# The **iStart**
TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS

# Smartphone Roundup

*...before you take the plunge, read about the iStart Smartphone Roundup. It will help you navigate the pros and cons of six of the most popular units on the market, as well as provide you with all the important specs before...*

# BlackBerry Torch 9800

While the BlackBerry is generally considered the tried and true (if somewhat dated) workhorse phone for professional types, with some very slick releases from its competitors recently, just how does the latest version of the old favourite stack up?

RIMs gameplan for the 9800 seems to be: make some minor tweeks, but stick to the old standard. Stylistically, the BlackBerry Torch 9800 is very much in keeping with the generic Blackberry look. With a well-functioning sliding screen and QWERTY keyboard, the design is good, but it's definitely a case of business as usual.

The most noticeable downside of the 9800 is a big one: the gritty 480 x 360 display. If you're accustomed to pretty visuals from your smartphone, and especially if you've had a go with an iPhone 4, you'll be left scratching your head as to why RIM have opted to put such a low rent screen on an otherwise sturdy device. It's a puzzling decision.

If you can get over that however, the 9800 is a decent, if a little underwhelming device. Pluses include a well-designed and very easy to use keyboard, solid email, plus good messaging and browsing functions, making the 9800 a decent device for a modest-needs business user.

One surprisingly good touch is the universal search function. Search for anything – an app, an email, or a contact – and the universal search is on it, allowing you to bypass a lot of unnecessary movement through screens, and simply giving you what you want with a minimum of fuss.

Make no mistake, the BlackBerry Torch 9800 is a Spartan warrior – no bells and whistles and a downright awful screen. But if it's bare basics done well that you're after, you could certainly do worse.

## $1099 - $1199

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** 624 MHz processor

**OS:** BlackBerry OS 6.0

**Display:** 3.2 inch (360 x 480)

**Storage:** 4GB

**Video Playback/recording:** VGA@24fps

**Camera:** 5.0 MP

**Connectivity:** Bluetooth 2.1, WiFi

**Battery:** 1300 mAh

**Dimensions:** 111 x 62 x 14.6 mm

**WIN!**
See last page,
or txt SUBS
to 244

**8/10**

# HTC 7 Trophy

While the Trophy is the lowest spec'ed of the Windows handsets, the HTC 7 Trophy has got all the basics on board and then a bit more. So does it stand up next to the flashier competition?

For business purposes, the HTC 7 gets a tentative pass. There's a nice panoramic interface with Microsoft Office Hub – which lets you view and edit Excel, Word and PowerPoint, and access data on SharePoint - but editing functions are somewhat limited.  There was no sense of harmony, as with Mac and iPhone, that the phone software was built in the same shop as your PC. They really are still two different worlds.

But, it can't all be about business, right? Powered by Xbox LIVE and with a 1GHz Snapdragon processor to deliver speedy performance, the HTC Trophy is well set-up for gamers. Sync it with an Xbox account and the HTC Trophy is a gamer's dream.

The HTC 7 Trophy doesn't have the sleekness of the HTC Mozart, but the sturdy build is good – it feels solid in your hand, with a rubberized body adding to the effect.

While the camera is good (but not great), when it comes to audio and video the HTC 7 Trophy is a winner. The audio quality is superb and while there's no codec support for video (MP4 and WMV only), the HTC 7 Trophy can convert video formats for you automatically.

The interface is dead simple to use with the home screen made up of tiles that link to your apps, features and functionality, and with very few layers of menu to scroll through it's a piece of pie to navigate. The phonebook, organizer and messaging all work predictably well.

While in terms of functionality, the HTC 7 Trophy is not everything to everyone, for the Windows devotees and closet Xbox gamers out there, that's probably okay.  And at the price it makes an attractive alternative.

## Mobile only $849

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** 1 GHz processor

**OS:** Windows Phone OS 7

**Display:** 3.8 inch (480x800)

**Storage:** 8GB

**Video Playback/recording:** 720p@30fps

**Camera:** 5.0 MP

**Connectivity:** Bluetooth 2.1 with A2DP for wireless stereo headsets, Wi-Fi, 3G

**Battery:** 1300mAh

**Dimensions:** 118.5 X 61.5 X 11.96 mm

# iPhone 4

The release of an Apple product is always surrounded by more than a little hype. But for the 2010 release of the iPhone 4 – which saw Apple's secretive development processes breached, leaked units appear on the internet, and even one journalist's home raided and computers seized - the hype reached extreme new heights, even by Apple standards. So with the iPhone 5 release date still to be confirmed, we take a look at the iPhone 4, and see whether it does indeed live up to the puff.

Constructed of glass in a metal rim, the iPhone 4 has been applauded by Apple-devotees as a marvel of modern design – which might be a little bit of an overstatement in iStart's opinion. Those traditional iPhone curves are gone and have been replaced by a new, almost sharp-edged design that would make Dieter Rams proud. Not to everybody's taste perhaps, but a deviation from the round-back look we're all used to. We also reckon a back button is missing on the thumb pad.

More striking is the iPhone 4's 'Retina Display' screen. There's a little controversy around Steve Job's claim that the iPhone 4's 326 pixels per inch resolution is better than the human eye can detect from a foot or so away, but who really cares? The fact is it looks great – better than any other smartphone on the market, so why split hairs? Photos and especially HD movies come alive and the intuitive, standard-setting interface is rendered crisp and crystal clear.

In fact, everything looks pretty great on the iPhone 4 and stuff just works.

Add to this fast app switching, and the hugely stocked app store, and you've got a well balanced product which is absolutely faultless - to rabid Apple fans anyway. But, be prepared to pay.

16GB $1123, 32GB $1328

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** 1 GHz ARM Cortex-A8 processor, PowerVR SGX535GPU, Apple A4 chipset

**OS:** iOS 4

**Display:** 3.5 inch, (640 x 960)

**Storage:** 16/32GB

**Video Playback/recording:** 720p@30fps

**Camera:** 5.0 MP

**Connectivity:** Wi-Fi (802.11 b/g/n), (2.4 GHz only), Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR

**Battery:** 1420mAh

**Dimensions:** 115.2 x 58.6 x 9.3 mm

8.5/10

8.5/10

# LG Optimus 2X

If you're looking for a smartphone with 'grunt', your search is over.

Featuring 'Dual-Core' technology, the new LG Optimus 2X offers users lot of power for its size. Users fed up with a stuttering, glitchy smartphone experience, or with things slowing down to a crawl when they're multitasking, will find a lot to love with the LG Optimus 2X. Whether ploughing through high definition photos, videos or intense gaming (or any other task requiring more than a little CPU power for that matter), expect the LG Optimus 2X, reportedly one of the fastest smartphones on the market, to cope effortlessly.

Add to that the combination of a bright, rich-coloured TFT LCD screen, HD video capture, and a big 8 megapixel camera, and you've got an extremely solid multimedia device on your hands. With the addition of a reasonable 1.3 megapixel front-facing camera, and you've got a very good video calling device too.

A well designed, customisable Android-based interface, with calendar, memo and contacts widgets all on hand, and a functional, if somewhat limited email app, makes the Optimus 2X an effective device for the mobile warrior.

Nevertheless, the Dual-Core technology is what the Optimus 2X is all about. If you're a multi-tasking maniac the LG Optimus 2X packs the extra horsepower you've been looking for.

## RRP $999

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** Tegra 2 Dual-Core 1GHz processor and ULP GeForce GPU

**OS:** Android 2.2, upgradable to 2.3 Gingerbread

**Display:** 4-inch WVGA (800 x 480) LCD

**Storage:** 8GB, with microSD (up to 32GB)

**Video Playback/recording:** 1080p@24fps, 720p@30fps

**Camera:** 8.0 MP

**Connectivity:** HSDPA 7.2Mbps and HSUPA 5.7Mbps

**Battery:** 1500mAh

**Dimensions:** 123.9 x 63.2 x 10.9 mm

# Samsung GALAXY S II

If you're looking for speed, look no further.

Running a dual-core application processor, the Galaxy S II represents Samsung's most powerful smartphone to date. Multitasking and switching between applications is now superfast, plus, with wireless network connectivity you get rapid data transfer times.

The Galaxy S II may have a sleek and lightweight design (just 8.49mm and 116g), but it still manages to pack in an 8MP camera and camcorder with 1080p full HD recording and playback, and it's equipped with a 'Super AMOLED Plus' screen, providing excellent image quality and wide viewing angles, all while keeping power consumption down.

It's not just about power however. Business capabilities are brought to the front with enhanced conferencing and connectivity services from Cisco, a comprehensive mobile implementation of Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync and secure remote device management from Sybase, meaning the Galaxy S II serves well for both business and pleasure.

And as far as gimmicks go, here's a tough one to beat. The Customized Voice Translation application can translate voice or text into, and from, a range of languages. Speak a word or phrase into the handset and it will translate it, with both audio and text output. Not the kind of thing you'll be doing every day, but pretty cool, nonetheless.

All in all the Galaxy S II is a very good unit – thin, fast and powerful.

$1199

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** 1.2 GHz Dual Core Application Processor

**OS:** Android 2.3 Gingerbread

**Display:** 4.27˝ WVGA (480x800) Super AMOLED Plus

**Storage:** 16/32GB with microSD (up to 32GB)

**Video Playback/recording:** 1080p@30fps

**Camera:** 8.0 MP

**Connectivity:** Bluetooth technology v 3.0 + HS, USB 2.0, WiFi DirectMHL, DLNA (AllShare)

**Battery:** 1650mAh

**Dimensions:** 125.3 x 66.1 x 8.49mm

9/10

# Sony Ericsson Xperia Arc

Measuring only 8.7mm at its thinnest part but with a wide 4.2" multi-touch screen, the Sony Ericsson Xperia Arc is a good looking unit. If you're guilty of valuing form over function, one look at the Xperia Arc and you'll be sold.

But there's more going on here than just a pretty package. Most noticeably, the Xperia Arc's multimedia capabilities are second to none. With a bright, crystal clear image and very black blacks, the picture quality on this unit really is among the best on the market (although some have complained that limited viewing angles can detract when viewing the screen from a less-than-direct position).

If you need a phone that you can use as your main camera as well, you've found it here. The Xperia Arc captures outstanding images and HD videos even in low light. Pictures and videos can then be shared in HD on your living room TV via the built in HDMI-connector, which is a nice touch.

Messaging, contacts, and applications are all easy to access and interfaces are intuitively designed, and with the latest version of Android onboard you can access a vast array of applications at the touch of a button. Furthermore, if you're a heavy Gmail user, accessing email on the move is as good as it gets with the Xperia Arc.

High performing and with an exceptionally good-looking screen, at the end of the day it's still the Xperia Arc's super-sexy design that steals the show.

RRP $999

## KEY SPECS

**CPU:** 1GHz Scorpion processor, Adreno 205 GPU, Qualcomm MSM8255 Snapdragon

**OS:** Android 2.3 Gingerbread

**Display:** 4.2 inches, 854 x 480 pixels (FWVGA)

**Storage:** 8GB with microSD (up to 32GB)

**Video Playback/recording:** 720p@30fps

**Camera:** 8.1 MP

**Connectivity:** aGPS, Bluetooth, HDMI, DLNA

**Battery:** 1500mAh

**Dimensions:** 125 x 63 x 8.7 mm