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Sony Ericsson C905 mobile phone - First Look

8.1 megapixels in a phone? Surely not

by Chris Hall published on 18 June 2008

Sony Ericsson is looking to capture the world of photography with its latest phone, the C905. Pocket-lint got hands-on with the new camera phone at the UK launch in London.

Coming in the common slide form factor, at first glance it is easy to overlook the fact that this phone features a camera, until, that is, you spy the Cyber-shot branding and the camera-specific controls along the right-hand side.

The slide has a good solid action to it and overall the build quality was very good - an overall feeling that this is a premium handset. The 2.4in screen was bright, showing good crisp images. The keypad was responsive and controls, overall, well laid out. Considering the size of the device (see the photo in the hand for an idea) you have to wonder how they manage to pack in a phone as well as all the regular camera features.

This is, in part, a question of optics. The lens hides behind a sliding cover on the back of the phone that is interestingly designed, but may not stand the tests of time. This is a good move for protecting the lens, because if you want to take serious pictures, you need to protect it not only from general pocket debris, but also fingerprints. That said, it is easy to forget to close the slider, and in our test we managed to smear our fingers all over the surface.

Returning to optics, the C905 features up to 16x zoom, which is one method of saving space in the body, as there are no optical moving parts. We couldn't test the performance of the zoom, other than to verify that it did indeed work. The camera features an 8.1-megapixel sensor, which is the headline attraction here.

Supporting the camera pent, you have dedicated



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buttons for the shutter, as well as a button to switch between still and video modes, which saves rooting through menus. The shutter button is in a logical place for use as a real camera, so again, ticks that box.

There are a range of supporting options for the camera that you'd expect to find - scene modes, red-eye reduction, face detection, smart contrast - which are easy to access via shortcut buttons, both at the bottom of the screen, and cunningly placed at the top, alongside the speaker. In practice the menu opens over the image, which makes things a little cluttered it can be difficult to see exactly what you are looking at.

Face detection works after a fashion, as is often the case with this technology, and will pick up three faces. Smart contrast is interesting, as it takes three images on differing settings, then merges them into one image - the aim being to get the best from your highlights and shadows without compromising one or the other. We asked a Sony Ericsson spokesperson if the resultant file would be larger than normal, but they couldn't answer, so it's something we'll check out when we do a full test.

You also get a Xenon flash as you would on a camera, so you can move away from the terrible LED option that is very common. The flash recycling time was a little long and of course it will have an impact on battery life - the downside being that if you take too many pictures at that party, you won't be able to call a taxi to get home...

When it came to taking pictures, there is a degree of buffering lag, but in our hands-on, there wasn't really enough time to do a full evaluation.

On-board memory is rather small so you'll get a bundled 2GB Memory Stick Micro, sticking with the Sony format, with an external slot for the card, so you can slot that into your PC to grab your photos. PictBridge is also supported, so printing

At a glance

What is it?

Camera phone

Good

Good build quality, dedicated camera buttons, more advanced camera options

Bad

Lack of on-board memory

Verdict

In our First Look we were unable to assess the critical performance aspects we would like, such as image quality and how the phone is to live with, but in the flesh it seems like an interesting proposition

Price Dependent on contract

Your score

?/10

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directly to a compatible printer is a possibility.

So that you can keep track of all your picture-taking, the C905 also features AGPS and there is a geo-tagging option in the camera menu. Of course, this also means that you can use the supplied Google Maps to find your location and so on.

On the connectivity front, you'll also find HSDPA support, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth (A2DP). The handset has also been certified DLNA compatible, so you'll be able to wirelessly send your photos to compatible devices, such as a TV. You'll also find the normal music players and so on that you'd expect, meaning that you get a very comprehensive package indeed.

VERDICT

In our First Look we were unable to assess the critical performance aspects we would like, such as image quality and how the phone is to live with, but in the flesh it seems like an interesting proposition. The question moving forward from here is whether this phone can really replace your camera, or is it simply playing the big numbers game?