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# BlackBerry Torch 9800 Test

By Peter Wolf



Wow – a [BlackBerry](#) with a slide-out keyboard! No, let's start again – a BlackBerry with a large screen and a keyboard that you can conceal under the screen when it's not in use. That's what's special about this product.

A large touchscreen is nothing unusual these days, but you either get just a virtual keyboard you can tap or a real one that's not up to BlackBerry standards. Its users have always been spoiled in this respect, although they haven't enjoyed a large screen. Or even a touchscreen (not many people will remember the two unsuccessful

touchscreen models «Storm» and «Storm 2», whose quirky virtual keyboard and lack of real keyboard made them such a flop).

But now the Torch has arrived – a smartphone with a large, finger-friendly display that also has a real BlackBerry keyboard and is also compact.

It also comes with a new operating system that takes a bit of getting used to. First of all I had to get accustomed to how easy it is to use. You can just start tapping on the home screen and it displays all the possible options for a given context.

So if I want to adjust the ring tone, I type the words «ring tone» and it displays «Options (2)», i.e. two ways in which you adjust ring-tone settings. For example, I can never remember where to change the PIN code for the SIM card. So I just type «SIM», it displays a hit in the form of «Options (1)», I click on it, that takes me to «SIM card», I press the menu key and then I can select «Change PIN code».

Of course this approach also works with other terms too. If I enter the name of a colleague or customer on the home screen, it immediately displays a wide variety of information about this person. Not only do I see the address book entry, but also all our SMS and e-mail correspondence and what appointments we have together. Not only that – it also lists Twitter and Facebook activities.

The new BlackBerry is extremely well integrated into the world of social media. On the notification bar at the top of the screen, I can not only see when I've received new e-mails or text messages, but also when I've been mentioned on Twitter or when I receive a Facebook message. If I take a photo, the associated menu entries include «Send to Facebook» and «Send to Twitter». It's also possible to upload videos directly to YouTube.

But of course the Torch isn't just well integrated into the new world of social media; the same applies to the world from which it originates – the office world. It's still very good at mobile e-mailing as well as managing schedules and addresses. The BlackBerry copes very well not only with the Microsoft Exchange environment but also with the Google Apps we now use.

The screen recognises all the usual actions such as tapping, double-tapping and dragging with two fingers to zoom. But the trackpad does so many things so well that I often forget I can tap directly on the screen. The real keyboard is good to use, as you would expect from a BlackBerry. The virtual keyboard on the display is a bit so-so, but perfectly adequate for short entries.

**Summary: The Torch is not the first smartphone with a touchscreen, but it is a real BlackBerry with a good keyboard (I typed this entire article on it, of course), it has more room on the screen, and a new, easy-to-use operating system.**

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