

Sprint to sell dual-screen 'Echo' smartphone (w/ Video)

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The Kyocera Echo by Sprint and Kyocera, the first dual-touchscreen smartphone, is shown with a map view across both screens as it was introduced in New York Monday, Feb. 7, 2011. (AP Photo/Craig Ruttle)

(AP) -- Sprint Nextel Corp. on Monday unveiled a smart phone with two screens, one stacked on top of the other. The top screen slides out and can be snapped it into place so that the two lay side by side, producing screen space that rivals a tablet computer.

The phone, called the Echo, is made by Japanese manufacturer Kyocera Corp. and has screens that are each the size of an iPhone's display. Put together, they create a larger space for typing e-mails, playing games and watching videos. The resulting display is still about half the size of an iPad's. But it's still a larger surface area than those found on most phones.

If people wish, they can use just one screen, or have something - say, a YouTube clip or [Google Maps](#) - stretch across both screens. But Sprint also lets people use certain applications so that different parts of the app show up on each screen. For example, you can read e-mails on one screen and respond using an oversized onscreen keyboard on the second display. Or, you can play a game such as "The Sims" in one window with the controls taking up the lower screen. Like many other [smart phones](#), the Echo runs [Google](#) Inc.'s Android software. Adding an extra screen is Sprint's way of making the phone stand out from dozens of others that also run Android.

For now, Sprint has re-configured the basic e-mail, text messaging, photo, video and Web browser features, along with some games, so that you can use these apps while doing different things on each screen. That list will grow to include more specific [Android](#) apps, Sprint said.

One question that remains about the Echo is how long it's likely to last on a charge. For now, Sprint says the phone can offer at least 5.5 hours of talk time, though the company might succeed in stretching the battery life by the time it goes on sale. The [iPhone](#), in contrast, claims 7 hours of talk time.

Perhaps to preempt any complaints about its endurance, Sprint will include a spare battery in the box, along with a device that can recharge both the phone and the second battery at the same time.

The phone will go on sale in the spring and cost \$199 with a two-year contract.

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