

Comment: the launch of the HTC One

LONDON, UK / TAIPEI, TIAWAN: Julian Jest, research analyst at Informa Telecoms & Media comments on the launch of the HTC One.



HTC's latest handset, the HTC One, is undoubtedly a striking device, with an industrial design rivalling any handset previously released by the Taiwanese company, and the current crop of high-end smartphones on the market.

Although the device is powered by Android OS, it is highly distinguishable from the "Android mass" in terms of both usability and elegance of design. Clearly, the introduction of One will help HTC to differentiate its brand from the typical Android identity without losing the high performance qualities the OS can offer.

The Taiwanese manufacturer added its HTC Sense customisation to the Android OS on its handsets some time ago. However, HTC Sense has received a radical overhaul with the One. The addition of the "Blink Feed" home screen, which bears some resemblance to the live tiles layout present on the Windows Phone OS, is particularly unique. It can dynamically aggregate and display animated content fed from external sources, social networking portals and internal applications as a function of the user context. This UI framework should prove popular with consumers as it enables UI customisation that dynamically provides a comprehensive view of the most relevant and contextual information.

Introduced at the right time

The only caveat here is power consumption, since using such functionality could shorten the battery life quite significantly leaving the user no choice but to deactivate it. The introduction of HTC One has come at an ideal time - iPhone sales are slowing down and advanced users are now desperately looking for more innovative devices to satisfy their appetite to explore the new technology horizons.

However, HTC has to get the pricing right with the One. It is unlikely that network operators will give their support to a device that they will need to subsidise heavily - and from a vendor that has struggled to compete with Samsung, the market leader on the Android OS. A speedy delivery of the device to a wide range of mobile operators will be vital, and may just give it the head start it needs to grow its market share ahead of the latest Galaxy device from Samsung.

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