

Review: Galaxy Nexus buttons up; Droid Razr Maxx is sharp

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Verizon has been rolling out its 4G coverage to 195 markets, and the company has given me two phones to review that take good advantage of 4G's much faster speeds.

The Samsung Galaxy Nexus and Motorola Droid Razr Maxx run different versions of Google's [Android](#) operating system, but both have large screens and run on Verizon's 4G LTE network.

SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS: Sporting a gorgeous 4.65-inch HD Super AMOLED screen with a resolution of 1280x720 pixels, the Galaxy Nexus has a dual-core 1.2GHz processor in a case just 0.37 inches thick and weighing 5.1 ounces.

The Nexus is the first Android phone I've used that has soft buttons on the bottom of the screen instead of actual buttons for items like home and return.

The Nexus runs Android version 4, known as Ice Cream Sandwich.

The operating system also brings [face recognition](#) to the Nexus' unlock screen: Hold the phone up to your face and in about half a second, the front-facing camera recognizes you and unlocks the phone.

It was easy to set up and worked well. If I looked into the screen normally I was recognized, but if I made a funny face or opened my mouth really wide, the recognition would not unlock the phone.

There is a backup to facial unlocking - you assign a PIN or gesture to unlock the phone.

The Nexus' rear-facing camera has a 5-megapixel sensor with zero [shutter](#) lag. The camera also captures 1080p video and has a mode for automatically capturing panoramic photos as you swing the camera slowly from left to right.

Once you get the timing right, the panoramic photos look really neat.

The front-facing camera has a 1.3-megapixel sensor for video chatting.

The Nexus has 1 [gigabyte](#) of RAM and 32 gigabytes of storage.

There's also Near Field Communications with Android Beam, which is a technology for sharing files between two phones by touching one phone to the other.

At my house the Nexus' download speed was 10,576 kbps and the upload was 864 kbps, according to a test I ran at [Speedtest.net](#).

The 1850 mAh battery provides 12 hours of talk and 150 hours of standby.

The Nexus is \$299 with a two-year contract.

-Pros: Great screen. Super-fast network.

-Cons: Can't think of any.

-Bottom Line: This is Verizon's flagship 4G LTE phone, and it's worthy of the title.

MOTOROLA DROID RAZR MAXX: I've seen plenty of TV commercials for the [Droid](#) Razr Maxx in recent months, and it's a really impressive phone.

Where the [Nexus](#) is gently rounded at the corners, the Maxx is all about angles. If I had to use one word to describe the Maxx's design, it'd be "futuristic."



According to Verizon, the Maxx is the thinnest 4G LTE smartphone at 0.28 inches thick. It weighs 4.48 ounces.

The body is made with Kevlar and features Corning Gorilla Glass with a water-repellent nanocoating.

The Maxx has a 4.3-inch Super AMOLED screen with a resolution of 960x540 pixels, which I'll admit is not exactly state of the art, but it still looks pretty good.

The phone has a 1.2GHz dual-core processor with 1 gigabyte of RAM and runs Android 2.3.6 (Gingerbread).

It has 16 gigabytes of onboard storage and a 16 GB microSD card preinstalled to provide 32 GB of total storage.

The main camera has an 8-megapixel sensor and captures 1080p video. It can be launched from the lock screen.

Video can be played to your TV through an HDMI port.

The front-facing camera is 1.3 megapixels for video chat over 4G, 3G or Wi-Fi.

The Maxx features MotoCast, which allows you to pull movies, music, photos and documents from your PC over 4G.

Being a guy, I really like the look of the Maxx's cool black and gray body.

Speedtest.net showed a 9600 kbps download speed and 800 kbps upload.

Battery life from the 3300 mAh Li-On battery is a staggering 21.5 hours of talk and 15.8 days of standby.

The Maxx is \$299 with a two-year contract.

-Pros: Slick design, great size. Fast network.

-Cons: Wish the screen had a higher resolution.

-Bottom line: One of the best-looking phones I've seen. It's a pretty complete package.

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