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Google's Upcoming Phone: More Details

Posted by: Olga Kharif on August 15

The first mobile phone based on Android, which is software supported by Google, will debut this fall. We know a lot about the phone's looks already: Made by HTC, it will have a touch screen and a slide-out Qwerty keyboard, according to [this story](#). But today, Moe Tanabian, senior principal at IBB Consulting who has seen the device, has been able to give me a lot more details on its software.

Software is, in fact, what will make or break this gadget, which some call the gPhone. There have been plenty of touch-screen iPhone clones already, several of them from HTC. They've done well, but not nearly as well as Apple's iPhone. Could the Android phone change that? Perhaps.

Here's Tanabian's run-down on the Android phone's software features:

- If you want to receive push e-mail, you'll have to use Google's Gmail. It's unclear that the phone will support Microsoft Exchange.
- The phone will have access to upcoming T-Mobile App Store, which will be very similar to Apple's store featuring third-party iPhone applications. Only T-Mobile will likely place fewer restrictions on software developers, so that Android phone users may have more games and productivity apps to choose from.
- The phone will come with Google's advertising software pre-installed. Customers who opt in to receive mobile ads from Google may be offered to buy the phone for a lower price, and may also pay lower monthly service fees. The Google platform will serve ads based on your interests and location, provided by the phone.

Tanabian has also provided me a few additional details on the hardware:

- The Android phone's screen will be larger than the iPhone's, he believes.
- The handset will feature a track ball, making it easier to navigate menus with one hand.
- Down the road, perhaps the phone may be able to hook into T-Mobile's Hotspot @Home service, allowing people to make unlimited calls via the Android phone from home or office.
- The Android phone will hit stores around Thanksgiving, not in September-October, as some news outlets have reported.

Many of these features sound interesting (Google won't confirm or deny this information). My only concern: If, indeed, you'll have to use Gmail for push e-mail, that's troubling. Clearly, lots of people use other services today. And many businesses may be hesitant to abandon their current e-mail systems.

The Gmail mandate also raises all those old, hairy questions about just how much control Google will exercise over the Android project. Lots of the world's best independent developers and software companies actually compete with Google. And if they sense that Google is always getting the upper hand with Android, they will not back this phone. End users will suffer, as they won't have access to the best applications out there.

ABOUT

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John Kreuzer

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Certainly some interesting developments in the past couple of days. It will be very interesting to see if the rumors finally prove to be true.

<http://kreuzer33.wordpress.com/2008/08/15/google-android-coming-to-t-mobile/>

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