

## **BlackBerry Curve 8900 Review**

### **Introduction:**

The [Curve 8300](#) series has been an immensely successful line for RIM, helping push the manufacturer out of the board room and into the family room. There have been attempts at consumer friendly devices since, such as the [Pearl](#) and Storm, but nothing has quite hit the sweet spot like the Curve.

So, how do you create a follow up to arguably the best device you've ever put out? Make it sleeker, of course.



Enter the Curve 8900, a rework on the original with a better screen, better in hand feel, better camera and better OS. It's conservative enough for the suits but modern enough for the everyday user. It's gorgeous to look at and a joy to use. In the box you'll find: Li-Ion battery, AC adapter, 3.5mm stereo headphones, 256MB microSD card, Leather pouch.

### **Design:**

The new Curve feels distinctively different from the original. The dimensions haven't changed drastically, but it is narrower and lighter. It fits great in the hand, although the keyboard is more cramped than other RIM offerings.

The **screen** is what immediately grabs your attention. Measuring in at 2.4" it has a resolution of 480x360, bettering the Bold's 480x320 and matching the [Storm](#). It is only 65K colors (like the others) but is still one of the sharpest and crisp displays we've ever used. It stood up well to all lighting conditions, even direct sunlight.

Below the display is the standard RIM layout; **a trackball** flanked by two keys on either side above a **full QWERTY keyboard**. The shift keys are regular size now, not elongated as they were on 83xx models, and the narrower [phone](#) means a narrower keyboard. It doesn't lose much in the way of functionality though. If the [8350i](#) is a 10 in terms of usability, the 8900 is an 8.5. It is better than most keyboards on the market, and only those with very large mitts will complain about the smaller size. With our moderately large fingers we had no issues tapping out messages.

**The back** of the device is in line with other RIM units. The large battery door takes up most of the real estate, with the 3.2 megapixel camera and LED flash perched up top. It looks like brushed aluminum, but unlike the Storm the door is actually plastic. The phone has a ring of matte chrome trim around it, which is also plastic. Neither of them cheapen the new Curve though, which feels more solid than the original.

The **microSD slot** has moved to below the battery, next to the SIM card, making it hot swappable. RIM has still managed to mess it up though; rather than a spring mechanism that is found on nearly every other device out there, they have gone with a locking mechanism that requires two hands to operate. Needless to say, this can be cumbersome at times.

The **left side** has a lanyard loop at the top and silver convenience key. The **right** is busier, with a 3.5mm headphone jack at the top followed by the volume rocker, another convenience key and the microUSB charging/data port. Like the Storm, **the top** of the Curve has a Lock and Mute key that are integrated into the housing. The convenience keys have plenty of travel and feel, but the volume rocker could use some more tactile feedback.

We were really impressed with the design of the Curve 8900. There are no doubt some that will prefer the slightly larger Bold, but in our opinion the Curve is the best designed QWERTY device we've come across. Our one gripe is the microSD, which is finally hot swappable but is a pain to remove. There is a little catch that holds the card in place, and you have to pull it down and the card out at the same time which took us a good minute to do the first time. It's a minor thing, however, and much better than the under-the-battery placement on the 8300.

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