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## [Sony Ericsson W508 Review](#)

### *Decent Walkman series clamshell*



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[MRSUMMARY=1]One of the few clamshell devices adding to the Walkman series, Sony Ericsson W508 makes a good impression at first glance. As a mid-range handset, the phone's data sheet is feathered with standard features that are mostly used in this kind of handsets.

The TrackID, SenseMe, Walkman 3.0 and MegaBass equalizer are only a few of the features that have already become standard for Sony Ericsson's music phones. The slimness of the phone is also one of the attractions, but that trait ends when you actually unfold the phone and see how big it is. This may be the only negative point that I could find at first glance and regards the impact the clamshell has on users that are handling it for the first time.

Announced in January 2009, Sony Ericsson W508 hit the shelves in May 2009 and can be bought for approximately 260USD, depending on the location and plan. The clamshell is available in two colors: Metal Grey and Poetic White. I would also like to mention here that the sales package contains one piece of colorful front case, which can be changed if users are bored with the default one.

### Design

Sony Ericsson W508 looks like a classic clamshell, only it's a little bit slimmer than usual handsets with a clamshell form factor. This might be great if you could actually use it without unfolding it. That's because W508 is literally huge when you put it to your ear. Anyway, the phone does feature a secondary, small monochrome display (36x128 pixels) on the front part, as well as dedicated music controls, right underneath the small screen. Above it, there's a 3.2-Megapixel camera and a small ambient light sensor. On the right side of the phone, there's a dual volume key and a small lock key, which enables users to pull the back cover of the phone. The left side features the proprietary Sony Ericsson port for charging, headset or cable. The back part of the clamshell includes a thick loudspeaker at its base and a SE together with the Walkman series logos.

When the phone is unfolded, users will immediately notice the big keypad with rounded keys and the medium-sized screen. There is plenty of space between the keys and the layout is pretty standard, which will smooth one's texting experience. The rounded D-pad controller in the middle is very responsive, but one should be careful, as the only way to browse through the menus is to click on the edge of the controller. The only annoying thing I found regards the two soft keys, which have been placed a little bit too far and will be somewhat awkward to use.

Above the 2.2-inch display besides the in-call speaker, there's a secondary video-call camera, but also two plastic pins, one on each side, that will protect your display from making contact with the keypad. That will ensure that your screen won't get scratched by

the keys. The clamshell measures 93.5 x 50 x 14mm and weighs 98g (including battery). You will be able to open it with ease even with one hand, but, as I have already mentioned above, the phone is really big when unfolded. The closing mechanism is pretty solid, as well as the whole handset.

[IMG=21]

The plastic used for manufacturing the device is very stylish, with nice finishes. The front part can be pulled out and replaced with another one of a different color that can be found in the sales package. Users won't have problems with fingerprints on either side of the clamshell. Overall, Sony Ericsson W508 has a pretty solid construction and is one of the slimmest SE clamshells.

[IMG=22][IMG=23][IMG=24][IMG=25][IMG=26]

## Display and Camera

Sony Ericsson's W508 clamshell features a TFT screen measuring 2.2 inch, displays 262k colors and supports a 240x320-pixel resolution. The secondary, monochrome screen on the front part of the phone measures 1.1 inch and supports a 36x128-pixel resolution. Both displays are scratch-resistant, and the main screen's contrast and brightness are very good, so that you won't have problems when you're outdoors in the sunlight. For more in-depth info regarding performance, check out the benchmarks below.

[IMG=27]

While the 3-megapixel camera is not one of the strong points of the clamshell, pictures taken with the clamshell are medium in quality, so you don't have to worry about it. Still, the camera lacks some features that would've improved the quality of the snapshots, such as the autofocus and flash. If you're looking for a camera phone, W508 is not the phone you're looking for.

[IMG=28][IMG=29]

Besides the lack of auto-focus and flash, the clamshell also misses some advanced features, like image stabilization and macro mode. Still, users will be able to use the geo-tagging (CellID) and video-recording capabilities. The camera can record movies in the QVGA resolution at 15fps. The quality of the clips is very low, which means that one will be limited to getting pictures mostly.

[IMG=30][IMG=31][IMG=32][IMG=33]

The interface of the camera looks standard and user-friendly, nothing new if you have previously owned an SE device. The maximum resolution of the pictures is of 2048 x 1536 pixels, while the size varies between 0.8-1.3 MB. Thanks to the accelerometer, you can easily take pictures in portrait or landscape mode. As I have already stated above, the quality of the photos is mediocre and doesn't stand out from the rest of the Walkman series handsets.

[IMG=34][IMG=35][IMG=36][IMG=37]

Overall, it shows that Sony Ericsson W508 hasn't been targeted at those looking for a camera phone and that it keeps in the same Walkman music phone line.

[IMG=38][IMG=39][IMG=40][IMG=41][IMG=42]

## Menu and Software

Sony Ericsson W508 features the company's proprietary GUI, which has become known over the course of time. There are some updates in terms of device personalization and looks, but basically there's nothing really new. The only thing I found weird was the fact that the auto-rotate feature didn't function with all applications and had to be changed manually. There's also support for Flash Lite 2.0, so users can now take advantage of various animated themes, but also of some other Flash-based entertainment utilities. They get to choose from four different themes, each with its own specific abilities.

[IMG=43][IMG=44][IMG=45][IMG=46][IMG=47]

The main menu layout can be changed in accordance to the theme, or by choosing one of these options: grid, rotating and single icon. The wallpaper, startup screen and screen saver can also be personalized according to the user's needs. Also, there are seven profiles to choose from, more specifically Normal, Meeting, In car, Outdoors, Handsfree, Home and Office. Besides these, W508 also includes a Flight mode, in case users don't want to use the GSM function of the handset.

[IMG=48][IMG=49][IMG=50][IMG=51][IMG=52]

There are a few productivity tools that can be employed, such as Alarms (limited to five), Tasks, Notes, Calendar, Timer, Stopwatch, Calculator, Code Memo, AccuWeather, Music Mate 5, Music Quiz, WalkMate and a basic File manager. Besides these, the clamshell features a dedicated Java YouTube client, which enables users to watch and upload clips. The Internet icon, as the name suggests, gives access to basic Web browsing. Sony Ericsson W508 features the latest Access NetFront HTML browser 3.4, which seems to open any webpage, no matter how elaborated. Webpages open pretty fast, even on an EDGE connection, but for more speed, I suggest using the 3G network when browsing the Internet, as speeds are much better. The auto-rotate feature doesn't function and the screen must be rotated manually.

The Radio only works when the wired earphones are inserted. The Entertainment sub-folder contains a few functions more or less specific to the Walkman-series devices, namely TrackID, MusicDJ, PhotoDJ, VideoDJ, Record sound, Remote control and Games (Bowling, FMX III, Bubble Town, Guitar Rock).

[IMG=53][IMG=54][IMG=55][IMG=56][IMG=57]

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 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 W508's user-interface puts at one's disposal quite a number of features and high functionality, but doesn't change anything.

## Communication

The Sony Ericsson W508 Walkman clamshell features the basic connectivity tools, but has also been gifted with the HSDPA 3.6Mbps technology, which greatly improves data transfers. When benchmarked, the phone attained outstanding speeds: 1233 Kbit/s download and 211 Kbit/s upload in 3.5G network. EDGE data transfers were a little bit lower than expected, but still reached speeds of 156 Kbit/s for download and 81 Kbit/s for upload services.

[IMG=58][IMG=59]

The handset is also compatible with Bluetooth 2.0 with an A2DP technology and features a

USB 2.0 connectivity. Applications like Google Maps have no real use until you get an external GPS receiver, but you will also need something like Wayfinder Navigator 7, so your device will really come in handy with localizations.

Messaging capabilities have been improved and now offer a wider range of options. All messages share the same Inbox, except for emails, which have a separate one. You can now manage and categorize them the way you want, or you can simply use the pre-installed categories: Business, Favorites, Follow Up, Fun, Holiday and Important. The email service is fully compatible with the POP3 and SMTP clients.

[IMG=60][IMG=61][IMG=62][IMG=63][IMG=64]

The quad-band (GSM 850 / 900 / GSM 1800 / GSM 1900) network-compatible handset has a good GSM signal reception. The sound during phone calls is pretty good, while the vibration is somewhat low in intensity.

### Processor and Memory

The W508 clamshell features a medium-power ARM9 family processor that runs at speeds of up to 201 Mhz. The actual menu browsing is annoyingly slow. W508 is a hard one when it comes to speed. I wouldn't recommend the phone to heavy users.

[IMG=65][IMG=66]

The handset comes with a 100MB internal memory, but features a micro M2 memory slot card to expand the storage space up to 16 GB. It has been placed under the back cover of the phone, but it can be inserted without the need of powering off the device (hot-swappable). Moreover, it comes with a 1GB M2 memory card in the sales package.

[IMG=67][IMG=68]

### Multimedia

As it has been expected, Sony Ericsson W508 is a complete music phone and features excellent music sound quality. The clamshell offers very good music quality, as it features the Walkman 3.0 music player and the famous MegaBass equalizer mode, thus making the sound pretty impressive. Besides the earlier mentioned MegaBass mode, users can take advantage of a few more equalizer modes. It supports almost all possible music file formats available on the market: MP3, AAC, AAC+, E-AAC+, WAV, WMA, M4A and MIDI.

[IMG=69][IMG=70][IMG=71][IMG=72]

Furthermore, the music player is compatible with the Album art function and, thanks to the integrated accelerometer, it takes advantage of the Shake control feature. The latter enables users to go one track forward or backwards by shaking the phone forward or backwards. It is also possible to shuffle the playlist by simply shaking the phone both ways twice. Another new feature introduced by Sony Ericsson is called SensMe, which enables users to make their playlists according to their mood by simply selecting "Happy" or "Sad." The only drawback of the service is the fact that only the songs that are tagged by Sony Ericsson's Media Manager will be taken into consideration. If one wants to use this feature a lot, one will need to transfer all their files through the Sony Ericsson Media Manager application, which could take a while.

[IMG=73][IMG=74][IMG=75][IMG=76]

The stereo earphones (HPM-64) that are coming in the sales package are more than

decent and include a 3.5mm adapter, which means that you can even attach your own headphones in case you're not satisfied with these ones.

The clamshell also includes an FM radio function with RDS, which can memorize up to 20 base stations. The reception and sound are also very good. Both music player and radio can be run in the background.

The integrated video player can run movies in full screen, in landscape or portrait mode, thanks to the accelerometer. Overall, Sony Ericsson W508 features excellent sound quality levels and above-average multimedia features at a convenient price.

[IMG=77][IMG=78]

### Battery

Sony Ericsson W508 features a 900 mAh Li-Polymer battery that has an official lifetime of approximately 400 hours (400 hours for 3G) in standby mode and ten hours (four hours for 3G) in talk-time mode. After using the phone for about a month, I can say that the battery's life was excellent, as I managed to attain an average of five-six hours of talk time and around seven days in standby mode. That is really impressive and unexpected from such a medium-capacity battery. If you are a heavy user, you'll most likely need to charge it twice per week, but a soft user will have no trouble keeping it going for at least a week. The music playback time is of nearly 20 hours with the display in standby mode.

[IMG=79][IMG=80]

### Impressions

Even if Sony Ericsson W508 has a standard clamshell form, it can attract fans of the Walkman series through its slimness and price. The only thing I found annoying was the big size of the phone when you actually unfolded it and put it to your ear. Otherwise, I think W508 is a pretty decent clamshell, with nice multimedia features and a medium price.

### The Good

Some of the best features of the phone are multimedia-related, but also regard the connectivity ones (such as HSDPA) and battery, which has a very high lifetime. The design of the phone is also nice, but the size should be much more reduced. The sound and keypad are also some of the good points of the device.

### The Bad

Contrary to what I thought, the size of the phone does matter, but only when the phone is folded. That is one of the negative sides of the phone, the huge size of the device. Also, the low quality of the module camera, as well as the low speed of the phone are found among the not-so-good points of the clamshell.

### Sales Package

Sony Ericsson W508 Handset;

1GB M2 memory card;  
900 mAh Li-Polymer Battery;  
Front case replacement;  
Data Cable;  
Stereo HPM-64 headset with adapter;  
Travel Charger;  
CD-Rom;  
User Manual.

[IMG=81][IMG=82]