

LG U8110 3G mobile phone

by Dan Leonard published on 16 June 2004

The LG U8110 was the first 3G handset from LG to hit UK stores. A hard hitter, but pleasingly light at 126g, it was very similar to Samsung's V200, with rotating camera on an offset mount. Far smaller, and lighter, than any full-on 3G phone (screen size was paramount on the early 3 network models) yet, sporting a good sized 35x44 TFT screen, the U8110 ranks in size and shape among the best of the 2.5G, GPRS handsets. What then sets this apart from its rivals is really only the bandwidth available on the 3 network that lifts the quality of streaming media above network rivals. It's hard to gauge much difference between handset performance between this, a 3G and many 2.5G handsets, as it's that extra bandwidth that speeds up the download. Objectively, we're looking here at the handset, rather than the 3 network per se. What does make it stand out from the rivals is the bodywork - a full external 23mm aerial allows for more chance of receiving the 3G reception while and improvement to the catch system makes removing the cover easy, when required. The external build quality is sound - something for which LG has been criticised in the past with their televisions. Moving the camera into the centre makes a great change to the balance of the design. Solid buttons and strong flip, sound and weight are let down only by somewhat cumbersome keypad layout. It's a screen-driven menu system. The correlation can be a little frustrating at times, but once mastered it all becomes fairly straightforward to navigate around the menus. Intuitive colour schemes and small clear fonts make the best of the available screen size. So does the video player - the size of the actual viewing window is slightly larger than the excellent Motorola v600 manages. With a 2x digital zoom, and a light, we caught some pretty stills and movies. Remember though, full functionality goes with network and to send an MMS video, MP4, means a far shorter capture than the phone can provide, but watch out for the memory and battery drain. With 14MB of space



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available on the phone it does match up even to the disappointing Sony Ericsson K700, and there's not much room for collecting downloads and no removable memory card. One more trick lies up the LG's sleeve- the Avatar address book. Assign animations to caller/caller groups that will overlay and run on screen for incoming calls something that has been borrowed from Sharp's GX30, lending an extra something to watch, on what to be fair is one of the nicer flip phones out there. Battery gives 120 mins standby, 140 mins talk and 100mins video- not bad, and GPRS at around 180mins, but we found the downloads drained the juice pretty fast and sometimes its just too much fun watching clips to be able to make a call in the evening.

VERDICT

On the whole, a nice phone. It could easily pass for and will no doubt sell well as a 2.5G phone, but considering the change in style by Nokia for their media entertainment models, this is by no means groundbreaking. You can't fault the camera, the photo-light is a bonus and it's all packed in a durable shell, but perhaps not as graceful as the G7070. With no Bluetooth, you may feel a little left out (nobody in the office heard my cries of 'infa-red me') but despite the lack of memory, it runs the video and sound rather well. All in all, the LG U8110 reigns supreme in 3's crown and holds up well against the main competition that is out there at the moment, but the question is, for how long?

At a glance

What is it?

3G Video mobile from LG

Good

Full 3G functionality in a compact flip

Bad

Screen driven navigation a little muddled. 2-way video subject to connection to the 3G network

Verdict

The LG U8110 holds up well against the main competition out there at the moment, but the question is, for how long?

Price price dependant on contract

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10