

WELCOME TO THE SOCIAL MOBILE

INQ¹ is simple to use, affordable and more importantly - it is the best

By Jon Marsh



WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE BEFORE. A sophisticated new piece of technological wizardry arrives on the market to

huge fanfare. It looks beautiful, promises the earth and at the same time puts a big dent in your wallet.

Now comes the hard part - you have to actually use it. That's usually when the problems start. The instructions appear to have been written by an engineer trained on another planet; the fancy new applications refuse to respond to all manner of increasingly desperate button pressing and an attempt to get through to the help line leaves you pulling your hair out in frustration.

Sound familiar? Well, it is hardly surprising as in today's world "must have" devices such as the latest 3G "smartphones" are becoming more complicated (and expensive) almost by the day. Indeed, a recent industry survey reported by the BBC found that the complexity of modern mobile phones was leaving many people unhappy. The survey revealed that 85 per cent of users reported that they were frustrated by the difficulty of getting a new phone up and working. Of the 4,000 people questioned, 95 per cent said they would try more new services if phones were easier to set up.

Well, help is at hand. INQ, a brand new Hutchison company, is offering customers what is being described as the world's first Social Mobile. The INQ¹, as the handset is known, looks good, is very affordable and, significantly, is easy to use. Most importantly, it makes keeping in touch a cinch by connecting your Facebook, Windows Live Messenger (WLM) and Skype contacts with your phone book.

The impact has been swift and dramatic, sending shockwaves through the industry. Within months of being launched, the INQ¹ walked off with the GSMA's award for Best Mobile Handset or Device, the most coveted and





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AN AMAZING TRIUMPH

TO PUT THE achievements of the team at INQ into context, the GSMA Global Mobile Awards are the Oscars of the mobile communications industry. For a new company to win the award for Best Mobile Handset or Device is quite remarkable, especially when the opposition included established industry heavyweights Nokia, BlackBerry and LG.

More than 450 companies spanning Internet, finance, advertising, music, television and gaming submitted entries across 16 categories for this year's awards, reflecting the diversity and breadth and depth of the industry. The event was attended by more than 900 executives and mobile industry leaders.

The GSMA represents the interests of the worldwide mobile communications industry. Spanning 219 countries, the GSMA unites more than 750 of the world's mobile operators, as well as 200 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies, equipment providers, Internet companies, and media and entertainment organisations.

A groundbreaking device that will probably change the way you use your mobile

fiercely contested prize in the mobile industry, beating other heavyweight contenders such as the Nokia E71, T-Mobile G1 (also known as the Google phone), RIM BlackBerry Storm and LG KS360.

In making the award, the judges commented: "The INQ¹ represents a significant step towards the mobile device as a social networking hub and also represents superb value for money. Its approach to the deep integration of services such as Facebook outshines that of much costlier smartphones, and it presents a compelling proposition by treating the phonebook as the focal point of the device. With its ingenious ability to transform from phone to 3G modem by simply plugging it into your USB port, the INQ¹ delivers data services to the mass market and for an affordable price."

INQ Mobile's Chief Executive Frank Meehan was delighted. "Prior to INQ Mobile, the INQ team was part of the HWL Global 3G Handset and Application Group. We were responsible for managing

handset vendor and Internet partner relationships," he said after the award ceremony in Barcelona. "HWL management had tasked the 3 Group to fully deliver on the data promises of 3G by leveraging its mobile broadband capabilities. Our role was to source handsets that could get consumers excited about the Internet on mobile.

"However, the main vendors were concentrating all their efforts on high-end devices which were complicated to use and too expensive for most consumers. So HWL decided to invest in our own Internet-centric range. Our first device was the Skypophone. Its success with consumers, and its ability to deliver more margin to the 3 Group, led us to take it a step further with INQ. Now, with a small investment, we have the potential to deliver large returns and become a major global brand for the Group"

The new INQ¹ handset combines the traditional functions of a mobile phone, such as contacts book and message inbox, with direct access to Facebook, Skype, and WLM.

In addition, the address book provides live status updates and profile photos from Facebook and presence information from Skype and WLM – perfect for busy people who want to access their social networks while on the move. The phone also has one-touch access to a series of other Web services, such as Google, LastFM, Ebay and YouTube.

Henri Moissinac, Director of Mobile, Facebook, said: "More than 20 million Facebook users currently access the site through their mobile devices. This number has quadrupled over the last 12 months and we expect it to continue to grow as more people begin to connect with their friends and family through Facebook on innovative mobile devices, like the INQ¹."

"Congratulations to the INQ team for being recognised for the hard work they put into bringing a standout device to market."

Technology Website Engadget put it this way: "INQ won because of how they've enabled Facebook deep integration, focus on your contacts as living, breathing, and ever-changing entities, great pricing, and a compelling user interface."

Mr Meehan stressed that the phone is designed to bring the mobile Internet to a much wider audience. "People are tired of paying a fortune for phones that are unusable," he said.



All smiles: The INQ team celebrates at the GSMA Global Mobile Awards – the Oscars of the mobile communications industry – after winning the award for Best Mobile Handset or Device.

“In the current economic environment, people will not give up all the benefits of having a mobile but they will be much more careful about where and how they spend their technology dollar.”

The new phone highlights how the way people use their mobiles has changed. Mobiles were about pure communication before applications like games and music were added. While these remain benefits that people want, they are a step away from the original idea.

“The INQ¹ is about taking the things people love most about the Internet and building them into the very heart of the phone without them having to learn any complicated new applications,” said Mr Meehan. “Mobile is still mostly about voice and text for the vast majority of users, but those same people use the Internet to communicate every day with Skype, instant messaging, Facebook and e-mail.”

To say that the new phone has been warmly welcomed

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by the industry is something of an understatement.

CNET, a leading technology Website, was full of praise, commenting: “We’ve had a lot of time with the INQ¹ and we remain as impressed with its performance as we were on the day we took it out of the box. Even with Facebook and Skype opened in the background, the processing performance is first rate. The INQ¹ is easily the most impressive phone we’ve seen at this price point. Even without the excellent social networking integration, the INQ¹ is fantastic value for money, with its solid, stylish construction and HSDPA Web access. Facebook fiends really need to check this phone out.”

Praise indeed in a highly competitive market. Meanwhile, in the Irish Daily Star, reviewer Gavan Byrne described the phone as a “groundbreaking device that will probably change the way you use your mobile.”

With reviews like that the future for INQ looks very bright. But it is not just the customer who benefits – the business model also drives positive economics for the operator. Currently, operators are burdened with providing heavy subsidies to bring high-end smartphones to market, or features such as escalating camera megapixel that don’t generate revenue opportunities. INQ’s devices, on the other hand, are engineered to drive the sale of data packages to the mass market.

The phone is already available in the UK, Ireland, Australia and Hong Kong, and will soon be launched in Italy and other markets around the world.



inqmobile.com

Winner

INQ¹
Best Handset
2009 Global Mobile Awards

INQ¹ is the world's first Social Mobile. With Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, Skype and Last FM built right in. No wonder our very first phone has just won 'Best Mobile Handset or Device' at the 2009 GSMA Global Mobile Awards.

INQ. Social Mobile.

WHAT MAKES INQ¹ SPECIAL

The new phone includes these great features:

■ **Facebook**

Fully integrated in the handset, INQ¹ introduces exclusive features that make Facebook a joy to use. A widget keeps you up to date with what friends are doing at a glance and notifies you each time someone sends a Facebook message. When your friends on Facebook call you their photos automatically appear with caller ID.

■ **Address book**

From a static destination visited only to initiate a call, the address book becomes a live, thriving hive of activity. With information drawn from Skype, Facebook and Windows Live Messenger, status updates and the latest details of your friends’ online activities are all gathered together in one place.