

Title:

Blackberry 8300 Curve - Fortus Mobile Phone Review

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Summary:

Close but not Quite Perfection

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Article Body:

Close but not Quite Perfection

With mobile phones looking to narrow the gap all the time between themselves and the dedicated PDA handsets on the market - the Apple iPhone springs to mind - manufacturers like Research In Motion (RIM) are having to try even harder to make their products stand out. Enter the new Blackberry 8300 Curve, with a host of new features yet, surprisingly, some glaring ones too.

The fact this new Blackberry has come out so soon after the 8800 model says everything there is to know about just how good mobile phones are at the moment - RIM is obviously worried about the diminishing market. However, PDA's like the Blackberry 8300 Curve can still offer some features mobile phones can't, and it's these features that make this such an exciting product.

The main difference between this model and the recently released 8800 is that the Curve is a lot slimmer. In fact, with the change in size that RIM has given the Blackberry 8300, you'd be forgiven for thinking that you're holding a normal mobile phone in your hand. The only thing that gives it away is the standard QWERTY keyboard just below the large display screen.

Design-wise, the 8300 Curve benefits from a black and silver colour scheme, which offers it just the right amount of futuristic styling that PDA users seem to love. It's extremely lightweight as well, at least for a PDA, and is full 1.5 ounces lighter than the Treo. It feels good to hold as well, thanks to the small addition of rubber grips on the side, making it feel more secure and less prone to slipping from your grip.

A neat little trick is that the 2.5-inch screen has sensors that detect what the lighting conditions are like. Too dark or too bright, and the Blackberry 8300 will automatically adjust the brightness and contrast. This makes it a lot easier to navigate your icon-driven menus, and is a definite step in the right direction, not just for Blackberry but PDA's and mobile phones in general.

Unlike some similar models, the screen isn't touch-sensitive; however, there is a little trackball nub that you use to move around the screen. Using the keyboard is a lot easier on this model as well, with RIM reverting back to the larger spaces between each of the QWERTY keyboard elements. The smart screen allows pictures taken on the 2.0megapixel camera to look just that little bit sharper, especially if you compare pictures from an equivalent specced mobile phone camera. However, there's still no video playback option.

If there is one thing that stops the Blackberry 8300 Curve from being almost perfect, it's that it's not a 3G unit. This seems almost criminal when you look at the features it does come with, yet for some reasons, RIM haven't seen fit to supply the 8300 with 3G features. There's no Wi-Fi support either, and again it seems like a missed opportunity. It does make up for this a little by being quad-band, but Wi-Fi would have been nicer.

Yet the Blackberry has always been about its office suite and more professional approach than a mere mobile phone can offer. In that respect, it doesn't disappoint at all.