Nokia Delivers Astound for T-Mobile

Monica Alleven

Nokia is targeting those feature phone users who haven't yet made the move to a smartphone with the new Nokia Astound. It will be available April 6 through T-Mobile USA for $79.99 after rebate and with a two-year service agreement and qualifying voice and data plan. The data plans start at $10 a month.

Nokia worked closely with T-Mobile over the past six months on the phone, which is not a cheap-o made of plastic. Rather, its AMOLED touchscreen is protected by Gorilla Glass and surrounded by stainless steel, so it's something people can feel proud to carry around, says Mark Slater, vice president of sales at Nokia. Terms of the exclusivity period were not disclosed.

The gadget is also packed with features, and while it's targeted toward the first-time smartphone owner, users who have no prior experience with smartphones often move up the grid pretty fast; they learn the basics and then start looking for more sophisticated features, Slater says.

The phone is based on the latest version of Symbian and includes an 8-megapixel camera with dual-LED flash and 720p HD video capture, free turn-by-turn navigation and access to free and paid apps through Nokia's Ovi Store. The Astound has three customizable home screens, so users can see their email, Facebook and Twitter. Pre-loaded games include Fruit Ninja, and Slacker Radio also is preloaded.

It's equipped with the latest commercial version of Ovi Maps, so it can provide voice-guided, turn-by-turn navigation in almost 90 countries in 46 languages. New features include improved search engines and Wi-Fi positioning, a drive assistance

mode for real-time traffic updates, maps of public transit lines and the ability to check in to places and share moments with friends on Facebook, Twitter and many local social networks.

Currently, Ovi Store sees more than 4 million downloads worldwide per day, including popular apps and games like Angry Birds, OpenTable, Shazam and Galaxy on Fire, and apps and services can be billed directly to a consumer's monthly T-Mobile bill or credit card.

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