



The power to do more

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INFORMATION | GADGETS | TECHNOLOGY



HANDS ON REVIEW

SAMSUNG S8 REVIEW

The S8 is a very important phone for Samsung. They were all ready to set the market on fire with the awesomeness of the last Note 7. But the market literally caught fire as the phablet proved too hot to handle. The S8 has to recover not just the goodwill but also all that lost business to Google, LG and OnePlus.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The S8 is an evolution of the previous model with one big change: they have made it narrower. It is supremely comfortable to hold and even better to use when wearing formal pants. The tall, slender dimensions are perfect for holding in the palm.

For the past two weeks this phone served me in everything I needed. It worked and worked and impressed. It's the first Samsung phone I am actually contemplating owning. Yet, there are a couple of caveats.

DESIGN

The fingerprint sensor is awkwardly placed on the back, off-centre to the camera lens. You smudge the camera while hunting for the not-at-all-natural position where your finger rests. This can get annoying when I have to unlock the phone hundreds of times a day. I can alternately use

the excellent face detection or the new-fangled iris scanner. But how many of you like to pick up a phone, stare at it and wait for action? Didn't think so.

DISPLAY

Then there is the bezel free glass everywhere with much of it drooping over the edges. Nervous? Yes. Wrap it up in a rubberized cover? Then the whole point of it looking so fantastic is moot. Gone. Poof. The back is glass also which makes it more worrying. It's like dating a supermodel.

The 5.8 inch display is almost bezel free. That massive yet visually compact AMOLED display has a density of 507ppi, more than you can make out with your naked eye. Screen legibility in the sunlight is the best I've seen on any device yet. The physical home button is finally gone. Having to rely on on-screen controls is perfectly natural. And in a couple of years, everybody will have forgotten about that button just like the Windows help assistant Clippy. Who? That's right.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Bixby is a three-part assistant/utility aimed to be like Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa. Then there is Bixby Home, similar to Google Now. It provides information updates for



appointments, workout counts, news headlines, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter updates. Rounding it up is Bixby Vision which is a camera filter. Scan business cards or translate into 52 languages with more or less varying results. But for all this, you need to sign up for a Samsung account.

CAMERA

Can it make you popular on Instagram? This is one of the main reasons for buying mobile phones these days. No dual camera on this but do you really need two? The 12MP camera is consistently fantastic. Shutter lag time is negligible allowing you to snap away instantly. Double tap the power button and you can have the camera ready to shoot in 0.8 seconds consistently. Samsung finally implemented this standard Android feature.

What sets it apart from the S7 and dual lens options is the officially titled "Multi-Frame Image Processing". Here the phone captures many images with one tap

and merges them for a single clear, sharp image.

Photos are crisp and accurately coloured. The dynamic range is excellent and it's coupled with a pleasing image sharpening effect. You can take them in default JPEG or RAW if you feel the need to tweak them much further on a PC later on.

A pro mode helps you tweak the settings much more than the majority of the S8 users will attempt. But the auto setting is more than enough for most. One highlight is the Portrait option that detects a face and blurs out the background for more attention to the subject, similar to the iPhone 7. Go overboard and you may end up cutting off someone's limbs and ears.

What the dual lenses on competing devices offer is better depth of field effect for portraits but frankly, the S8 manages perfectly well. Videos are shot in 1080p HD which

you can move up to quad HD (1440p) at the cost of video stabilization.

BATTERY

Now onto the hot stuff. You may be wondering if you need to wear a fireman's outfit for using this device. Samsung hasn't provided one yet and I can assure you that while the device does get a little warm like most other phones during heavy usage, it has not set my pockets on fire. But the price will.

Battery drain tests averaged 16 hours of looped video. The S7 which had an excellent battery backup could manage that at 14.5 hours. In daily usage considering our network issues, the phone easily lasts an entire day during average use but if you play games a lot, prepare to top up once.

PHOTOS AND REVIEW: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

SPECS

Corning Gorilla Glass 5 front and back
Single SIM (Nano-SIM) or Dual SIM (Nano-SIM, dual stand-by)
IP68 certified - dust/water proof over 1.5 meter and 30 minutes
5.8 Super AMOLED 1440 x 2960 pixels (~570 ppi pixel density)
Always-on display
OS: Android 7.0 (Nougat)
Chipset: Exynos 8895 Octacore
GPU: Mali-G71
Memory: microSD, up to 256 GB (dedicated slot) - single-SIM model
Internal: 64 GB, 4 GB RAM
Camera: 12 MP rear, f/1.7, 26mm, phase detection autofocus, OIS. 1/2.5" sensor size. Simultaneous 4K video and 9MP image recording, 2160p@30fps/1080p@60fps video. 8 MP front, f/1.7, autofocus, 1440p@30fps video.
Connectivity: Bluetooth 5.0, NFC, USB 3.1 Type-C
Sensors: Iris scanner, fingerprint (rear-mounted), barometer, heart rate.
Battery: Non-removable Li-Ion 3000 mAh battery
Colours: Midnight Black, Orchid Gray, Arctic Silver, Coral Blue, Maple Gold
Price (as of May 2017) S8: 77,900 tk
S8+: 83,900 tk

VERDICT

Samsung has made one of the best looking phones in the market right now. It's the make-your-friends-go-jealous type. The narrow form factor is perfect for ergonomics. I never did like big wide phones like the Google Pixel or the One Plus 2. It's faster than you will ever need it to be. AnTuTu scores are 164368 for my test unit. Camera is good enough to be among the top five flagships right now. It's almost perfect except for that super annoying fingerprint sensor. But if you are an S7 user, there is not that much performance upgrades for you to switch other than the novelty factor. It's fresh, it's cool. On the plus side, the battery fears are put to rest. Before you get one though, take the fingerprint unit on a test run. It is not a deal breaker but it can get annoying. And after you have bought it for its looks, hide it behind a cover because it is curved glass everywhere. Check online for photo samples and more in-depth review.

TECH HAPPENING

Five mobile apps developed for Agricultural Sector



Chairman of BTRC handed over five newly developed mobile apps to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in a ceremony held in BTRC last week. These apps were developed under HRD (I2) project funded by Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT). The apps are - Crop Production, DAE Office Directory, Organic Farming, Salinity Information System and Weather Forecasting. The app "Crop Production" shows the production report of different crops in different areas. The "DAE

Office Directory" app has all the information of the employees who are working in DAE and users can also make call from that application. "Organic Farming" is an informative app which includes organic crop production information. "Salinity Information System" app helps to predict the production status of different crops in different areas. "Weather forecasting" app shows the micro-weather update in a particular location, which will be helpful for the farmers.



Ruby Conference held at Dhaka

RubyConf Bangladesh 2017, arranged by Ruby Community Bangladesh, was held at University Grant Commission Auditorium, Dhaka this last Saturday. Around 150 developers participated in this conference. On this daylong programme, 10

tech talks were presented by expert Rubyists. Experts discussed about different frameworks of Ruby, especially Ruby on Rails. Five mobile apps developed for Agricultural Sector

Digital transformation requires digital payment simplification

Digital businesses will get expanded only when digital transactions will be increased in our country and if so, then it will also help to enhance country's all digital transformations. But, in this regard, there exist some complications among the service providers and users about availability, security and trust and to get rid of it, mass-awareness is highly required. The speakers shared all this in Digital Transaction Summit held on April 18, 2017 at Lakeshore Hotel, Dhaka.

'Digital Transaction Summit 2017' was officially inaugurated on April 18, 2017 and was organised by Governance Policy Explore Centre (GPEC) in association with RallyRound. Chief Guest of the event was Dr. MD. Abdur Razaque MP, Chairman, Standing Committee on Ministry of Finance.

After inauguration, a roundtable discussion titled 'Prospects and Challenges of Digital Transaction in Bangladesh' was also held. Head of E-Commerce in SSL Wireless Mr. Nawat Ashekin delivered the keynote speech in the roundtable discussion moderated by the President of CTO Forum Bangladesh Mr. Tapan Kanti Sarkar. From the organisers, CEO of Governance Policy Explore Centre (GPEC) Razib Pervaz presented the welcome speech whereas CEO of RallyRound Mrs. Naznin Nahar delivered the closing speech.

In the keynote speech, Nawat Ashekin said, 'Only 3% of the total digital transactions in the country are done through online payment. But interestingly, the popularity of mobile banking has far exceeded the number of ATM cards. So, all the banks along with all the concerned policymakers should come forward to make digital transaction popular.'

FACEBOOK'S NEWEST FOUR RIVALS

In the last six months, Facebook has been copying features from its competitors at an unprecedented scale. Although initially it was limited mostly to Snapchat, now Facebook is providing services very similar to some other top players. Here's the top four:

	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
	Cloud-based team collaboration tool	August 2013	Stewart Butterfield

With workplace, Facebook has officially stepped into the arena of team collaboration platforms. Slack and similar platforms now have serious competition.

	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
	Online crowdfunding platform	May 2010	Brad Dampousse & Andrew Ballester

Facebook now has a verification and fund-raising mechanism which can easily replace all the key services provided by the most popular fund raising platform- gofundme.

	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
	social media with everything	January 2012	Tencent Holdings Limited

One app to rule them all- probably that's teaching that Facebook took from WeChat and now they are trying to integrate everything in their services.

	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
	Online payments system	December 1998	Max Levchin, Peter Thiel, Luke Nosek, Elon Musk & Ken Howery

Through the messenger app, Facebook has introduced money transfer option with Western Union. Soon this would be available in many countries.

DESIGNED AND RESEARCHED BY: SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Facebook will license its new 360 cameras that capture in six degrees of freedom



Facebook is building brain-computer interfaces for typing and skin-hearing



Microsoft to shut down Wunderlist in favor of its new app, To-Do



IBM shares dropped like a rock today



Oculus co-founder Palmer Luckey donated \$100,000 to Trump's inauguration

