

Nokia's latest mobile dazzle

April 27 2006



Nokia 6682

Nokia, a company that isn't known for creating slick and sexy phones, has recently released its latest endeavor, the Nokia 6682. Nokia calls it a multimedia computer and not a phone, as it sports a speedy processing chip and includes numerous "computer like" functions like letting you take your e-mail and office anywhere so you can view files created with programs like Adobe Reader and Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

The phone also includes a phone book with multiple numbers per contact, a calendar with notes and reminders, and an alarm clock with snooze offline mode.

But curiously enough, even with all of this productivity functionality, it's not a classic PDA. This phone is somewhere between a regular phone and a full-featured BlackBerry or Palm Treo-style PDA. It lacks touch-screen functionality and doesn't have a miniature keyboard like these other phones. So navigation isn't as easy or intuitive as it should or needs to be.

The phone supports external Flash memory, comes with 10 MB of onboard memory and has a 64 MB external memory card. Also included is a USB cable and headphones so you can listen to your MP3 files. The phone's music functionality is really nice as it supports full polyphonic ringtones, Midi, AAC and MP3s via the previously mentioned Flash cards or downloaded directly to the unit via its integrated Web browser.

Nokia's main push with the new 6682 is its new multimedia, connectivity and gaming functions. While Nokia's nGage platform may be dead, the concept lives on in the new 6682, as it will support nGage titles.

"Using the connectivity of a phone is the most important thing. The key reason mobile telephony took off is because it connected people regardless of time and place. Mobile games is currently the biggest application category in mobile phones, earning around \$2.8 billion," said Markus Huttunen, manager of Nokia's Snap! Mobile gaming service.

He continued, "The problem (with mobile gaming) is that right now, mobile games are just ports of what's been done on other platforms. None of this stuff was created for the platform. I think the most successful entertainment applications will be material that connects people and will be designed for mobile games."

In keeping with executives like Huttunen's desire for more and more connectivity functionality, the 6682 has it covered in spades.

The phone's camera phone functions were OK but not great. It has a built in 1.3 megapixel camera with flash, 6x digital zoom, night mode and black & white mode. Advanced settings include flash mode, brightness, image quality, white balance and color tones. Nokia's XpressPrint technology allows direct photo printing from a compatible USB printer (cable included). It really is a full featured digital camera. The problem is you have to export the image to your computer before you can fully judge the image quality, which was excellent.

In addition to still photography the phone has a built-in video camera that can film anywhere from 30 seconds of video up to one hour, although this correspondent finds the one-hour claim hard to believe, as I was only able to get a couple of minutes worth of video to film before running out of space. The quality of the video was surprisingly smooth and clean, once the footage was transferred off the phone.

From a design standpoint, the 6682 is not a slim design at all, but it has a nice and solid feel to it and despite its "clunky" look is surprisingly lightweight. The 6682 isn't as space-age looking as its competitors, but it's full featured, somewhat easy to use and is a nice blend of functionality and style.

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