

## Tips, Tricks and Advice from your local “IT Guru”

This month I want to talk to you about Smartphones. Let's start by explaining what a Smartphone is; basically it's a mobile device that, as well as making phone calls, can do lots of other things as well. Typically, this would be things like send and receive eMail, read eBooks, browse the Internet, create and play music or videos, do a bit of gaming and view and edit Office documents. Most modern Smartphones can also act as navigation devices. To me, the best way to define a Smartphone is a mobile phone that can be enhanced with various applications to add extra functions.

Just like with computers, Smartphones have an operating system, and unlike computers, there are many to choose from, but let's stick with the most popular ones. These are:

- Apple Mobile OS
- Symbian S60
- Google Android
- Microsoft Windows Phone
- Blackberry
- Palm Web OS

As you can see there is quite a selection, and some of these even come in different flavours depending on the manufacturer. So, if you decide you need or would like a Smartphone, which should you go for?

Without a doubt the best device on the market is the Apple iPhone. It's head and shoulders above the rest and, with over 100,000 applications, easily the most expandable. The intuitive interface makes it simple to start using and the links to iTunes make adding applications quick and easy. Over the last 15 years I've tried most types of Smartphone and this is the best, by far! The only downside is that it's expensive, very expensive, so if you can't justify the eye watering cost, what's the next best thing? My advice would be to go for a Symbian S60 device, they are not as polished as an iPhone, but are just as accomplished and can be found quite cheap on Pay as you Go and probably free on contract. The biggest manufacture of Symbian devices is Nokia, and they do a style and price to fit every need, touch screens, keyboards, sliders, the choice is yours and they are all very well specified with GPS, WiFi, good quality cameras and radios as standard. Their App store may not be as big as iTunes, but most of the applications you will need are already installed out of the box, and their Ovi store is growing every day. Just go to any phone shop and ask to see a selection, but to point you in the right direction, look at the E71 if you want a device with a front facing keyboard and the 5800 if you are after a touch interface.

So, what about the rest on the list? Google Android is getting a lot of interest at the moment, but unless you are a compulsive fiddler and are really techy, I'd give it at least another year to become a bit more user friendly. As I said, I've been using these things for years and even I struggled to get used to it. Blackberry could be of interest if you live and breathe emails but the interface is looking a bit dated nowadays and they are complicated to set up. Windows Phone is one of the original smartphone operating systems and tries to make your phone look and act like a desktop PC, but it just doesn't work well on such a small screen. There's a new version due out next year which might improve things, but I would keep clear for the moment. The Palm is the new kid on the block and looks quite interesting, but it's the same price as the iPhone so.....

Frankly, for normal people (and I mean that in the nicest way) everything but the iPhone is hard to use and set up, with S60 being the best of the rest. So, if you can afford it go for the iPhone, otherwise Symbians S60 will not disappoint.

It may seem like a gadgety boys toy, but once mastered a Smartphone can provide a good way of getting things done in time that would otherwise be wasted and can be really useful in both your working and personal life.

If you have any questions or anything you would like me to cover in this column, email me at [look@4-11consultants.co.uk](mailto:look@4-11consultants.co.uk)

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