

# How to pick the perfect smart phone

September 24 2010, By Bridget Carey

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In the past few months we've seen more than a dozen new high-quality smart phones with powerful hardware -- and tested them.

So which should you buy? First, decide which [service provider](#) you want to use. Not every phone is available from every carrier, and costs for monthly plans can vary significantly. Most phones cost about \$200, after rebates and two-year contracts.

That said, software changes quickly, and the carriers are constantly coming out with software upgrades users can download to fix bugs and add features.

But for now, these are the winners in my book:

- Larger-than-average screen: HTC Evo 4G on Sprint. Compared to its larger brethren, it's got the best interface and a second camera on the front for video chatting.
- Slide-out keyboard: Top-of-the-line choices are AT&T BlackBerry Torch, Verizon Droid 2 and Sprint's Samsung Epic 4G. My pick: Epic for its sharp graphics, spacious keyboard layout, quick and smooth response. It also has an extra camera on the front if you want to video-chat.
- Photo-video sharing: The iPhone 4 and HTC's Aria (both AT&T), Evo (Sprint) and Incredible (Verizon). Others new this season, such as the Samsung Galaxy S line of Androids (available on all major carriers),

have great cameras, but current software forces all vertical photos to be shared horizontally.

- Video watching: It's a toss-up between the iPhone 4 and the Samsung Galaxy S line of Android phones. The iPhone 4 offers Netflix (coming soon to Android), and Android has a Blockbuster app for instantly downloading movies. The Galaxy S is soon to feature a Media Hub -- which is like an iTunes for Samsung.
- Video chats: Three phones -- AT&T's iPhone 4, and Sprint's HTC Evo 4G and Samsung Epic 4G -- have front-facing cameras that allow video chatting. It's easiest on the iPhone, but as of now, you can only chat with other iPhone 4 users using Wi-Fi. The video chat apps for the Evo and Epic can use improvement, but they have more flexibility on whom you can chat with and where you can chat.
- Mostly business: Any of the latest [smart phones](#) can sync Outlook e-mail and calendar. Still, the new BlackBerry Torch is especially popular with businesspeople who are addicted to its messaging interface, keyboard with raised keys and blinking red alert light -- though it offers limited multimedia functions and few apps.
- Overall Champ: When you compare hardware, screen size and sharpness, battery life, an easy-to-use interface and wide choice of apps, the iPhone 4 tops the list (as long as you solve the known antenna problem with a case). A close second: Samsung Galaxy S phones with Android.

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