

LTE on Apple's iPhone 5 a winner with a catch

September 26 2012, by Troy Wolverton



The iPhone 5.

My first take on Apple's iPhone 5 is this: It's a nice device that's certain to please iPhone fans.

The larger screen is the most noticeable new feature, but the one [iPhone](#)

fans are likely to appreciate most is the device's ability to connect to the [wireless carriers'](#) fast new LTE networks. LTE radios have been standard fare on Android devices for more than a year now, but until the new model, iPhones have been stuck on the relatively slower and more congested [3G networks](#).

The new [antenna](#) makes a world of difference. On the iPhone 4S, I saw speeds of as slow as half a megabit per second at my house while connected to AT&T's 3G network. From the same location, I saw download speeds of up to 21 megabits per second and upload speeds of up to 19 megabits per second on the iPhone 5. That's comparable to the bandwidth I typically see on my landline connection from Comcast and about the same as what I experienced while using the AT&T version of Samsung's Galaxy S III.

One note, though, about the new LTE radio. If you are on AT&T and attempt to talk on the phone while surfing the Web, the iPhone 5 will kick you back to the company's slower 3G network. And if you are on Verizon or Sprint, you won't be able to talk and surf at the same time at all - you get kicked back to their 3G networks, which don't support simultaneous talking and surfing.

That's the same limitation that the iPhone 4S and other 3G Verizon and Sprint phones suffered from. Other LTE phones on those networks - including the Galaxy S III - don't have that limitation because they have an extra radio that's able to connect to the LTE data network while using a separate radio to make phone calls. [Apple](#) chose not to include an extra radio in order to make the [iPhone 5](#) as thin and light as possible. You can decide for yourself whether that trade-off was worth it.

More information: Troy Wolverton is a technology columnist for the San Jose Mercury News.

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