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LG KF600 mobile phone

Harmonic symbiosis or split personality?

by Chris Hall published on 16 April 2008

As mobile phones go, the KF600 has had the whole treatment; you can't help but have seen the advertising campaign. But does this phone, like its screen, suffer from a split personality? Is this Romeo and Juliet or Jekyll and Hyde? We take a closer look.

The KF600 takes the form of a slider and its relation to the company's KG800 "Chocolate" range is easy to spot. In terms of size, it is a fraction larger than the Chocolate at 101.2 x 50.7 x 14.1mm so perfectly pocketable.

The unique factor here, and the feature that has been highlighted the most, is what LG are calling the InteractPad, or more precisely, a small 1.5in touchscreen occupying the bottom section of the slide; in essence replacing the touch-sensitive controls from the KG800.

The InteractPad changes as you roam around the phone's features, for example the in music player and the camera, presenting specific control options. When viewing the pictures you snap with the 3 megapixel camera, the InteractPad can be used to control the zoom, meaning you can easily look in more detail at your pictures - perhaps getting round the fact that the main screen is only 2 inches.

Menu navigation works through the InteractPad which takes some getting used to. It can be a little confusing with a tendency to touch the top half of the screen rather than the bottom. If you don't want to use the InteractPad then sub-menu options are numbered and after a while this becomes a faster method of navigation, but unfortunately, the top level main menu doesn't have this advantage.

However, some things just don't seem logical, such as in text messaging, when the InteractPad



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offers you some controls, the rest are on the keyboard. The InteractPad also offers handwriting recognition which works to a degree, but opt to insert a special character and you are presented with a 6 x 9 grid containing 52 symbols (and a back key filling two squares): with no on-board stylus, these are practically impossible to press.

This sort of sums up the InteractPad, something of a double-edged sword. Credit should be given for innovation, but overall you are left with the feeling that something is missing; that polished positive experience doesn't quite appear.

One of the nicer features is that when you select a wallpaper it can occupy both parts of the screen so there is the chance to be creative. On the creative front, the phone comes customised with Keith Haring art, including funky active wallpapers.

Besides that touch pad the phone offers the normal features you'd expect: Bluetooth 2, FM radio, video capture, music player and so on. It will accept "external memory", in the form of microSD, but you'll have to insert it inside, under the battery, so is really memory expansion rather than external memory. The KF600 is tri-band so will cover most of the globe as you travel around.

The slide has a good weighty action with a feeling of positively-engineered quality. In contrast the keypad at first feels a little cheap, but it is fast and responsive and generally easy to use. As a phone it functions perfectly well and everything you expect is here.

VERDICT

The split screen is something of a statement and realising the best use for it within the constraints of the phone is something of a challenge. All too often, when you really want to get something done, reverting to the numbered option is faster. Moving away from the traditional keyboard-based operation means that functions, like texting - that have become second nature for many - have to

At a glance

What is it?

Touchscreen-ish mobile phone

Good

Keith Haring themes, good build quality, good slide action

Bad

Confusing control just doesn't quite work

Verdict

From the innovative design to the cool Keith Haring themes, all the potential is here but something just doesn't quite work

Price Dependent on contract

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10

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be adapted.

We really want to like this phone - from the innovative design to the cool Keith Haring themes, all the potential is here but something just doesn't quite work.