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MOBILE COMPUTING

Samsung Galaxy S: How Does It Measure Up to the Competition?

By Ginny Mies, PCWorld Jun 29, 2010 5:42 PM



This spring, Samsung introduced the [Samsung Galaxy S](#), a super Android smartphone to rival the HTC EVO 4G, the various Droids (both Motorola's and HTC's) and of course, the iPhone 4. Versions of the Galaxy S will be making its way to U.S. shores this summer in four different form factors to all four major U.S. carriers. I was lucky enough to get my hands on the original European Galaxy S and did some quick side-by-side comparisons with the other hot phones of the summer.

Design and Display

When I first picked up the Galaxy S, I was amazed with how thin and lightweight it was. I was also surprised by how familiar it looked. The design is actually very iPhone 3GS-like with an all black, shiny plastic body and minimal buttons on the phone's face. It is thinner than both the EVO 4G and the Droid X measuring 0.39-inches thick, but slightly beefier than the ultra-slim 0.37-inch iPhone 4. It is the lightest of the bunch, weighing a scant 4.2 ounces.

The Galaxy S's feather-light weight is due in part to the Super AMOLED technology, which the Samsung first introduced at Mobile World Congress on the [Samsung Wave](#). Super AMOLED technology has touch sensors on the display itself as opposed to creating a separate layer ([Samsung's old AMOLED displays](#) had this extra layer) making it the thinnest display technology on the market. Super AMOLED is fantastic; you really have to see it in real life to experience it. Colors burst out of the display and animations appeared lively and smooth.



The Galaxy S' 4-inch display is larger than the iPhone's (3.5-inches), but smaller than the HTC EVO 4G and Motorola Droid X's displays (4.3-inches). Despite its smaller size, the Galaxy S outshined both the Droid X and the EVO 4G in my casual side-by-side comparisons. The side-by-side with the iPhone 4 was a closer call. The iPhone 4's display appeared slightly sharper, but I thought the Galaxy S's colors looked more natural. It is really hard to declare a winner--both displays are stunning.

Samsung TouchWiz 3.0 with Android 2.1

The Samsung Galaxy S runs Android 2.1 (Eclair) with Samsung's own TouchWiz 3.0 user interface. Overall, this version of TouchWiz is a lot better than the version on the Samsung Behold II for T-Mobile, which was slow and difficult to navigate. But while this version is an improvement, I encountered some familiar issues with TouchWiz 3.0. Despite the 1GHz

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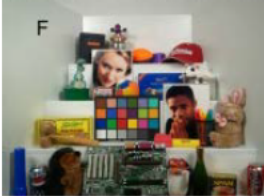


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Hummingbird processor, the phone lags when launching apps, flipping through menus and scrolling down contact lists or Web pages. This could be due to the fact that this is a pre-production unit, however, and not everything is in perfect working order.

Like HTC Sense, Samsung has its own social media aggregator. Social Hub combines streams from your Facebook, MySpace and Twitter accounts into a single view. It is a useful feature if you need a simple way to keep track of your networks. One odd feature is Mini Diary, which lets you create blog entries with photos, weather info, texts and more. This would be a great feature if you could actually sync this information to your blog or Facebook profile—but weirdly, you can't.

Camera



Samsung Galaxy S Test Shot

We put the Galaxy S's 5-megapixel camera through a modified version of our PCWorld Lab Test for point-and-shoot digital cameras along with the iPhone 4, the Motorola Droid X and the HTC EVO 4G. Unfortunately our test panel was not very impressed with the Galaxy's photo quality. The Galaxy S phone earned the lowest score out of the four and an overall word score of "Fair." It finished ahead of the Evo 4G in terms of exposure quality, but finished in last place in our color accuracy, sharpness, and distortion tests.

On the other hand, it took second place in overall video quality. Its performance was skewed heavily toward good performance in bright light. According to our panel, bright-light footage looked a bit underexposed and slightly grainy in a full-screen view, but great at smaller sizes. The Galaxy S's auto-focus searches a bit before locking onto a crisp image. Its microphone actually picks up audio a bit too well: our audio clip sounded far too loud and blown-out, while it was barely picked up at all by some of the other smartphones in this comparison. In low light, the footage was a bit too murky and undefined to earn a better rating. Read the full test results in our [Smartphone Camera Battle: iPhone vs. the Android Army](#).

Keep an eye out for full reviews of the Samsung Galaxy S phones including the Samsung Epic 4G (Sprint), Samsung V brant (T-Mobile) and the Samsung Captivate and the Samsung Fascinate (Verizon).

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