



Windows Phone 7:

An End-User's Loves and Loathes

by Brie Stampe

♥ 10

Loves

☹ 3

Loathes

Four months ago, I traded in my company iPhone for the brand new Windows Phone 7 on a leap of faith (with a 30-day return safety net). Our company's mobile contract was up for renewal, and each employee had a choice to make — iPhone or BlackBerry (Torch or Curve). Most folks were ready to turn in their old beat-up BlackBerry device for anything new and shiny, but I had already been testing the iPhone 3GS for more than 10 months by then. As much as I loved the cool apps and games, I was constantly struggling with the iPhone's business and productivity limitations — particularly with the keyboard, phone quality and battery life.

As a typical end-user, I'm a mobile worker:

- I read and edit documents on the road.
- I take important calls from just about anywhere I can get a signal.
- My inbox and calendars are critical to my daily success, both personally and professionally.
- I collaborate with no fewer than four people at any given time and often many more.
- I live in a Microsoft world by day and a Facebook world by night.
- I have contacts scattered across Outlook, LinkedIn, Facebook and various spreadsheets.

Whatever smartphone I use needs to be smart enough to allow me to bring all the functionality and accessibility I have in the office with me when I'm on the road.

I wasn't crazy about the iPhone, but I couldn't bring myself to go back to a BlackBerry, so with Microsoft's grand promises of Office and SharePoint integration in mind, I asked to trade in my iPhone 3GS for the Samsung Focus model with the Windows Phone 7 mobile operating system. Knowing that others at the firm and in the legal industry may eventually go in the same direction, I started to keep a list of personal "loves and loathes." Note that at the time I was writing this article, I was on first generation software and eagerly awaiting Microsoft's upgrade, promised in March, which will include functionality such as Copy and Paste.

Loves

Eye appeal and simple navigation: The very snazzy interface includes tiles for key access points — people, phone, calendar, inbox, photos, Office, messaging and custom pinned tiles.

Aggregation of contacts: Social and Outlook contact records are automatically linked and allow for at-a-glance views of a person's contact info, social status updates and Facebook photos.

Touch keyboard friendliness: Typing is friendlier than on the iPhone, with keyboard aids such as the backspace button and a more user-friendly spell check.

Microsoft Office mobile goodies: Create, edit, save and e-mail documents, spreadsheets and presentations, and toggle Outlook flags on e-mail messages (hallelujah!). Use OneNote for note-taking by voice or text and sync up to your SkyDrive for access from your desktop. Press a button on an appointment to send an automatic "I'm running five minutes late for this meeting" message to all attendees.

SharePoint integration: Open documents or lists on Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010. I haven't tested this one yet, but I'm excited about the possibility.

Comprehensive search: One of only three buttons on the device is dedicated to Search. From the Home screen, the button will open Bing to search the Web. From the inbox or other app, the button will open a search bar to keyword search within the app. Bing also drives the maps and navigation feature, which looks cool, but may be less reliable than Google Maps.

Voice commands: Press and hold the Start button (another of the three device buttons) to call up the surprisingly accurate Microsoft Tellme speech feature. You can say things like "open calendar," "call Kate cell" or "nearby Italian restaurants" without having to first train the device.

Multiple calendars: Manage multiple calendars (including shared Gmail calendars) within a single color-coded calendar or agenda view.

Phone quality: People on the other end tell me my phone quality is better on this than my iPhone and I drop fewer calls, though I am still with AT&T.

Battery life: It feels similar to the life I got out of my old BlackBerry, and I rarely have to recharge midday.

Loathes

Obvious functionality missing from a Microsoft device: There is no Copy and Paste...yet, and no multiword Select or Select All. Tasks or Memos/Notes are not yet integrated with Outlook. You can't see other people's availability when scheduling appointments. The inbox has limited search and filter options and there is no cc: line on new messages by default.

Limited apps: Supposedly there are thousands in the works, but I still find myself missing out when people with iPhones and Androids are downloading the latest cool app. I'm still holding out hope for a good Twitter app or other basic tool. Plus, the Windows Marketplace for Mobile (think iTunes) is difficult to browse and search, with everything — songs, artists, albums and apps — piled together into one search result list.

Other aggravations: Windows Phone 7 has no unified inbox or conversation/thread view, and offers no customization of ringtones or alarms. Key tap sound effects help with typing but can be annoying and are tied to the main device volume. The alarm feature lacks snooze settings for people who like to snooze more than five minutes at a time.

In summary, there's a lot to love about the Windows Phone 7, but there are also some fairly significant feature gaps that Microsoft has yet to address. Considering, however, that it is first generation, I was impressed enough to keep my device beyond the 30-day return. I'm still buying into the promise of full integration and more productivity enhancements to come from Microsoft, so I will continue to use this as my smartphone, and I'll hold out hope for more apps! **ILTA**

This article was first published in ILTA's March 2011 issue of *Peer to Peer* titled "Communications Technologies" and is reprinted here with permission. For more information about ILTA, visit their website at www.iltanet.org.



Brie Stampe serves as Director of Market Strategies at Traveling Coaches where she leads the company's strategic marketing and research efforts. Pairing 11 years of legal technology experience with an expertise in user adoption, Brie works to explore trends and collaboratively define the changing needs of legal technology learners. Brie has an MBA from Thunderbird with a concentration in global strategic marketing and business intelligence. She can be reached at bstampe@travelingcoaches.com.