Mobile technical specifications

Display

Today, we have displays of different sizes and compositions, each one claiming to be better than the other.

Associated Terms: AMOLED, LCD, Super LCD, Retina, PPI, ClearBlack. What you need to know: Bigger displays might look better but also drain battery life. And while we recommend going for the highest resolution screen within your budget, do remember to check if the apps you want to use support that resolution. As for the AMOLED vs LCD debate, we advise you to trust your eyes to 'see' which one works best for you. As a general rule, AMOLEDs are brighter and produce richer colours, but LCDs render text better.

Processor

The processor is the engine that drives your phone. As phones become more powerful, processors are getting into dual core and quad core territory.

What you need to know: A faster processor with more cores will work better, but what you need to keep in mind is whether the operating system and apps on your device are actually designed to use the extra power. If you're only looking for good web browsing, social networking and some casual gaming, a single core 800 MHz processor will do nicely too.

RAM

The RAM allows the phone to run multiple applications simultaneously and do various tasks in the background.

What you need to know: While some operating systems need more RAM, others will function smoothly with lesser amounts. For instance, you'll see a lot of new Android devices with 1 GB of RAM, but most Windows Phone devices run fine at 512 MB and many Symbian devices work fine at even 256 MB. It is not really about the amount of RAM but about the OS of your device.

Camera

Once considered a luxury in smartphones, the camera is now an integral part of smartphones.

What you need to know: There is a whole lot more to any camera than megapixels. The quality of the lens, the camera software and the presence of options like autofocus and different scene settings make a world of difference — so much so, that many 5MP cameraphones outperform 8MP ones. If you want to take loads of photographs, check for features like auto focus/touch focus, xenon flash, face detection, macro mode and red eye reduction.

Battery

The battery (with a capacity expressed in mAh or milli ampere hour) determines how long your phone keeps working on a single charge. As phones get bigger, so do their batteries.

What you need to know: While battery life varies a lot depending on how you use a phone, a phone with a battery that has a high mAh count will generally offer better backup. Operating systems like Symbian and BlackBerry also tend to manage battery life better than the likes of Android and iOS. As for the 'removable vs non-removable' issue, we have not seen it making a major difference — unless you plug your phone in several times a day, necessitating a battery replacement before you actually need to change your phone.

Device Connectivity

There are various wired and wireless technologies embedded today on mobile devices to connect them with other phones, tablets, televisions or various accessories.

What you need to know: Whenever you look at the device connectivity options in a phone, check the fine print to see if there are any limitations. For instance, iOS and Windows Phone devices generally do not let you send files over Bluetooth. Also see if any accessories are required to make the most of this connectivity and if they are bundled with the device — HDMI cables and USB On-The-Go adaptors are two examples.

Mobile Internet Connectivity

Phones are no longer used to just make calls and swap texts. Almost every smartphone now comes with some sort of Internet connectivity via the operator's data services.

What you need to know: Being able to access the Web on your handset is useful, but check if you actually have access to the form of network that the device supports. For example, the 4G-enabled HTC One X and the new iPad will not work with Indian 4G networks. The slower (and cheaper) GPRS/EDGE connections often suffice for basic browsing and email.

OS/Platform

The operating system of a phone is the software that makes the phone work, handling basic tasks like calling, texting as well as more complex ones like mail and Web browsing. It works in a similar way like Windows and Mac OS do, on a computer.

Apps

Apps, or applications are bits of software that let you do a host of tasks, from browsing the Web to playing games to tweaking images.