

BlackBerry Storm 9500 Review

The new [BlackBerry Storm](#) is probably RIM's most important phone release since the first Pearl became available back in 2006. Why? Because like the Pearl, which introduced the business orientated BlackBerry brand to the consumer world, the Storm represents another first for RIM, the introduction of a touchscreen handset with a brand new interface ready to take on the current smartphone darling, Apple's iPhone 3G.



Originally known as the BlackBerry Thunder prior to the official announcement, we received word of its imminent release on October 8th when the Storm 9500 was confirmed for Europe – incidentally, the Storm 9530 is the version to be sold in the USA – and word is the BlackBerry will be on sale from October 22nd.

Research in Motion realise how important the touchscreen interface is and have added their own unique style to the system as well as addressing the various feature omissions which frustrate both existing and potential iPhone users. The Storm has its fair share of impressive features and will appeal to a broad range of mobile phone fans, as it's set to be as competent on the multimedia side as it's sure to be on the business side. If you've held off purchasing another smartphone because you where intrigued to see what RIM were cooking up, then it looks like you're about to be rewarded, as the Storm looks mightily impressive.

It's not the first time RIM have made a BlackBerry which will appeal to everyone, but it's perhaps the first time they have packaged one inside such a stylish handset! Style is everything in consumer world and phones don't come much better looking than when they are almost devoid of ugly buttons. It's not just a pretty face either, as the Storm does everything the casual user demands.

Mobile Video on the Blackberry Storm – The Way You Want It.

The BlackBerry Storm is happy playing the majority of common video files, including MPEG4 and WMV formats, plus you have the option to stream clips from sites such as YouTube.com directly to your phone.

Music on the Blackberry Storm - the Way You Want it Too.

It's not just video which can be streamed to your Storm either, as the phone accepts streaming audio too. Like several other recent BlackBerry's, the music player will play MP3, WMA and AAC encoded files and can be synced with your PC via iTunes as well as the included BlackBerry Music Sync software. A 3.5mm jackplug socket has also been added so you can plug in your own headphones.

A Superb Camera.

The first of the features the Storm boasts which improves on the iPhone 3G's spec. The Storm's camera is a 3.2 megapixel item and has both a flash unit and autofocus to take the sharpest pictures possible. The Storm's camera also shoots video.

An Array of Messaging Options.

Aside from the BlackBerry's brilliance at email, you can also compose SMS and, again adding something the iPhone 3G lacks, MMS messages. Another standard feature is the BlackBerry Instant Messenger enabling you to chat to your friends in the same way you would with Yahoo or MSN instant messenger on your PC.

Social Networking on Your BlackBerry Storm.

If you're a Facebook or MySpace addict and love to update them during the day but don't always have access to a computer, then the Storm will make your life much simpler! Direct access to your accounts means it's easy to change your status or add a blog post all from your mobile phone, wherever you are.

BlackBerry Maps and Built-in GPS.

The Storm features a built-in Assisted GPS receiver for the fastest location service possible, making sure you never get lost again. BlackBerry Maps is a very flexible software package which can not only plot a route, but highlight points of interest, bookmark favourite spots or suggest locations based on a search term too.

Enjoy Fantastic Business Tools on the BlackBerry Storm.

Once a business device, always a business device. The BlackBerry Storm may include every cool multimedia function in order to attract those who don't want to use the phone for work, but RIM made their name by providing just about the best mobile office handset on the market and the Storm is no exception.

The Original and Best Mobile Email.

Think BlackBerry, think email. The Storm offers few surprises in the email department, as their tried and tested system is already top-notch. Integrate your office email system via the BlackBerry Enterprise Server which works with Microsoft Enterprise, Lotus Domino and Novell Groupwise ensuring whichever system your work has chosen, the Storm will happily connect with it. The same applies to personal email systems too, either via syncing with your PC or in the case of Yahoo or Gmail, the entry of your username and password in order to set everything up in mere moments. Use it once and you'll wonder how you ever did without it.

Data Connections Galore!

The Blackberry Storm 9500 is a 3G, quad band GSM handset with HSDPA support for the fastest mobile data access available. GPRS and EDGE are on hand to back the 3G connection up and v2.0 Bluetooth plus a USB socket complete the line-up.

Office and Calendar Features.

The BlackBerry Storm features DataViz's Documents To Go viewer and editor to allow simple manipulation of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint files – which can be sent and received by email – plus the comprehensive RIM calendar and address book, which are integrated so well into the operating system they can be accessed quickly and easily even when on a call.

Browse the Internet On the Move.

The Storm's web browser is rumoured to be based around the same software as the one found on the iPhone 3G, but its operation is still something of a secret. What is known is that it will feature copy/paste, something the iPhone 3G doesn't, and will make use of the multi-touch technology and special feedback given by the Storm's brand new touchscreen.

Inside the Eye of the Storm.

It's the BlackBerry Storm's biggest attraction and will likely be the talking point all over the mobile phone world upon its release, we're of course, talking about the beautiful new touchscreen. But the screen is not the only impressive technology found on the Storm...

All New Touchscreen Experience.

Research in Motion was unlikely to follow the herd and just add a regular touchscreen to their first ever device to feature such an item, but we didn't expect something as unique as this! Touted as a 'clickable' touchscreen, it's supposed to feel like you're actually pressing a physical button rather than an unresponsive glass screen when using the Storm, which RIM claim makes the

experience far more interactive and user-friendly than expected. Will the Storm be the first re-invention of the touchscreen? We can't wait to find out!

Two Keyboard Options.

Unlike the iPhone 3G's portrait keyboard, the Storm offers two different ways of typing your emails, SMS's or chat sessions. If the Storm is held upright as normal, then a SureType keypad is displayed, just like the one found on the Pearl, but if you rotate the phone into landscape orientation then a full QWERTY keyboard appears for faster and even more accurate typing! This is surely the biggest advantage the Storm has over its competitors.

Auto Screen Rotation.

This transfer between SureType keypad and full keyboard when the phone is rotated is fully automatic thanks to the accelerometer inside the Storm. It works well for web browsing and videos too.

A Fast Processor and Upgradeable Memory.

A 624Mhz processor should keeps things moving swiftly along, as will the 128MB of RAM. Internal storage is 1GB out of the box, however there is also a slot for a MicroSD card up to a huge 32GB in size!

Large Screen Size and Plenty of Battery Power.

The Storm's touchscreen is 3.25 inches and displays a resolution of 360×480 and 65,000 colours. The battery, which will be removable and therefore user-replaceable, offers a quoted 360 hours standby and over 5 hours talktime.

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