal clear. Calls aren't completely unlimited however as they are on the PC application and 3's Skype package allows you to make 4000 minutes of calls as long as you top up your account with £10 every month. The £10 doesn't go towards the calls so you get voice as well, but if you don't top it up you lose the ability to make Skype calls. Within that tariff you'll also get 10,000 chat messages although you'll have to be a good texter as the Skype phone doesn't feature a QWERTY or 20-key keyboard. So what's the catch? Well frustratingly you won't get video calling, even though it's a 3G handset and that's the main selling point from both companies of their services. You'll also miss out on the ability to SkypeOut to other mobiles or landlines or be able to use the Skype function when roaming aboard if you aren't in a 3 territory. Interestingly for the more geeky amongst you, 3 actually makes the first step of the call as a voice call into the Skype network rather than going data all the way.

## VERDICT

If you are a big Skype user then the chance to take your contacts with you will be really appealing, offering you 2 hours of free calls every day to other Skype users. If you are just looking for a regular phone without any whistles or bells, then this is certainly worth taking a closer look at, however for most it will be a disappointment beyond the Skype button. Mobile workers will feel especially cheated as there is virtually no smartphone features available here. 3 say they will be offering the Skype service on other handsets, but clearly this is their push for the service. Good, but too basic an offering to want to replace your latest Samsung, Nokia or Sony Ericsson handset.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Skype on your mobile phone

### Good

4000 Skype minutes a month, easy to setup, dedicated Skype button

### Bad

No smartphone features, no SkypeOut, no Video calling, no roaming beyond 3 network

### Verdict

Good, but too basic an offering to want to replace your latest Samsung, Nokia or Sony Ericsson handset

**Price** £50

**Our score**

**7/10**

**Your score**

**5/10**