

## Apple iPhone 3G - First Look

Can it possibly live up to the hype?

by David Phelan published on 15 June 2008

So what do you want from the new iPhone? Do you want 3G, so you can surf the net faster when you're not in Starbucks? For sure. Push email, so you don't have to go searching for your mail all the time? Natch. A lower price? Are the Kennedys gunshy?

Well, Steve Jobs has obliged and the new model, iPhone 3G will be subsidised when it's out on 11 July. £99 on the lowest-priced tariff, free on the others. And 3G is among ten antennae built-in to the handset and which have necessitated a plastic instead of aluminium back to the phone. Like the MacBook Air, the new iPhone's back has tapered edges, so it's a touch wider than the original. Otherwise, from the front, you can barely tell the difference.



After all, although it's 3G, there's no front camera for video calling. Apple says it doesn't want to do video calling until it delivers something special. Fair enough, but couldn't we have had a better camera on the back in the meantime? You see, to that wishlist above you could add better camera, better texting and video recording.

And to those three the answer's no. The texting in particular could do with an upgrade, even if only to allow you to use the fiddly virtual keypad in landscape orientation so the keys are bigger. Sure, the error correction makes up for it pretty spectacularly but there are still improvements to be made.

At the San Francisco Apple keynote - ruthlessly restricted to just five UK press including Pocket-lint - the whooping was loud and sincere. Afterwards, though, some were more muted.

Did we want GPS? Well, maybe, but Maps was fine as it was, although the demo, where you can watch your car's progress down a street was a mixture of Big Brother eeriness and undeniable



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cool.

And although the significance of a flush headphone socket - now you can use any headphones you please - was not lost on the crowd, the option to shoot video and upload it to YouTube would have been neater.

In use, the new phone is as simple, intuitive and addictive as the first with improvements across the board. Contacts is now fully searchable instead of just the first letter of the surname. The camera software has been tweaked. Lots of extra languages have been added and you can change on the fly. That push email can be configured to check when you want it to.

Critics can justly point out that some phones have had these features for some time, of course. But, and it's a big but, it's rare for a phone company to so comprehensively upgrade its phone software, and this isn't the first upgrade, not by a Cupertino mile.

The iTunes delivery mechanism is a great way of updating the phone and a potent argument against hacking. Since O2's tariffs are appealing, if you're someone who's going to surf the net and download stuff, many people will switch, and existing iPhone owners can upgrade early at no penalty.

The new software from third-parties ranged from the fun to the spooky. Fun included Super Monkey Ball from Sega. Spooky included Loopt, where you could use the GPS and your friends' details to find out if someone's in the area and crash their lunch date. Hmm. MooCow Software's Band was a big keynote success as it showed its rough-and-ready program to turn you into a blues musician effortlessly.

Our early First Look wasn't comprehensive enough to test Mr Jobs's claims for extended battery life, or to see how much GPS would eat into that. But we're happy to recommend it on the basis of its remarkable predecessor and the

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Return of the Mac phone

### Good

3G, GPS, headphone socket, improved contacts

### Bad

Camera, texting, and video recording could all be better

### Verdict

Still room for improvement, but it's still the best phone money can buy. And now for less money

**Price** Dependent on contract

## Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3220/Apple-iPhone-3G-First-Look>

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addition of HSDPA data transfer at speeds of up to 7.2Mbps. Especially since O2's 3G network is more advanced than its EDGE coverage.

## **VERDICT**

To deliver the iPhone 3G less than a year after the first phone is to be applauded, even if it remains too big for some tastes, or too tricky for texters who prefer to use a stylus (the capacitive touchscreen of the iPhone only responds to the electrical pulse of a human finger - no gloves allowed). And those underwhelmed by the update are already waiting for the next software update.

For all that, it's still the best phone money can buy. And now for less money.