A weekend with the new iPhone 3G

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apple iphone ipod tech

Well, finally received my iPhone on Friday. At this point I should probably insert a rant about Optus customer service (or lack thereof), however the coolness of the device eclipses the terrible customer experience I encountered from Optus.

It ranged from blatantly lying about unit lead times, not wanting to take my order (at the Woden store), and not being prepared to even look up my details to let me know how long I need to wait for the phone.

Still, they ended up having a reasonable plan - 750mb data per month + $550 worth of calls for $81 per month (2 year contract, no upfront fees). So I'm guessing they don't pay their store staff much.

Having owned an ipod touch for the last 12 months I sort of knew what to expect - solid web, email, maps, address book, calendar, ipod (audio, video, podcasts, Apple store etc). I was even fond of the weather app.

The headphones have an integrated microphone so you don't even have to take your headphones off to take the call, it simply turns down the music volume when you take the call, and starts playing the music again when you hang up.

Google Google integration is pretty sweet - you can sync your gmail, google calendar (via iCal), most of the google online services now support the iPhone safari browser (and render to support the iPhone screen size) - these include gmail, calendar, chat, reader, picassa.

GPS The built-in gps integrates with Maps to provide you with location details, and allows you to look up road directions (Maps does perform caching so you don't always have to be in 3G service to get map details).

It will be interesting to see what new apps come out that use the gps feature (hello geocaching?). App Store The most important upgrade (for iPod touch, iPhone 1 and iPhone 3G users) is the Apple App Store.

This allows you to browse and download new applications for your device (some of them you have to pay for). Here are some of the ones that I think are particularly groovy: Remote - one of the few Apple created apps - allows you to remotely control your iTunes library or Apple TV. (Free) Mobile Fotos (previously called iFlickr) - flickr for your iPhone - allows you to browse flickr.com (explore random photos, or view your contacts latest photos), it integrates with the iPhone camera, allowing you to upload photos directly to your flickr photo stream!

Also embeds geolocation data into the photo and allows you to search for flickr photos that were taken near your location (brilliant example of technology convergance). ($6) Twittervision - This one is pretty groovy, on a map of the world you can see twitter updates as they are happening (in real time).

I think you need another twitter application to see your followed contacts - I think this is called Twitterific. (Free) Shazam - this one is really amazing, you place your phone up to a tv or radio and it identifies the song that it is playing!

You have to see this to believe it! (Free) Monkey Ball - fun little game that uses the iPhone tilt sensors to control a monkey in a ball ($13). My Lists - simple list creation program - allows you to email lists back to yourself.

This one appealing to me because you don't have to sogn up to an online service to use it (and share your lists). I also liked the icons and ability to easily delete lists. ($4) HFD Calculator - Picked up an application to help you calculate Hyperfocal distance (based on camera type, lens focal length and aperture) - unfortunately it is producing the wrong values - but the author was very responsive, indicating that Apple are currently reviewing the patch before it is released to the App store ($4) - in order to do this properly I also purchased a tape measure app that uses the gps to measures distances ($1.50).

I'll submit another post to let you know how this goes...

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