

## WinInfo Daily | UPDATE

**Windows Phone Hits the Final Lap**

by Paul Thurrott

This morning, Microsoft announced an important milestone in the development of its next-generation smartphone platform, Windows Phone. The company has delivered a near-final, technical preview version of the system to developers in preparation for a broad, worldwide launch in the fourth quarter.

"Our software is now ready for the hands-on everyday use of a broad set of consumers around the world," Microsoft Corporate Vice President Terry Myerson wrote in a blog post announcing the release, "and I can't wait to see how our developer partners take advantage of our new approach to smart design and integrated mobile experiences."

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Myerson also took an implicit dig at Apple, whose own lack of testing has finally come back to haunt the company in the form of multiple, endemic hardware problems with the iPhone 4.

"The [Windows Phone] software has undergone extensive testing, in daily use by more than 1,000 people at Microsoft who have been using [Windows Phone] as their only phone for the past several months, and the more than 10,000 devices in our test labs," he noted. "We've been testing usability, battery life, network connectivity, and many other metrics for a long time. As a result of that work, I hope you will find the experience to be of surprisingly high quality."

That's what I've found. In my own tests of the technical preview software this month, running on prototype hardware devices, Windows Phone has worked reliably and with excellent performance. More enticingly, Microsoft's new Metro UI, with its integrated panoramic hubs and touch-based interaction model, is like a breath of fresh air in a me-too mobile industry that's been bogged down for too long trying to ape Apple's increasingly tired apps-based model. Windows Phone isn't perfect—yes, it will lack

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features like copy and paste and true multitasking at launch—but I don't believe these concerns will deter actual consumers, either.

You can read my initial [hands-on report of Windows Phone](#) on the SuperSite for Windows. I'll have more information about Windows Phone in the days ahead.

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## **Apple: There Is No Problem, so Please Accept Our Free Fix for That Problem and Stop Complaining**

by Paul Thurrott

Hoping that its customers and most ardent followers won't see the logical discord, Apple on Friday strenuously claimed that there was nothing wrong with its beleaguered iPhone 4 smartphone. It then announced that it would provide a free fix for that non-existent problem, apparently hoping that a dose of berating and a cheap gift would simply make the problem go away until the real fix—expected by the end of September—arrives.

After apologizing for having to address the problem in such a public manner, Apple blamed the media for "blowing out of proportion" news coverage of the iPhone 4's many physical and software defects. (Hypocritically, the company has never made such a claim for the commensurately blown-out-of-proportion positive media coverage it normally gets for even the most minor of upgrades.)

To "fix" the iPhone 4 antenna problem—which Apple amazingly claims affects less than 1 percent of users, when in fact it is a hardware defect that afflicts every single iPhone 4 ever made—the company will provide customers who request it with a free "bumper" case that does what a good initial design would have done: cover the antenna and provide protection against the user's hand. These bumper cases typically cost \$29 at retail, and Apple will provide refunds for customers who already purchased one.

Of course, this isn't so much a fix as a cover-up. Literally: The bumper covers up the exposed antenna, which allows it to work properly. The iPhone 4 uses a known-faulty external antenna design that other

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smartphone makers explicitly avoid.

Apple also turned Friday's press conference into a marketing event. It announced that it has sold more than 3 million of the buggy devices since the iPhone 4's launch last month and made bizarre and improbable claims about the iPhone 4's dropped call rates and return rates. The message: There is no problem. And thanks for complaining, but the iPhone 4 is a huge success and maybe the company's best product ever.

Further stretching its credibility, Apple noted that the antenna problems that dog iPhone 4 users are also present in "every smartphone," according to Apple CEO Steve Jobs, and the company provides some video evidence of those claims. Apple's competitors immediately fired back, noting that companies with many years of experience making phone antennas learned how to avoid the iPhone 4 problems long ago.

"Apple's attempt to draw [BlackBerry maker] Research in Motion into Apple's self-made debacle is unacceptable," a RIM statement reads. "RIM has avoided designs like the one Apple used in the iPhone 4 and instead has used innovative designs which reduce the risk for dropped calls, especially in areas of lower coverage ... Apple clearly made certain design decisions and it should take responsibility for these decisions."

"Nokia designs our phones to ensure acceptable performance in all real-life cases, for example when the phone is held in either hand," a Nokia statement reads. Nokia is the world's largest maker of smartphones, by far. It too, does not place antennas on the outside of its devices.

Ultimately, Apple's decision to launch the iPhone 4 with an antenna design that was known internally at the company to be defective for as long as a year is simply the latest in a long line of examples that the company values form over function—often to the detriment of its customers. Steve Jobs refused to change the iPhone 4 antenna, which stretches along the outside of the device, because he was so enamored of the sleek device design it afforded. Apple employees, famously fearful of crossing the dismissive CEO, then saw their concerns about the antenna go unchecked.

Amazingly, Steve Jobs even admitted to this. "The iPhone 4 antenna went through all of this," he said after describing Apple's \$100 million

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dollar antenna testing facility. "We *tested* it. We *knew* that if you gripped it in a certain way, the bars were going to go down a little bit, just like *every* smartphone. We didn't think it'd be a big problem ... Phones aren't perfect."

In the span of 30 seconds on Friday, Jobs claimed this problem affects "every smartphone." But as it turns out, Apple can't officially make such a claim. So on its website, Apple offers a less dramatic claim, noting that "nearly every smartphone can lose signal strength if you hold it in a certain way." The company cites five smartphones as evidence, though it should be noted that two of the five tested devices are Apple's own iPhones.

Much of the media is, of course, lining up like the lemmings they are, lauding the company for acting "prudently" and for "apologizing to customers" and "seizing the bull by the horns." Curiously, few have pointed out that there are 3 million customers out there with bug-ridden devices that will cost them about \$2,000 over the life of their two-year AT&T contract. And the antenna problem is only the start of what is now a litany of complaints about the iPhone 4. Will Apple ever admit to these many flaws and do the right thing?

Of course not.

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