



Tips on Purchasing a Smartphone

Service Provider. If you are satisfied with your current cell service provider, then continue with that provider. Most have an array of devices from which to choose.

Text Messaging. Do you text message frequently? If so, you will want to feel comfortable with the keyboard. Always test-drive a device first; some phones have touchscreen texting while others have a QWERTY keyboard (like a computer).

Radiation Concerns. You may wish to check this site listing the radiation levels by cell phone <http://www.ewg.org/cellphone-radiation> before you choose a new device. Using a Bluetooth earpiece reduces the amount of radiation exposure to the head and is helpful if you drive and talk on the phone.

Battery Life. One of the best places to read a non-biased review of cell phones is CNET <http://cnet.com>. They usually cover battery life of the devices and other topics of interest. Remember the more you use Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, cameras and surf, the faster the battery drains. Invest in a second battery if you are a frequent traveler.

Data Plans. Most cell phone providers require you to purchase a data plan. Make sure you get a plan that matches your usage. The cost can be quite considerable.

Warranty. Make sure the device has excellent warranty coverage. Check to make sure any accessories are covered also.

Insurance. Devices do break, and if the problem isn't covered under the warranty, you are just throwing away money. You can purchase insurance coverage from companies such as Safeware.com <http://www.safeware.com/> for situations not covered by the provider warranty, like theft.

Wear and Tear. Invest in a rugged cover for the phone to protect against rough handling.

Purchases. You're not always required to purchase a device through your provider. Best Buy and others also carry phones which may be cheaper than your service provider's.

Multimedia. If you wish to play music and videos, purchase a phone with these capabilities.

Wireless Standards. 3G and 4G are the highest data speed network types available and offer multimedia support; however, these specifications may not be available in all areas.

GPS. If you are interested in using your smartphone as a GPS device, look for a model with this capability.