

iPhone 3G S has slew of new features

July 8 2009, By Etan Horowitz



If you've been thinking of buying an iPhone, the release of the iPhone 3G S makes it a lot easier to join Apple's telecom family. But if you already own an iPhone, deciding whether to buy this new model is a little more complicated.

There's finally a [video camera](#), better photos, a compass, voice controls, a landscape keyboard, better [battery life](#) and the ability to cut and paste. The "S" stands for speed, and although the device can open Web pages and applications twice as fast as its predecessor, the [iPhone](#) 3G, I don't consider the speed boost the phone's best feature.

I was most impressed with the iPhone's improved camera, which can shoot video and take sharper still pictures. The 3-megapixel autofocus

digital camera lets you tap an object or someone's face to focus in on, and it also has a macro focus for close-ups.

But the ability to not only shoot video, but edit and upload it to YouTube from the phone is really the standout feature of the iPhone 3G S. It means you no longer have to carry around a pocket video camera like the Flip (though the iPhone doesn't shoot HD like some Flip models) and that you can share video with the world in minutes without the need for a computer.

In my tests, the battery ran out after about five hours of mixed use, even when I set the phone to push new e-mail automatically, something that drains the battery extremely fast on iPhone 3G.

My other favorite feature was the compass, which comes as a standalone application and is also integrated into the Maps application. This is a big help when you're following directions because it tells you if you are facing the right direction.

If you are an existing iPhone owner, the first thing to do is check when you are eligible for upgrade pricing by dialing (ASTERISK)639# from your iPhone. If you are eligible for an upgrade in July, August or September, you can get the iPhone 3G S now for new-customer pricing -- \$199 for the 16GB model, \$299 for the 32GB model. If not, you can wait or pay a higher price now for the phone.

If you have the original iPhone, upgrading to the iPhone 3G S is worth it. If you have the iPhone 3G, the main reasons are the ability to shoot video, the improved battery life and the increased storage space (this is the first time there has been a 32GB iPhone).

If those things are not important to you (or important enough to spend a few hundred dollars and sign a new two- year contract), then you don't

need to upgrade. The improved speed is nice, but the iPhone 3G is no slowpoke, and you can get some of the best new features in the iPhone 3G S simply by upgrading for free to the iPhone 3.0 software.

IPHONE 3.0 SOFTWARE

There are more than 100 new features in the iPhone 3.0 software. To learn how to use them, visit the iPhone User Guide, which is a bookmark in your iPhone's Safari Web browser. Here are some of the best.

- **Cut, copy and paste:** More than any other feature, this is the one that iPhone users have pined for the most. It takes a little getting used to at first, so be sure you check out Apple's instructions to get the hang of it.
- **Search:** Probably the most useful of the new features because it makes performing tasks faster by letting you quickly search across your phone for an e-mail, a contact, a song, an application and more.
- **Landscape keyboard:** Tilt the phone sideways to make typing a lot easier.
- **Push notifications in apps:** This lets an application send you a text message-like notification, even when you don't have the app open. Good apps to download include: AP Mobile, which uses notifications to alert you of breaking news, Textfree Lite, which lets you send free text messages, AIM, which alerts you to a new instant message, and Zillow, which alerts you when a home is for sale in a neighborhood you like.

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Citation: iPhone 3G S has slew of new features (2009, July 8) retrieved 20 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2009-07-iphone-3g-slew-features.html>

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