

## Motorola A1000 mobile phone

by Stuart Miles published on 17 November 2004

With the 3G market heating up Motorola has announced three new handsets on the 3 3G network. The A1000 is the PDA styled unit that's aimed at the mobile worker, however while that might be the plan for Motorola, 3 seem to have other ideas for it. The main selling point here is the 208x320 pixel wide 65k colour touch screen display. The focus of the phone, it acts as the keypad, browser and general interface to the phone. Elsewhere there are buttons, ie for controlling sound, camera, answer and hang up calls but for the most part it's down to the software and the touch screen. In a move to associate it with PDAs you do get a stylus that sits snugly in the unit rather than bolting on to the side. Either way, the adoption of a PDA-styled device that doesn't use PalmOS or the PocketPC OS is a brave move and the reliance on easy-to-use software is even greater than before. It's this reliance that for us doesn't seem to work. Menus are difficult to master, access to 3G services 3 has integrated are difficult to use and overall it isn't a pleasant experience. 3 itself at the launch event for this device suggested that the Motorola interface has been a pig to use in the past and it seems nothing much has changed. The phone has been broken down into a number of tabs; Home, Calls, Browser, Mail, Contacts and Applications. The home tab has strong resemblances to Microsoft's mobile edition and a quick glance will give you a list of messages, be they email or voice, you have waiting for you. Above this, in a big garish plug, are buttons to Tunes&Pix, Music and My 3. These buttons whiz you off to 3's services and aren't customisable showing that 3 are really keen to force content upon you whether you like it or not. The Calls tab offers the standard functions that you would expect from a phone including a touch screen phone pad, while Contacts and Mail is likewise what you would expect. The Browser is where you hope it will get exciting, but then find yourself deeply disheartened when you realise that 3 don't let you surf the internet other than visiting the



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sites they have pre approved. This is a strange option and one that makes this device so confused. Why have a PDA-style unit aimed at mobile workers if those mobile workers can only access entertainment sites rather than their own network for getting access to emails?The problems don't stop there unfortunately. One of the benefits of the faster access to the 3G network is the ability to download music videos, games and the like at fast speeds. In our test when we were in a 3G network this was all very possible. However once you've downloaded those files it was almost impossible to find them again. In fact on more than one occasion when we wanted to show people the music videos we had downloaded we had to download them again. At £1.50 a pop you would hope that Motorola and 3 had devised a better storage structure. We are sure they are on the phone somewhere, but we'll be damned if we can find them.

## VERDICT

As a standalone phone the device performs below average, yes it may have Bluetooth, a document viewer and 1.2 megapixel camera, but the screen's preciseness was slightly off-sync with the stylus resulting in the frustration of wrong buttons pressed, what made this worst, was unlike PDAs we couldn't find a setting to correct it. That, combined with an interface that is better, but still a pig to use in the words of 3, and poor integration of services makes this phone a big thumbs down for us. There was one good point however, phone calls and video calls made from the unit to other phones and networks worked very well and they were very clear, it's just a shame that in our minds that's all the phone has going for it. Motorola of all people should understand there's less and less room for making mistakes on your big new launch.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

3G PDA styled phone

### Good

Large screen, 3G download speeds, 1.2 megapixel camera

### Bad

Poor design, bad interface, restrictive

### Verdict

With a confused message, this phone isn't really sure of who it wants to appeal to

**Price** price dependent on contract

**Our score**

**5/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**