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Sony Ericsson G502
Champagne Black
Sony Ericsson

[Sony Ericsson G502 Review](#)

A cheap device offering fast Internet browsing

Released back in summer, the G502 mobile phone can be considered one of the few pleasant surprises coming from Sony Ericsson this year. There's no point in denying that Xperia X1 has been the most expected Sony Ericsson device in 2008, but G502 has its advantages and targets a different market than X1. In fact, Sony Ericsson G502 is among few other mid-tier mobile phones to feature HSDPA technology. It seems that its K660 predecessor had some success on the market, which made the Swedish-Japanese joint company launch another version, even cheaper - G502. The main attractions of the device are definitely the new integrated web browser and HSDPA connectivity capabilities.

Announced in April 2008, Sony Ericsson G502 was made available on the market in June 2008. To increase its appeal, SE launched the phone in three color versions: Champagne Black, Brilliant Hazel and Celerity Red. The phone can be acquired for about USD 180\$, but the price may vary depending on location and plan.

Design

Sony Ericsson G502 features a stylish candy-bar form factor, but lacks any improvement from the previous Sony Ericsson bar handsets. It's like you've seen one, you've seen them all. Without being ugly, G502 doesn't impress in terms of design, but that is not what it's meant for. G502 is a small (103 x 46 x 13.5 mm) and light (83g, including battery) mobile phone made from polished plastic, which eliminates the feeling of owning something cheap.

Even if it doesn't stand out from the crowd, I'm still impressed by the fact that SE was very careful to avoid the standard look of its devices. Moreover, users won't have any problem with the phone catching fingerprints, as the material used keeps it clean. Instead, the screen could become soiled after each phone talk, in case you're putting it to your ear, and that will be visible more than it should. Another drawback that I have noticed is the fact that its paint peels off after heavy use, especially the silver paint on the back of the phone, near the camera. The joystick paint might also peel off if you're not careful with it. Well, that's about all the negative aspects I have noticed, so let's start checking the rest of the device.

The G502 bar handset features the proprietary Sony Ericsson port used for USB synchronization, charging or headset. It has been placed on the bottom side of the phone, together with a small eyelet. On the right side of the device, one can see the dual volume key and a dedicated camera key (thumbs up). There is nothing on top or on the left side, except for a small icon on the left side that indicates the fact that the phone features a micro M2 slot card under the back cover. It can be easily pulled out, which makes the process of replacing the memory card pretty easy. The 2 Megapixel camera on the back has been

placed on a large silvery prominence, but lacks protective lenses, so it might be susceptible to damage. The loudspeaker has been hidden under the silvery prominence that embeds the camera.

The 2 inch display has been covered by protective plastic so it won't get damaged. Above it, there's only a large in-call speaker and no secondary camera for video-calls. The keypad below has been shaped to emulate a "ripple" effect. There are six keys above the standard keypad: two contextual keys, Accept and Reject call keys, Activity Menu key and a Clear key (Power off/on). The keypad is very easy to use on texting, very responsive and nice to the touch. Still, I have found that using the D-pad joystick might be a little tricky, even annoying sometimes. I didn't like the control of the six keys mentioned above or the D-pad. Otherwise, those using the phone for heavy texting will be more than pleased with the performance of the keypad. Backlighting is stronger on the upper part of the keypad, but overall you won't have too much trouble texting in the dark.

Sony Ericsson G502 may look pretty solid, but it is a little bit unbalanced, especially because it's too light for its size. Otherwise, it makes a fine addition to Sony Ericsson's portfolio of mid-level handsets.

Display and Camera

Sony Ericsson G502 features a 2-inch display, which is definitely too small for today's standards. Furthermore, the phone has been designed to meet the latest users' demands in terms of web browsing, but the small screen might redirect lots of consumers to similar devices featuring larger displays. Anyway, the TFT screen supports 262k colors and 240x320 pixel resolution. Contrast and brightness are pretty good, but as usual, outdoor use is restricted by the fact that it's still not visible enough in strong sunlight. For more in-depth info regarding performance, check out the benchmarks below.

The 2 Megapixel camera on the back of Sony Ericsson G502 lacks any flash or auto-focus capability. In fact, the module camera enters into the mediocre camera category, which means that quality pictures is not its main purpose. What surprises is the good looking interface strongly resembling Cyber-shot series interfaces.

The same landscape layout of the interface enables fast access to various settings and functions.

Even if it includes only a handful of functions (Shoot Mode, White Balance, Effects), the fact remains that Sony Ericsson tried something here, but failed because pictures taken at maximum resolution (1600x1200 pixels) are mediocre.

As you can see from the samples below, images have a large amount of noise, lack focus and have a low level of detail. I wonder why they included a dedicated camera key since

module camera is only mediocre.

Anyway, movies can also be recorded in QVGA resolution at 15fps, but we cannot talk about quality at this level.

Menu and Software

Nothing new about Sony Ericsson G502's user interface, but some updates have been made in terms of device personalization and looks. The same Media center introduced together with the K850i model has also been added to G502, but the auto-rotate feature has been left out. There's also support for Flash Lite 2.0 so users can take advantage of various animated themes, but also some other Flash-based entertainment utilities. You get to choose from five different themes, each with its own specific abilities.

The main menu layout can be changed in accordance to the theme, but users don't have the option of changing to grid, rotating or single icon. On the other hand, wallpaper, startup screen and screen saver can be personalized according to the users' needs. Also, there are seven profiles to choose from: Normal, Meeting, In car, Outdoors, Handsfree, Home, and Office. Besides these profiles, G502 also includes a Flight mode, in case customers don't want to use the GSM functions of the handset.

There are few productivity tools that can be used, such as Alarms (limited to 5), Tasks, Notes, Calendar, Timer, Stopwatch, Calculator, AccuWeather, Converter, Code memo, Synchronization and a basic File manager. The Internet icon, as the name suggests, gives users access to basic Web browsing. The candy-bar handset features the latest Access NetFront HTML 3.4 version.

Radio function only works when the wired earphones are inserted. Google Maps has also been included, even if the phone lacks any GPS capability. The Entertainment sub-folder contains a few functions more or less specific to the Walkman series devices: TrackID, MusicDJ, PhotoDJ, VideoDJ, Record sound, Remote control and Games (Alien Scum, Kasparov Chess, Minigolf and QuadraPop). One drawback might be the lack of a document reader.

The Gallery can be found through the File manager in the folder called Camera album, or in the Media center, and can also be accessed through the camera interface menu. The same landscape view is also available for Gallery, but screen can also be changed back to landscape.

The Java emulator works with just about any compatible application, like games or productivity software. Let's not forget the new service available from Sony Ericsson, Play Now, which offers maximum entertainment. Overall, SE's G502 user-interface offers quite a number of latest features and high functionality at a medium price.

Communications

Even if it's just a mid-end handset, Sony Ericsson G502 features HSDPA 3.6Mbps technology, which greatly improves data transfers. When benchmarked, the phone attained 827 Kbit/s download and 74 Kbit/s upload in UMTS network. EDGE data transfers were a little bit lower than expected, but still reached 96 Kbit/s download and 62 Kbit/s upload.

The handset is also compatible with Bluetooth 2.0 with A2DP technology, and features USB 2.0, with charging capabilities. I experienced data transfer speeds of up to 138 KB/s when sending files, and of 119 KB/s when receiving through Bluetooth connectivity, which is way above average.

Messaging capabilities offer a wider range of options. All messages share the same Inbox, except for emails, which have a separate one. The email service is fully compatible with the POP3 and SMTP clients.

Sony Ericsson G502 can save any email attachment, regardless of its file type. Still, as I have stated above, users won't be able to read any document file unless they install a third-party application.

The tri-band (GSM 900 / GSM 1800 / GSM 1900) network compatible handset has a good GSM signal reception. Unfortunately, when talking on the phone, there is no clarity, as I experienced low and muffled sound with this handset, sometimes even interruptions. The vibration is strong in intensity, which lowers the number of missed calls.

Processor and Memory

The G502 mobile phone features a medium power ARM9 family processor that runs at speeds up to 220 MHz.

The CPU is powerful enough; thus, you can run multiple applications in the background with no problems whatsoever. The embedded Java emulator can handle any compatible large-size file (over 300KB), so third party applications can be installed with ease.

The phone comes with 32 MB internal memory, but features micro M2 memory slot card to expand the storage. I have tested the device with a 4GB memory card and everything worked flawlessly.

Check out under the back cover on the right side. There you'll find the micro M2 slot card. Memory cards can be inserted without the need of powering off the phone (hot-swappable).

Multimedia

One of the best features of the handset is the latest Walkman 3.0 music player embedded. It supports a wide range of file formats such as: MP3, AAC, AAC+, E-AAC+, WAV, WMA, M4A and MIDI, and takes advantage of a great Equalizer that includes settings such as MegaBass and Treble. The device offers almost the same quality in terms of music as a Walkman series one.

Even with the earphones (HPM-62) included, the sound is above average in terms of quality, but it still cannot be compared with any of the Walkman series. The FM radio supports RDS and can memorize up to 20 stations, while both radio and music player can be run in the background.

Sony Ericsson G502 also features a very good movie player that can be run in landscape mode, full screen and even take snapshots of any movie you play.

Battery

Sony Ericsson G502 features a 950 mAh Li-Polymer battery, which has an official lifetime of approximately 340 hours in standby mode and an impressive ten hours in talk-time mode. No matter how long I talked on the phone, I only needed one charge in four days. I think that a medium user can easily get one week of use. Overall, this is a high quality battery of small dimensions that barely adds to the weight of the phone.

Impressions

Sony Ericsson G502 is the living proof that design is not everything that makes a phone a success. As you can see from the pictures, it's not an attractive device, but G502 can be a nice choice for those looking for a good Web-browsing solution at a mid-level price. And if you get bored using it, you can change it anytime for another handset.

The Good

Besides the HSDPA (3.6 Mbps) and Walkman 3.0 music player, G502 makes itself very

useful through its long lasting battery and exceptionally good Access NetFront HTML 3.4 browser. After all, it's the features that place a phone into a higher-end category, and not the way it looks.

The Bad

The most disappointing things about G502 are the low quality 2 Megapixel camera and the small screen. If these two had been better, I think the device would've easily made it as a high-end mobile phone. The lack of any document viewer could be another drawback if you intend using the device to transfer documents.

Sales package

Sony Ericsson G502

Charger

950 mAh Li-Polymer battery BST-33

Stereo Headphones (HPM-62)

CD with Software

Manuals.