



The power to do more

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INFORMATION

GADGETS

TECHNOLOGY



WORLD'S NO.1 ANTI VIRUS TECHNOLOGY

HANDS ON REVIEW

MICROSOFT LUMIA 640 XL: HIGH FLYING PHABLET

Big is the new black. All phone manufacturers have been trying to cash in on people's desire for more pixel real estate. Even Apple grudgingly gave up and went big. Bigger is more and it is apparently better. Is it for Microsoft's Lumia range?

Build: The Lumia 640XL phablet's design is typically Lumia, built out of good quality plastic that looks and feels robust. There are no unwanted creaks as you hold it and the grainy finish on the back offers better grip for those with smaller hands. I am yet to drop it. The design remains traditional which is not a bad thing because that works. It comes in hip, glaring colors bound to make it stand out among a sea of black slabs. Microsoft played it safe and gave us the black one though.

Display: The 720p display has only 259ppi. While this is great for most purposes, the 5.7 screen means there is a little bit of pixelation when reading fine text on web sites. It's a small quibble because the on-screen colours are pleasantly loud and visibility is excellent even in sunlight. A very nifty and old-school feature is the clock that is visible even when the screen is off. It's absolutely low res so power consumption is negligible. In these wristwatch-free days, it's a missed item on most other phones.

Software: The device runs Windows Phone 8.1 Update 2 out

of the box. This comes with the Lumia Denim update featuring multiple improvements and upgrades most notably for the camera app. It also includes Cortana, the voice activated personal assistant and navigator. Not all languages or regions are released yet but I got it working by selecting UK English. Best of all, it managed to identify almost all the words correctly as I spoke despite not having an English accent. When you accept the bulk of a phablet, this is a terrific device for executives who have to deal with documents on the go. The obviously bundled Office suite helped me manage all my editing flow on the go.

Power: The juice is provided by a quad-core 1.2GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 400 chip, with supporting roles played out by 1GB of RAM. These are the contemporary specs for a mid ranger. The experience is mostly smooth and lag-free, although once in a while there is a menu response delay. I've been running the graphics heavy GT Racing 2 among other games and it has not hiccuped once.

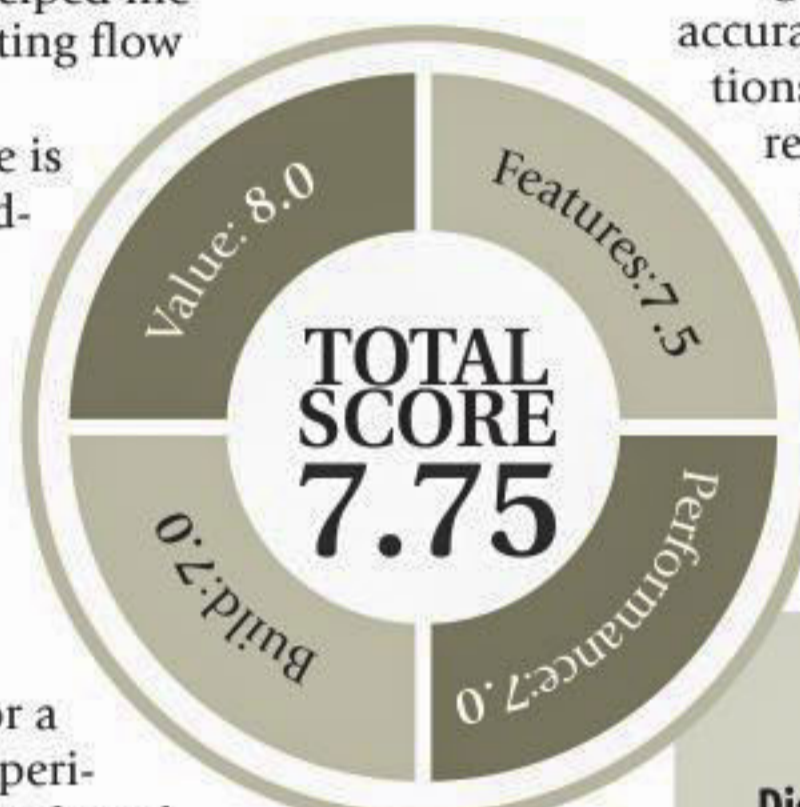
Back-up: That big chassis should have plenty of space for backup power and the replaceable 3000mAh battery doesn't disappoint. It's good enough to power you through at least a day and a half even through heavy usage. I've run this device with Wi-Fi on all the time as well as 3G data.

Storage: You get only 8GB of inbuilt memory of which less than 4 is available to users. But the expandable slot allows up to 128GB and that is more than enough for a mobile device. If you can rely on our middling internet speeds, Microsoft added its OneDrive cloud storage of 30GB which will soon upgrade to 1TB.

Imaging: Lumia's unique selling point seems to be photography. The 13MP sensor works surprisingly well considering the price



bracket and the comparable devices we tried out earlier. Photos come out best in natural light with great depth and excellent color accuracy. It does very well in low light conditions thanks to the wide 2.0 aperture. Noise is relatively low meaning pictures are almost always decent. The most recent version of the Lumia camera app provides tons of manual control and the company's Rich Capture mode which works a lot like HDR to highlight details in low light. There is a slider option providing more control on how much you want to



SPECS

- Display:** 5.7 inches, IPS LCD (1280 X 720) ~259 ppi
- Camera:** 13-MP with Carl Zeiss optics, 5-MP secondary
- OS:** Windows Phone 8.1
- CPU:** Quad-core 1.3 GHz A7 Cortex
- GPU:** Adreno 305
- Sensors:** Accelerometer, proximity, compass
- ROM:** 8GB, RAM: 1GB
- Battery:** 3000 mAh
- PRICE:** TK. 19,999/-

enhance. The XL can also offer up Full HD video recording. Also, great news for those wanting to relive the now-old Oscar selfie. The 5MP front unit takes excellent wide shots.

Verdict:

The Lumia lives up to the 'XL' moniker beyond just the screen size. The screen is bright with excellent visibility for sharing content with friends. It passed our 'Pocket Test' meaning it fit well and slid out without snagging on the garment. It can support dual SIMs and the camera is brilliant with a relatively quick shutter so you don't miss out on moments. It also performs well in low light. The biggest feature is the battery life. Those on the go can rely on the device for entertainment and connectivity without having to run for the charger during every tea break. And to top it off, there is the eventual free update to Windows 10. The only chink in its armor is that the app store has fewer titles than the two competitors. Despite that it is what we call a terrific balance ever since Microsoft took over the Lumia name.

REVIEW & PHOTOS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

Meet the new Microsoft

INTERVIEW BY: SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Microsoft turned 40 on April 4th this year and on the occasion we had an opportunity to speak with Sonia Bashir Kabir, the Managing Director of Microsoft Bangladesh. Sonia shared Microsoft's vision, future direction and upcoming plans with BYTES.

What is Microsoft's vision for Bangladesh?

Sonia: Most people perceive Microsoft as a company that makes Windows and Office. However, we are more than that and we plan to enable people to create and share content; collaborate across teams, organizations and networks; and gain contextually relevant insights based on preferences and intent. Microsoft is now focused on open software and systems even when it has meant supporting competing services in the process. Our three big bets are all on the cloud: O365 (cloud offering of Office at a fraction of the cost of the on premise Office license), Azure (data center on the cloud) and Windows. Bangladesh is included in our CEO Satya Nadella list of top 10 countries that will have a booming and vibrant ICT industry. The reasons are really simple. Bangladesh has a population of 160 million of which approximately 85% are unbanked, internet penetration is 20% while mobile penetration is 77% (95% use internet through mobile network). There are a lot of opportunities for Bangladesh to accelerate growth/leap-frog by leveraging state of the art technology.

How is the anti-piracy drive going on? How are you planning to combat piracy in Bangladesh, a market where 90% of the software are pirated?

Sonia: The reality is that 90% of the Microsoft Products in Bangladesh are pirated. We do not expect this number to reverse overnight but we are seeing positive results slowly. Most users are quite naive about cyber security threats and in the next 6 months we plan to share facts about cyber security aggressively. We have recently signed an agreement with Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) where BCS will help Microsoft to promote genuine software and continue with an anti-piracy drive. I want to say that most of the users are not aware that using pirated software is like committing a "theft". We may be a poor nation but we are not thieves.

Why aren't we seeing more Microsoft devices i.e. tablet and all-in-one-pc, accessories?

Sonia: The Surface Pro 3 tablets of Microsoft have outperformed everything else in the global market. The price

points for Surface Pro 3 are a bit high for the Bangladesh market but from next month we are launching the Surface 3 at approximately \$500. We see a potential market for this device in Bangladesh and stay tuned as we roll out more devices.

Lumia is something that Microsoft is now betting on. How well is it faring?

Sonia: Now that Microsoft has acquired Nokia, we will be more visible in the mobile device market. I am really happy to share that we are out of stock with our new Lumia phones. We are working very closely with partners to make the eco system strong for Lumia and plan to look at the B2B space very seriously.

Personally, you are involved with the 'Women in IT movement' in Bangladesh. How would you describe the IT scene for women in Bangladesh?

Sonia: The entrepreneurial spirit is thriving in Bangladesh. 50% of the population of Bangladesh comprises of women. We have seen a radical shift in the mentality of Bangladeshi educated woman. Women are involving themselves in the IT sector. And Microsoft wants to work with them. For Bangladesh we



have already launched a campaign called "Windows Women" where women from all ages and walks of life are welcome to become Microsoft Brand Ambassadors after they get free training on either our product portfolio or in creating Apps.

The startup scene in Bangladesh is vibrant. I lived in Silicon Valley for 20 years. I have seen the very same scenario: maybe in not a scale that we expect it to be but we are definitely moving forward.

You have been involved with the IT industry; both local & international. How would you describe the IT industry of Bangladesh?

Sonia: Bangladesh is like a sleeping giant. The IT sector continues to advance. BASIS has a target of USD 1 billion export of IT services. Of course we face hurdles, but the government and private sector are working relentlessly to improve the situation. I have no doubt in my mind that Bangladesh will be a world class player in IT industry in the near future.

TECH HAPPENING

DHAKATHON – Bangladesh's First Ever 'Hackathon for Elections' held

Bangladesh's first ever Hackathon for election called 'DHAKATHON' commenced last Friday at 10:30am at the Six Seasons Hotel in Gulshan, Dhaka. The event was jointly organized by The Asia Foundation and HiFi Public. This unique hackathon was aimed to provide a platform from which young participants could compete to provide useful and exciting online/mobile applications that will assist voters in accessing information relating to the City Corporation Elections. Over 80 enthusiastic participants joined the event, including students, faculty members of different universities, and employees of various ICT professional organizations.

The welcome speech was given by Kutub Uddin Kamal, Deputy Managing Editor, HiFi Public, who

introduced the crowd to the event and explained the motive behind this initiative and what it aims to achieve. This was followed by an interactive briefing from Peter Yates, Project Manager, Elections Program, The Asia Foundation, who explained what concepts the participants could engage in with examples of such hackathons held in other nations across the world. After 48 hours of continuous coding, IITDU Coders was announced as the champions. They devised the app 'Vote for' which will inform voters about the basics of election, detailed bio of the candidates, polling stations and so on. Team RITL was as 1st Runners-up while Team Supernova won the title of 2nd Runners-up.

The event was supported by DFID, Sida, SDC and DANIDA.



Osiris Group Invests USD 7 Million for SureCash Mobile Banking



The Osiris Group, an Asian investment firm, joined hands with Progoti Systems Limited to invest USD 7 million Series B fintech investments for SureCash mobile banking. Earlier, SureCash received Series A investment from a group of Japanese investors specializing in the e-commerce industry.

MD of Osiris Group Jason Bajaj and CEO of Progoti Systems Dr. Shahadat Khan signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. The ceremony was held at Surecash Head Office at Dhaka where also attended Syeed Khan and Mir Mahfuz Ur Rahman from Osiris and CBO Md. Abu Taleb, SVP S.M. Salahuddin and SVP Md. Afzalur Rashid from Progoti Systems.

Samsung Announces New Offer For Z1 Smartphone

Samsung Bangladesh has announced offer in collaboration with meenphone. The Z1 will be available at exclusive price of Tk. 6,900 only along with an value back offer worth of Tk. 3,000 for GP subscribers. Under this offer, Samsung Z1 purchasers will receive free 1,200 minutes talk time and stay connected with the world of 3G internet with a 6GB data package. Subscribers will get the minutes and the data split into 3 months, and the package will be valid for 30 days.



KASPERSKY SECURITY UPDATE

Deep Dive 5 threats affecting hardware (Part-2)



Certain firmware responsible for managing discrete hardware components has been getting increasingly complex and is subject to vulnerabilities and exploits. The worst thing is, that in many cases existing threat detection systems are impotent.

To cast some light onto this alarming trend, let's review one by one the top 5 dangerous hardware vulnerabilities that have recently been found in today's PCs. Today we bring you the second installment:

#2: Hard drives

While we are on the subject of RAM, let's cover hard drives. Thanks to the recent Kaspersky-commissioned research of Equation cybercriminal group, we are now aware of the fact that the controller firmware in hard drives might contain a lot of interesting curios.

For example, those include

malware modules which hijack control over the affected PC and function, essentially, in the 'God mode'. After a hack like this, a hard drive is damaged beyond repair: the controller firmware infected with a malicious code hides the sectors containing malware and blocks any attempt to fix the firmware. Even formatting would be in vain: the most reliable method to get rid of the malware is physical destruction of the hacked hard drive.

The good news here is that the attack is tedious work and a costly piece of hacking. That's why the absolute majority of users can relax and not even think of the possibility of their HDDs being hacked, except, possibly, those in possession of data so valuable that the exorbitant expenses of the associated attack are justified.



TECH BITS
Russians are using undiscovered exploits to hack the US government



FCC vote clears the way for lower-cost mobile data



Chrome OS gets a new launcher and more Material Design



WikiLeaks lets you search Sony's hacked emails



Indian firms back out of Facebook's free internet program

