Phone Review:
HTC One X+'s radiant display compensates for software

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Once a leader in the smartphone market, HTC has been hit with tough times over the past year. Facing falling revenues and the smallest profits it has experienced since 2004, many industry analysts are already saying that HTC may be one of the victims of the hyper-competitive smartphone industry.

Of all the different possible causes for HTC's woes over the past year that have been thrown around, the one that HTC seems to think is legitimate is the vast number of different HTC smartphones available, which make it difficult for the company to market its devices and create an image as a manufacturer like Apple, Motorola, and Samsung.

In response to this, HTC consolidate their phone offerings in the new HTC One line, made up of the One X, One S, and One V. Since releasing these phones, HTC has refreshed the One X, adding more memory, a larger battery, and a faster processor. This new phone, the HTC One X+, was made recently available in the United States on AT&T, and TechNews just got a hold of one to review.

When it comes to design, the One X+ seems to represent a compromise between the solid, black lines of Motorola and the rounded, nature-inspired looks of Samsung. The One X+'s lines are bold, but curved. The phone is made of a black unibody polycarbonate shell that is sleek and feels great in the hand. The phone has a 4.7 inch display that is drop-dead gorgeous. The display uses new super LCD 2 technology that makes it rise above its competitors - this phone's display is miles better than the one on the iPhone or the Samsung Galaxy SIII.

Color reproduction is brilliant, and the resolution of the display leaves nothing to be desired. If the quality of the display is the only thing you consider when buying a phone,

Image courtesy of htc.com

this is the one for you. Below the display are three buttons, the home, back, and recent app buttons that have become standard faire for Android devices since Android 4.0. The phone is jet black except for the display and these buttons, making for a very good looking device. I liked the design of the One X+ a lot, and found it better looking than competitors like the Galaxy SIII.

The design of the phone is only half of the equation, and when it comes to software, the One X+ brings a lot to the table. Running Android 4.1 Jelly Bean with the HTC Sense Skin, the One X+ is currently up to date when it comes to Android. Since it runs version 4.1, it has Google's new Google Now feature, which

is amazing. By simply holding down the home button I get access to a Google page with everything from the weather, to commute times, to nearby restaurants.

If you haven't heard about Google Now, it's a killer feature. Returning to the software experience as a whole, anyone who has read my previous reviews knows I like my Android vanilla and that I have very little patience for manufacturer skins. This sentiment rang very true on the One X+. When using the phone, it felt that HTC took every opportunity it could to add visual flourishes to the software. Sometimes it works, such as with the weather app.

When using the weather app, animations would play depicting the weather outside. But other times it was just confusing. For instance, hitting the recent apps button lead to a several-second long animation just to show all your recent apps. I could go back to the home screen and select the app I would like to use in less time than the recent app button would take because of this animation.

The other features that were added by HTC in its overlay were fairly unimpressive.

Where companies like Samsung try to add impressive features to Android with its overlay, HTC seems to be focused only on adding visual polish. While I will argue that stock Android has all the features one could want and that any added features would be unnecessary, it still felt odd to be using an Android skin that only added visual polish - often at the price of decreased performance. But it is important to note that even when performance is slowed due to animations, this phone flies. It runs a 1.7 gigahertz Tegra 3, making it one of the fastest phones on the market.

And it shows. Not once did an app run slow. Not once did the phone crash. Performance was rock solid unless the phone was running one of HTC's silly transition animations, which represented small, second-long flaws in an otherwise perfect performance story.

At the end of the day, the HTC One X+ is a fantastic phone. Its hardware design is perfect, it performs wonderfully, and the display is out of this world. Which means that it's a real shame that HTC hampered the phone with its software overlay. I truly believe that if this phone ran stock Android, it would be the perfect smartphone. But even with HTC's software, it's pretty close to perfect.

Available from AT&T for $199.99 on a two-year contract, it certainly isn't cheap, but if you're in the market for an Android smartphone, this is the one to get. Its design and performance can't be topped, which means that the phone will last.

Hopefully HTC will work out their software and an update will help this phone become the killer device it is meant to be.

HTC has a long road ahead of itself and a lot of software issues to work out if it is going to become the king of the smartphone market like it was a few years ago, but if the HTC One X+ is any sign of its future, HTC is going to pull out all of the stops to try to get back to the top of the hill.

New words added to English dictionary

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Every year, new words are added to various dictionaries. Some are hilarious and even seem nonsensical whilst others are words frequently used and made famous by public figures.

Words such as 'lolz' which one would not only use as internet language but even in speaking has been accepted in this dictionary to mean fun, laughter or amusement. If you are a twitter addict and cannot do without notifying your followers about what is happening in your life, they automatically become your 'tweeps', one of the newest additions to the Oxford Online Dictionary.

There have been new additions to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as well. However, we must ensure that we do not engage in malapropism when we use these words, although we may appear uneducated when we use them.

The 'Aha moment', a phrase believed as Oprah Winfrey's signature phrase is used to express a moment of sudden realization, inspiration, insight, recognition, or comprehension.

If your friends send you sexually explicit messages or images by cell phone, you should probably be careful with this act of sexting - another addition to the Merriam - Webster Dictionary.

Other words added to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary and their definitions include:

Mash-up: "something created by combining elements from two or more sources: as in
a. a piece of music created by digitally overlaying an instrumental track with a vocal track from a different recording
b: a movie or video having characters or situations from other sources"

Man cave: "a room or space (as in a basement) designed according to the taste of the man of the house to be used as his personal area for hobbies and leisure activities"

Earworm: "a song or melody that keeps repeating in one's mind"

Cloud computing: "the practice of storing regularly used computer data on multiple servers that can be accessed through the Internet"

Systemic risk: "the risk that the failure of one financial institution (as a bank) could cause other interconnected institutions to fail and harm the economy as a whole"

Gastropub: "a pub, bar, or tavern that offers meals of high quality"

These are only a few more words that one can consider adding to their vocabulary. People would have to consider whether the words that someone may use in their speech are acceptable by certain dictionaries before they can draw their own conclusions about the individual.

App Review:
Fandango offers portable information, at a price

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Every week we come up with a movie review. So, I thought let's review one of the favorite app for movies, i.e., tickets, trailers and lot's more. Yes, it's "Fandango". The first thing I could say is it's a great tool. So, let's start with some of the cool features of this awesome app. Firstly, you can set your favorite theaters or search for nearby theaters based on your location.

And, now that I have Fandango on my touch, the whole process is much faster! I never bothered booking tickets online before, but ordering tickets through Fandango is super easy.

This app comes in very handy when you don't want to stand in line to get your tickets, or if you're running late you can buy them on the go. The $1.25 convenience charge per ticket is a bit insane but I guess it's not that bad. I would suggest it should be charged once per use regardless of the number of tickets bought.

Integration of credit card and club card (AMC, Regal Cinemas) is an added ad-

vantage. If you have a Stubs card (as I have one), there is no convenience fee for AMC. It has a great user-interface where you can search for movies and watch the available trailers.

When you select a movie, you'll see the rating, length, fan rating, and a synopsis in addition to the show-times. You've an option to tap the play button to watch the full trailer, or can view more info on the film by tapping "movie details", where you can read a full synopsis, see the cast and director, and browse through fan reviews and ratings.

When you choose a theater, you'll see the full address and phone number, along

with the option to view the location on Google Maps. You can also call the theater with one tap. If the selected theater allows mobile ticketing, just tap "buy", select the time and number of tickets, and enter your card info or your Fandango account info, if you have one. The "Coming Soon" and "Top Box Office" lists also mean that you will never miss out on the latest cool films. Overall, I can just say Fandango is Fantabulous!

Got an app on your phone that you think other students should try? Send an email to ae@technewsiit.com and we will review it!