

Review: LG smartphone goes to pieces on purpose

May 3 2016, by Jim Rossman, The Dallas Morning News



Let's face it - LG makes fine smartphones, but they are not as popular as handsets from Apple or Samsung.

When you're chasing the leaders, you're much more likely to make some bold decisions, and LG has created some buzz with its new flagship handset, the LG G5.

LG designed the G5 as a modular phone - the portion of the phone's bezel below the screen snaps off and you can install different modules LG calls "Friends."

SPECS

The G5 is a flagship handset, so you can expect to find a high-end set of specs, and LG doesn't disappoint.

The G5 has a 5.3-inch screen with a resolution of 2,560-by-1,440 pixels, for a pixel density of 554 per inch.

It's running a Qualcomm Snapdragon 820 processor with 4 gigabytes of RAM and 32 gb of internal storage. A microSD card slot can provide up to 200 gb of additional storage.

The G5's 2,800 mAh battery, attached to the removable lower bezel, is user replaceable.

LG sells an optional charging cradle that holds an extra battery and can be used to charge other devices.

The G5 doesn't look very different from other Android phones. There are no buttons on the front - the power/sleep button, with its incorporated fingerprint reader, is centered on the back, under the cameras. The button falls exactly where your index finger rests, which is nice.

The only other buttons are on the left side. A single, rocking volume

button is near the top, while a smaller button near the bottom releases the bottom bezel for swapping modules.

The G5 gets its charge and moves data using a USB-C port instead of the usual microUSB connection. Some say USB-C is the future, but for now, it just means you'll have to bring your own charging cable instead of borrowing one from a friend when you need a charge.

The G5 measures 2.91-by-5.88-by-0.3 inches and weighs 5.6 ounces.

Communications include Bluetooth 4.2, 802.11ac Wi-Fi, an IR blaster to control your TV and NFC for mobile wallet applications.

CAMERAS

The dual cameras on the back are among the G5's best features.

The main camera has a 16-megapixel sensor and a lens with a 78-degree field of view. The second is an 8-megapixel camera with a 135-degree field of view.

I really liked having the wider-angle camera available. It's perfect for large group shots or landscapes.

I like that the two cameras really act as one when you're zooming. If you choose to zoom all the way out, you're using the wide camera. If you zoom in, the G5 switches to the normal camera.

The front-facing camera has an 8-megapixel sensor.

MODULES

Who doesn't like modular designs? I love the idea of popping the bottom

off of the G5 and swapping it out for something more useful.

Sadly, the idea of something more useful is about all we have today.

There are only two modules available for the G5, and one of them is not available in the United States.

Users can get the LG CAM Plus module (\$70), which adds buttons, bulk and extra battery power.

The module takes some of the controls for the camera off the screen and assigns them to actual buttons.

The module has buttons to turn the camera on or off, a two-stage shutter button to set the focus and exposure and then fire the shutter or record video, and a thumb wheel to zoom the lens. The module is thicker than the phone, so it gives your fingers a bit more real estate to hold onto while you're taking pictures.

An extra 1,100 mAh battery is included with the CAM Plus.

If you shoot lots of photos, you can leave the module installed, as it doesn't get in the way of the screen and the extra battery is helpful.

The only other module is the Hi-Fi Plus, which is a portable digital-to-analog converter, but it's not currently available in the U.S.

The module is designed play back high-definition audio files and enhance all music files.

One thing that bugs me is that the phone must be completely powered down to swap modules. I realize the battery is part of the module swap, but it precludes fast swapping of modules, and it's clunky.

CONCLUSIONS

The LG G5 is a nice enough smartphone, and I can see where the company is trying hard to include some features that stand out from the crowd, but I think the results come up a bit short.

LG is to be congratulated for trying the modular design, but the one available module is very limited. Perhaps LG will introduce more modules, but none have been announced.

I guess LG is hoping other companies will design their own modules, but without a fairly large user base, I'm afraid I can't see much development happening in that area.

Without more compelling modules, all that makes the G5 stand out is the dual [camera](#) system, but I'm not sure it's enough to convince me to buy the G5.

Pros: Great screen, dual cameras, modular design

Cons: Lack of available modules

Bottom line: A good design that would be better with more modules

©2016 The Dallas Morning News

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Review: LG smartphone goes to pieces on purpose (2016, May 3) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-05-lg-smartphone-pieces-purpose.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.