Consumer Reports

Product evaluations are a genre that has developed as part of our consumer culture. Faced with a vast array of products and wary of unscrupulous marketers, buyers use product evaluations to help them make informed decisions. Entire magazines, such as *Consumer Reports Buying Guide*, and endorsement guarantees, such as *The Good Housekeeping Seal,* have developed in response to the recurring demand for consumer advice. Like movie reviews, product evaluations make arguments of evaluation, but the audience expects far more information about the product from this genre than they do from the movie review because the choices they are making are far more consequential. Choosing a bad movie may mean a viewer wasted ten dollars and a couple of hours. Choosing a lemon may mean a buyer will spend years regretting that moment on the car lot. Readers expect product evaluations to be well-researched and to guide them to a wise choice.

The purpose of a product evaluation is to provide consumers with that research and with an evaluation of product performance. Like editorials, product evaluations offer guidance to readers, although they address readers in the role of private consumers, not in the role of public citizen. The genre fulfills its purpose by providing information at a level of detail that allows the buyer to understand how a product operates, and by describing the beneficial features and the undesirable limitations of an item well enough that buyers can decide for themselves what mix of features best suits their individual needs.

A key rhetorical strategy for product evaluations is the presentation of the writer as knowledgeable—the construction of a credible ethos. That presentation is achieved largely through the use of these rhetorical strategies:

- Categorization—perhaps the most creative aspect of product evaluations. By sorting products into discrete categories, product evaluations help readers see the differences between choices much more clearly. Categorization is often accomplished at several levels—magazine section, article type, even paragraph by paragraph. Creating the categories often serves as a form of criteria. The categories set up the basis for comparison with similar products.
- Description--Product evaluations use detailed descriptions to convey information to readers. The description is often aided by design features such as graphs, charts, and illustrations.
- Exemplification--Very often, product evaluations will offer an example of how a product performs under various conditions to show its features or limitations.
- Comparison and contrast—Writers use this strategy to help readers decide which product is better for what purpose.

Product evaluations make an argument of evaluation, but they do *not* try to persuade readers to buy a particular product. Rather, they argue that a product either does or does not fulfill the promises of its advertising, as the two evaluations of the initial iPhone do, or they argue that a product performs a particular task better or worse than similar products.

Reading tip:
Read through these evaluations first to get a sense of what the writer is saying about the iPhone. Read through a second time, paying attention to the comments in the margins to see how the writer created the evaluation. In each case, look at how the writer answers the question, "What is the value of this product and will it be a good buy for me?"

CNET editors' review

Reviewed by: Kent German and Donald Bell
Edited by: Lindsey Turrentine
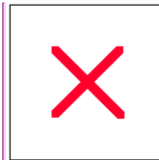Reviewed on 6/30/07   *Updated on: 9/5/07*   Release date: 6/29/07

Photo gallery:
Apple iPhone

Comment [bs1]: Move 1. Identifies the product.

Editor's note: Apple eliminated the 4GB model on September 5, 2007, two months after the iPhone's initial release date.

From the moment Apple announced its iPhone at Macworld 2007, the tech world hasn't stopped asking questions. Because Apple has kept many iPhone details under wraps until very recently, we've been forced to speculate. Until now. Is the iPhone pretty? Absolutely. Is it easy to use? Certainly. Does it live up to the stratospheric hype? Not so much. Don't get us wrong, the iPhone is a lovely device with a sleek interface, top-notch music and video features, and innovative design touches. The touch screen is easier to use than we expected, and the multimedia performs well. But a host of missing features, a dependency on a sluggish EDGE network, and variable call quality--it is a *phone* after all--left us wanting more. For those reasons, the iPhone is noteworthy not for what it does, but how it does it. If you want an iPhone

Comment [bs2]: Uses the recent introduction of the phone as a hook.

Comment [bs3]: Move 2: Offers an initial evaluation.

Comment [bs4]: Move 3: Identifies benefits and limitations.

badly, you probably already have one. But if you're on the fence, we suggest waiting for the second-generation handset. Even with the new $399 price for the 8GB model (down from an original price of $599), it's still a lot to ask for a phone that lacks so many features and locks you into an iPhone-specific two-year contract with AT&T. We'll be more excited once we see a version with--at the very least--multimedia messaging and 3G.

Design

On with the review: the iPhone boasts a brilliant display, trim profile, and clean lines (no external antenna of course), and its lack of buttons puts it in a design class that even the LG Prada and the HTC Touch can't match. You'll win envious looks on the street toting the iPhone, and we're sure that would be true even if the phone hadn't received as much media attention as it has. We knew that it measures 4.5 inches tall by 2.4 inches wide by 0.46 inch deep, but it still felt smaller than we expected when we finally held it. In comparison, it's about as tall and as wide as a Palm Treo 755p, but it manages to be thinner than even the trend-setting Motorola Razr. It fits comfortably in the hand and when held to the ear, and its 4.8 ounces give it a solid, if perhaps weighty, feel. We also like that the display is glass rather than plastic.

Display

The iPhone's display is the handset's design showpiece and is noteworthy for not only what it shows, but also how you use it. We'll start off with its design. At a generous 3.5 inches, the display takes full advantage of the phone's size, while its 480x320 pixel resolution (160 dots per inch) translates into brilliant colors, sharp graphics, and fluid movements.

Menus

In true Apple style, the iPhone's menu interface is attractive, intuitive, and easy to use. In the main menu, a series of colored icons call out the main functions. Icons for the phone menu, the mail folder, the Safari Web browser, and the iPod player sit at the bottom of the screen, while other features such as the camera, the calendar, and the settings are displayed above. It's easy to find all features, and we like that essential features aren't buried under random menus. Fluid animation takes you between different functions, and you can zip around rather quickly.

Much has been made of the iPhone's touch screen, and rightfully so. Though the Apple handset is not the first cell phone to rely solely on a touch screen, it is the first phone to get so much attention and come with so many expectations. Depending on what you're doing, the touch screen serves as your dialpad, your keyboard, your Safari browser, and your music and video player. Like many others, we were skeptical of how effectively the touch screen would handle all those functions.

Touch screen

Fortunately, we can report that on the whole, the touch screen and software interface are easier to use than expected.

Comment [bs5]: Move 4: Categorizes and describes product.

Comment [bs6]: Begins categorization.

Comment [bs7]: Detailed description.

Comment [bs8]: Comparison and contrast.

Comment [bs9]: Compares product to others in its category or class.

Comment [bs10]: Exemplification shows the reader how it works.

**Comment [bs11]:** Each category includes detailed description of the features.

Comment [bs12]: Note how these adjectives create a positive evaluation.

Comment [bs13]: Move 2: Evaluation.

Comment [bs14]: Strong verbs move description forward.

Comment [bs15]: Move 5: Categorization and description.

What's more, we didn't miss a stylus in the least. Despite a lack of tactile feedback on the keypad, we had no trouble tapping our fingers to activate functions and interact with the main menu. As with any touch screen, the display attracts its share of smudges, but they never distracted us from what we were viewing. The onscreen dialpad took little acclimation, and even the onscreen keyboard fared rather well. Tapping out messages was relatively quick, and we could tap the correct letter, even with big fingers. The integrated correction software helped minimize errors by suggesting words ahead of time. It was accurate for the most part.
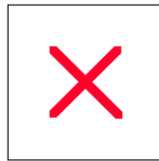
The Apple iPhone features a virtual QWERTY keyboard.

Still, the interface and keyboard have a long way to go to achieve greatness. For starters, when typing an e-mail or text message the keyboard is displayed only when you hold the iPhone vertically. As a result, we could only type comfortably with one finger, which cut down on our typing speed. Using two hands is possible, but we found it pretty crowded to type with both thumbs while holding the iPhone at the same time. What's more, basic punctuation such as periods or commas lives in a secondary keyboard--annoying. If you're a frequent texter or an e-mail maven, we suggest a test-drive first.

We also found it somewhat tedious to scroll through long lists, such as the phone book or music playlists. Flicking your finger in an up or down motion will move you partway through a list, but you can't move directly to the bottom or top by swiping and holding your finger. On the other hand, the letters of the alphabet are displayed on the right side of the screen. By pressing a letter you can go directly to any songs or contacts beginning with that letter. But the lack of buttons requires a lot of tapping to move about the interface. For example, the Talk and End buttons are only displayed when the phone is in call mode. And since there are no dedicated Talk and End buttons, you must use a few taps to find these features. That also means you cannot just start dialing a number; you must open the dialpad first, which adds clicks to the process. The same goes for the music player: since there are no external buttons, you must call up the player interface to control your tunes. For some people, the switching back and forth may be a nonissue. But for mutlitaskers, it can grow wearisome.

Criticisms aside, the iPhone display is remarkable for its multitouch technology, which allows you to move your finger in a variety of ways to manipulate what's on the screen. When in a message, you can magnify the text by pressing and holding over a selected area. And as long as you don't lift your finger, you can move your "magnifying glass" around the text. You can zoom in by pinching your fingers apart; to zoom out you just do the opposite. In the Web browser, you can move

around the Web page by sliding your finger, or you can zoom in by a double tap. And when looking at your message list, you can delete items by swiping your finger from left to right across the message. At that point, a Delete button will appear.

Thanks to the handset's accelerometer (a fancy word for motion sensor), the iPhone's display orientation will adjust automatically when you flip the iPhone on its side while using the music and video players and the Internet browser. Also, a proximity sensor turns off the display automatically when you lift the iPhone to your ear for a conversation. All three are very cool.

Exterior features

The iPhone's only hardware menu button is set directly below the display. It takes you instantly back to the home screen no matter what application you're using. The single button is nice to have, since it saves you a series of menu taps if you're buried in a secondary menu. On the top of the iPhone is a multifunction button for controlling calls and the phone's power. If a call comes in at an inopportune time, just press the button once to silence the ringer, or press it twice to send the call to voice mail. Otherwise, you can use this top control to put the phone asleep and wake it up again. You can turn the iPhone off by pressing and holding the button.
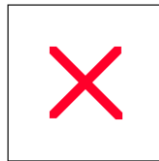
The Apple iPhone speakers are located at the bottom of the phone.

Located on the left spine are a volume rocker and a nifty ringer mute switch, something all cell phones should have and which is a popular feature of Palm Treos. On the bottom end, you'll find a pair of speakers and the jack for the syncing dock and the charger cord. Unfortunately, the headset jack on the top end is deeply recessed, which means you will need an adapter for any headphones with a chubby plug. Is this customer-friendly? No.

Unfortunately, the Phone does not have a battery that a user can replace. That means you have to send the iPhone to Apple to replace the battery after it's spent (Apple is estimating one battery will keep its full strength for 400 charges--probably about three years' worth of use). The cost of the replacement is $79 plus $6.95 shipping. No, you don't really need a removable battery in a cell phone, but like many things missing on the iPhone, it would be nice to have, especially for such an expensive phone. And just what are you supposed to without a cell phone during the replacement period? Contrary to earlier reports, the SIM card is removable via a small drawer on the top of the iPhone, but other AT&T SIM

cards will not work in the iPhone. That's especially troubling, as it completely defeats the biggest advantage of using a GSM phone with a SIM card. Some people have multiple phones and like to change the SIM card between their different handsets. Also, you can't use the SIM card to import contact information from another handset.

Features

The iPhone's phone book is limited only by the phone's available memory. Each contact holds eight phone numbers; e-mail, Web site, and street addresses; a job title and department; a nickname; a birthday; and notes. You can't save callers to groups, but you can store your preferred friends to a favorites menu for easy access. You can assign contacts a photo for caller ID and assign them one of 25 polyphonic ringtones. We should note, however, that there's no voice dialing and you can't use MP3 files as ringtones. Other basic features include an alarm clock, a calculator, a world clock, a stopwatch, a timer and a notepad. There's a vibrate mode but it's a tad light.

The calendar offers day and month views, and you can use the calendar as an event reminder or a to-do list as well. The interface is clean and simple, though inputting new appointments involves a lot of tapping. There's no Week view, however. We were able to sync our Outlook contacts and calendar and our Yahoo! e-mail address book with no problems.

Bluetooth and wireless

The iPhone offers a full range of wireless functionality with support for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity. The Wi-Fi compatibility is especially welcome, and a feature that's absent on far too many smart phones. When you're browsing the Web, the iPhone automatically searches for the nearest Internet hot spot. Bluetooth 2.0 is also on board, which delivers faster transmission and a longer range than Bluetooth 1.2. You can use Bluetooth for voice calls, but you don't get an A2dP stereo Bluetooth profile--another item that's not necessary but would be nice to have.

Though Apple CEO Steve Jobs has explained the iPhone's lack of 3G support by saying the chipsets take up too much room and drain too much battery, we'd like the option anyway. Yes, the Wi-Fi network is great when you can get it, but AT&T's EDGE network just doesn't cut it for all other surfing. EDGE Web browsing is so slow, it almost ruins the pretty Web interface. More on this in the Performance section.

Messaging and e-mail

For your messaging needs, the iPhone offers text messaging and e-mail. As on many smart phones, a text message thread is displayed as one long conversation--a useful arrangement that allows you to pick which messages you'd like to answer. If you use another function while messaging, you can return to pick up that message where you left off. We just don't understand, however, why Apple doesn't include multimedia messaging. Sure, you can use e-mail to send photos,

but without multimedia messaging you can't send photos to other cell phones--pretty much the entire point of a camera phone.

The iPhone's e-mail menu includes integrated support for Yahoo, Gmail, AOL, and Mac accounts. You can set up the phone to receive messages from other IMAP4 and POP3 systems, but you'll need to sweet-talk your IT department into syncing with your corporate exchange server. It's rumored that Apple will update the iPhone to support ActiveSync but Apple hasn't confirmed that as of this writing. You can read--but not edit--PDF, JPEG, Word, and Excel documents. Worse: you can't cut and paste text when composing messages.

iPhone's iPod
Sandwiched between all the iPhone's features lives Apple's most amazing iPod yet. The display, interface, video quality, audio quality--all of it is meticulously refined and beautiful. Unfortunately, it's trapped within a device that will cost you more than $1,000 a year just to own. CNET recently reviewed a Rolls-Royce that had a top-notch umbrella hidden inside its passenger door. Buying the iPhone for its iPod feature is a lot like buying that Rolls-Royce for its umbrella. Regardless, the iPhone is an exciting glimpse into what Apple hopefully has planned for its sixth-generation iPod. Apple has redeemed itself following the Motorola Rokr E1 debacle.
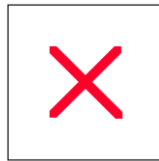
The Apple iPhone's music player lets you view album art.

On paper, the iPhone's iPod doesn't offer any features not already on a fifth-generation iPod: podcasts, videos, music, and playlists are all here, and content management with iTunes is identical. The difference rests entirely in the iPhone's interface. We've used other MP3 players that use touch interfaces, such as the Archos 704, iRiver Clix and Cowon D2, but the iPhone's unique integration of multitouch technology and a graphic user interface put it in a category all its own.

From an iPod perspective, Apple's biggest triumph with the iPhone is the fact that it has returned album artwork back into the music experience in a way that goes beyond a token thumbnail graphic. Physically flipping through your music collection in the iPhone's Cover Flow mode really brings back the visceral feel of digging through a CD or record bin. It's a tough feeling to quantify, but the real music lovers out there will appreciate how well the iPhone reconnects their digital music to a form that is both visually and physically more vivid. Even iTunes users who may already be jaded about using

the Cover Flow mode on their personal computer will be surprised at how the experience is changed by using the iPhone's intuitive touch screen.

Truth be told, there is one feature that is new to the iPhone's iPod--the integrated speaker. While the iPhone's speaker sounds thin and is prone to distortion, it works in a pinch for sharing a song with a friend. Apple was also smart enough to manage its speaker volume independent of the headphone volume, so if you're listening to the speaker full-blast and then decide to plug in your headphones, you won't be deafened.

The bad news is that the iPhone's iPod leaves out the ability to manually manage the transfer of music and video content. Unlike any previous iPod, the iPhone does not allow an option for manually dragging and dropping content from an iTunes library directly to the iPhone device icon. Instead, the iPhone strictly uses defined library syncing options for collecting and syncing content from your iTunes library to the device. This should work out fine for most people, but for a device with limited memory the inability to manually manage content seems like a misstep. Our 8GB iPhone was already a quarter full after only a few hours of testing, giving us the impression that users will need to be vigilant at grooming their iPhone library. An external memory card slot is another one of those "nice to have" features.

The iPhone's music sound quality seems right in line with our experience using the 5G iPod. All the same EQ presets are available, only now they are found on the iPhone's main Settings tab. The included iPhone earbuds did a passable job for casual listening in a quiet environment. Unfortunately, the iPhone's recessed headphone jack prevented us from using many of the test headphones we're familiar with. We were just barely able to squeeze the plug of our Etymotic ER6i earphones into the jack to do the comparison.

Watching video on the iPhone is not quite as luxurious as a Creative Zen Vision: W or Archos 504, but its wide screen and bright contrast beat the fifth-generation iPod by a mile. As with previous iPods, video playback is automatically bookmarked so that playback resumes where you left off. And because the iPhone is a phone, it includes an airplane mode that will keep the music player activated while turning off the call transmitter.

The Apple iPhone's video player really takes advantage of its wide screen.

Safari browser

The Safari browser really sets the iPhone apart from the cell phone crowd. Rather than trudging through stripped-down WAP pages with limited text and graphics, the browser displays Web pages in their true form. It's a completely and surprisingly satisfying experience to see real Web pages on a screen of this size. Our only regret is that the browser does not support Flash or Java. To pan around a page, just swipe your finger across the display, and the page moves accordingly. Tap your finger on a link to open a new page and double-tap your finger to zoom in and zoom back out. You can use the arrows on the bottom of the display to move back and forth, while a multifunction button at the bottom of the display lets you open new pages and flick among them.
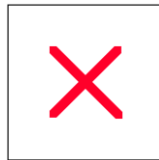
The Apple iPhone comes with the Safari Web browser.

Google search is the iPhone's default search tool, but you can use Yahoo search as well. When searching for information or typing URLs, you use the onscreen keyboard. It's just like typing an e-mail except that the spacebar is replaced with Web-appropriate language like ".com" and a slash. That's a nice touch.

Thanks to the accelerometer, you can tip the phone on its side for a more comfortable landscape view. It doesn't matter which direction you rotate the phone, as it will work either way. It's also nice that the onscreen keyboard appears in landscape mode when using the browser. Most Web pages looked great on the screen, but visually busy pages like CNN.com can be too crowded. And because you can zoom in only a set amount, some text can still be too small to read clearly. You can store bookmarks and sync your favorite pages from your PC, but it works only for Internet Explorer and not Firefox.

YouTube

You can activate the iPhone's integrated YouTube player straight from the main menu via a colored icon. Videos are organized using many of the same criteria as on the YouTube site, including Featured Clips, Most Viewed, Top Rated, and Most Recent. You can read the information attached to a video, such as the date posted and the poster's name, but you can't read comments. It doesn't appear, however, that the YouTube connection updates in real time. We uploaded a video of our own, and it didn't show up until a few hours later.

The Apple iPhone has a built-in Google Maps application.

Widgets
The iPhone doesn't have integrated GPS, but it does have a widget for accessing Google Maps. You can get turn-by-turn directions between two points, with traffic information. We tried mapping routes from CNET's offices to various places. The directions were accurate. But with no GPS, the iPhone can't tell you where you are, so you'll have to figure out that yourself. Also, the lack of audio instructions will limit its usability while driving. The map interacts well with the calling functions; you can find a point of interest and ring it in just a few taps. We also like that you can get the Google satellite view.

Additional widgets point to stock information and weather reports. You can program your own tickers and get information like a share gain or loss and see the chart of a share price over time. The weather function gives you a six-day forecast for your choice of cities. For more options, there is already a selection of third-party iPhone apps. No games are included on the handset

Visual voice mail
One of the most intriguing features on the iPhone is the much-touted visual voice mail. iPhone's voice mail works much like a text-message folder in that it displays the caller's name or phone number and the time. What's even more fantastic, however, is that you can listen to the message instantly by pressing the individual message--you don't have to call your voice mail first.

The Apple iPhone has a 2-megapixel camera on the back.

Camera

The iPhone's 2-megapixel camera offers a spiffy interface with a graphic that resembles a camera shutter. You're offered no camera editing options, which we didn't expect. That means you can't change the resolution, choose a color or quality setting, or select a night mode. There's no flash either, and with no self-portrait mirror, those vanity shots are going to be tricky. The camera performed well in our tests, however. Photo quality was excellent with rich, bright colors and distinct object outlines. White looked a bit too soft, but we approve overall. On the downside, you can't shoot your own video, which is disappointing on a phone at this price.

As we said earlier, the photo menu is attractive and easy to use, particularly due to the pinching motion. You can also flip between photos by swiping your finger across the display. When selecting a photo, you're given the option of assigning it to a contact, using it as wallpaper, or e-mailing it to a friend.

Call quality

We tested the quadband (GSM 850/900/1800/1900) Apple iPhone in San Francisco using AT&T service. Call quality was good for the most part, but it wasn't dependable. Though voices sounded natural, the volume was often too low, and the microphone has a sensitive sweet spot. When we moved the phone away from our ears ever so slightly, the volume diminished noticeably and we had to move the phone back to just the right place to hear clearly. The volume wasn't so bad that we weren't able to hear a friend who was in a crowded bar, but it just could be better. The speakerphone was also too quiet though conversations weren't too muffled.

CNET users have also reported volume problems, and a few people we called said they heard a slight background hiss. We didn't hear the hiss on our end, but more than one of our friends said they noticed it. Automated calling systems were able to understand us, but only if we were in a quiet room. On the whole, the call quality stayed the same in most environments.

Browser speed

Our first test with the Safari browser was over CNET's internal Wi-Fi network. Web pages loaded in 5 to 10 seconds, though sites with heavy graphics took longer. It was a smooth experience overall, though it not quite as zippy as we had hoped. We thought that could be due to CNET's network, but it seemed to be more or less the standard. Pages took about the same time to load on a home network and just a couple seconds longer in a cafe. When not using Wi-Fi, you're stuck with AT&T's EDGE network, which is just too slow to render the lovely Safari interface enjoyably. With speeds in the 50-to-90Kbps range, it reminded us of a dial-up browser. In other words, it's pretty intolerable. CNET Labs tested the speed of the EDGE network against the Wi-Fi connection by comparing repeated results of the download time for a 9.4MB file. After two days of testing, EDGE resulted in an average download time of 15 minutes, 41 seconds for the file; Wi-Fi on average

required a mere 1 minute, 11 seconds. In the end, our test results indicate that the iPhone's Wi-Fi connection is 13 times faster than using EDGE, although results will vary depending on location. We can only hope Apple adds 3G soon, especially since AT&T has a robust UMTS/HSDPA network.

Activation

Activation was easy using iTunes 7.3. Our computer recognized the iPhone right away, and the activation system started automatically. After a few prompts, it asked us if we wanted to automatically sync contacts from Yahoo and Windows mail and contacts from Outlook. It also asked us to if we wanted to sync Internet bookmarks but, as we said earlier, it won't import Firefox bookmarks. The integration with AT&T's account service is also seamless. We were able to select a plan and indicate whether we were a current AT&T customer. It even asked us if we wanted to port a current cell phone number. In all, it's much better experience than dealing with AT&T.

It's important to note that the iPhone is little more than an expensive paperweight until it's activated. You can make emergency calls, but you can't use any other functions, including the iPod music player. What's worse, if you cancel your AT&T contract, the iPhone becomes a paperweight again.

Battery life

The Apple iPhone has a rated **battery life** of 8 hours talk time, 24 hours of music playback, 7 hours of video playback, and 6 hours on Internet use. The promised standby time is 10.4 days. When we tested the iPhone with the Wi-Fi function turned off, we got about 7 hours, 45 minutes of talk time. When we tested it with the Wi-Fi activated, we came away with 4 hours less. Video time, however, clocked in at an impressive 7.3 hours. Music-only time was also satisfactory. We got 28.4 hours of music playback time on a single charge. Just keep in mind that it's rare you'll be using just one feature for hours on end. As such, your battery life will vary widely as you switch between functions. Large color screens such as the one on the iPhone tend to be battery drainers, so you'll most likely need to charge your handset every couple of days. According to the FCC, the iPhone has a digital SAR rating of 0.974 watts per kilogram.

> **Comment [bs20]:** This evaluation has an UNCONVENTIONAL conclusion. Most end with a summary evaluation. This evaluation just ends.

http://reviews.cnet.com/smart-phones/apple-iphone-4gb-at/4505-6452_7-32180293.html July 14 2007.

The iPhone Matches Most of Its Hype - New York Times

By DAVID POGUE
Published: June 27, 2007

Talk about hype. In the last six months, Apple's iPhone has been the subject of
11,000 print articles, and it turns up about 69 million hits on Google. Cultists
are camping out in front of Apple stores; bloggers call it the "Jesus phone."
All of this before a single consumer has even touched the thing.
So how is it?

As it turns out, much of the hype and some of the criticisms are justified. The
iPhone is revolutionary; it's flawed. It's substance; it's style. It does things
no phone has ever done before; it lacks features found even on the most basic
phones. Unless you've been in a sensory-deprivation tank for six months, you already know what the iPhone is: a tiny,
gorgeous hand-held computer whose screen is a slab of touch-sensitive glass.

The $500 and $600 models have 4 and 8 gigabytes of storage, respectively – room for about 825 or 1,825 songs. (In each
case, 700 megabytes is occupied by the phone's software.) That's a lot of money; then again, the price includes a
cellphone, video iPod, e-mail terminal, Web browser, camera, alarm clock,
Palm-type organizer and one heck of a status symbol.

The phone is so sleek and thin, it makes Treos and BlackBerrys look obese. The
glass gets smudgy – a sleeve wipes it clean – but it doesn't scratch easily.
I've walked around with an iPhone in my pocket for two weeks, naked and
unprotected (the iPhone, that is, not me), and there's not a mark on it.

But the bigger achievement is the software. It's fast, beautiful, menu-free, and
dead simple to operate. You can't get lost, because the solitary physical button
below the screen always opens the Home page, arrayed with icons for the iPhone's 16 functions.

You've probably seen Apple's ads, showing how things on the screen have a
physics all their own. Lists scroll with a flick of your finger, CD covers flip
over as you flick them, e-mail messages collapse down into a trash can. Sure,
it's eye candy. But it makes the phone fun to use, which is not something you
can say about most cellphones.

Apple has chosen AT&T (formerly Cingular) to be the iPhone's exclusive carrier

for the next few years, in part because the company gave Apple carte blanche to revise everything people hate about cellphones.

For example, once the phone goes on sale this Friday, you won't sign up for service in a phone store, under pressure from the sales staff. You will be able to peruse and choose a plan at your leisure, in the iTunes software on your computer.

Better yet, unlimited Internet service adds only $20 a month to AT&T's voice-plan prices, about half what BlackBerry and Treo owners pay. For example, $60 gets you 450 talk minutes, 200 text messages and unlimited Internet; $80 doubles that talk time. The iPhone requires one of these voice-and-Internet plans and a two-year commitment.

On the iPhone, you don't check your voice mail; it checks you. One button press reveals your waiting messages, listed like e-mail. There's no dialing in, no password – and no sleepy robot intoning, "You...have...twenty...one...messages."

To answer a call, you can tap Answer on the screen, or pinch the microscopic microphone bulge on the white earbud cord. Either way, music or video playback pauses until you hang up. (When you're listening to music, that pinch pauses the song. A double-pinch advances to the next song.)

Making a call, though, can take as many as six steps: wake the phone, unlock its buttons, summon the Home screen, open the Phone program, view the Recent Calls or speed-dial list, and select a name. Call quality is only average, and depends on the strength of your AT&T signal. E-mail is fantastic. Incoming messages are fully formatted, complete with graphics; you can even open (but not edit) Word, Excel and PDF documents.

The Web browser, though, is the real dazzler. This isn't some stripped-down, claustrophobic My First Cellphone Browser; you get full Web layouts, fonts and all, shrunk to fit the screen. You scroll with a fingertip – much faster than scroll bars. You can double-tap to enlarge a block of text for reading, or rotate the screen 90 degrees, which rotates and magnifies the image to fill the

wider view.

Finally, you can enlarge a Web page – or an e-mail message, or a photo – by
spreading your thumb and forefinger on the glass. The image grows as though it's on a sheet of latex.

The iPhone is also an iPod. When in its U.S.B. charging cradle, the iPhone
slurps in music, videos and photos from your Mac or Windows PC. Photos, movies and even YouTube videos look spectacular on the bright 3.5-inch
very-high-resolution screen.

The Google Maps module lets you view street maps or aerial photos for any
address. It can provide driving directions, too. It's not real G.P.S. – the
iPhone doesn't actually know where you are – so you tap the screen when you're ready for the next driving instruction. But how's this for a consolation prize? Free live traffic reporting, indicated by color-coded roads on the map.

Apple says one battery charge is enough for 8 hours of calls, 7 hours of video
or 24 hours of audio. My results weren't quite as impressive: I got 5 hours of
video and 23 hours of audio, probably because I didn't turn off the phone, Wi-Fi
and other features, as Apple did in its tests. In practice, you'll probably wind
up recharging about every other day.

So yes, the iPhone is amazing. But no, it's not perfect.

> **Comment [bs25]:** Move 5: Summary evaluation.

Rhetorical Analysis

Purpose: The purpose of a consumer report is to provide potential buyers with comparative information they can trust when they are making a decision about buying something.

Timing is only a critical factor in product evaluations if you are reviewing a product that is just being released. These two articles were written when the iPhone was just being introduced, so many consumers knew little about smart phones. Otherwise, product evaluations have a shelf life that is tied directly to the stability of the market for the product line you are evaluating. Still, a writer can use timing–the reader's need to buy or the release of a new entry in the product category to

generate reader interest. If a product is seasonal, a review of a category of seasonal items can also take advantage of timing to build interest.

Exigency
While the release of a new product can produce a sense of motiviatioin, readers usually create the exigence for a product evaluation. The product evaluation becomes important to them when they are in the market for a particular item.

Writer
The writers we considered here demonstrated that they were very knowledgeable about the product they were evaluating. They presented themselves as experts in that category of products. In product evaluations, that presentation of expertise is critical. The writers also present themselves as friendly advisors, adopting a tone that is accessible to the readers and often using the first person while not being too familiar by addressing the reader as "you."

Readers
Product evaluations are addressed to readers who have the capacity or the desire to purchase a particular product. In the essays above, the writers addressed readers who may be in the market for a new cell phone now or in the near future and who would already have to know something about cell phones and computers to make sense of their evaluations. The product you choose to write about will greatly influence who reads your article. As a student, of course, you may have to keep both this audience, the desired or imagined audience, and your teacher and peers, the actual audience, in mind as you write. If you plan to try to post this a website that invites user postings, you have yet another audience to address.

The medium or the forum
Product evaluations are circulated in a number of mediums and forums: magazines, newspapers, television broadcasts, radio talkshows, and dedicated websites among them. The medium of publication is likely to affect many of the design features of a product evaluations, although the necessity of expertise and the rhetorical strategies used are fairly stable across mediums. Where something appears, however, can affect who reads it.

Genre
These are the common features of product evaluations:

Purpose: The primary purpose of a product evaluation is to help buyers make informed buying decisions with a secondary purpose of arguing that the writer's evaluation of the relative merits and limits of the entries in that category is valid.

Move pattern:

The move pattern of a product evaluation is reiterative—it loops through a pattern of identification of features and limitations, categorization and description, and evaluation over and over again. Think of it as a dance with a repeating pattern.

1. Identify the product
2. Initial evaluation
3. identification of features and limitations
4. Categorization and description
5. Final evaluation

Language use:
- Third person mixed with first person
- Active voice with some passive voice
- Standard English
- Technical vocabulary associated with product
- Relaxed formality

Design features:
- Short paragraphs
- Long and detailed article for technical products; may be shorter for other items.
- Illustrations and graphics if product warrants it and medium supports it
- Subheads for categories

Ethical considerations

Just as movie reviewers assure they are credible to readers by remaining independent of the movie marketing departments that want them to say good things about their movies, consumer researchers have to remain independent of product sponsors as well in order to offer unbiased information to potential buyers. Here are some statements of ethics excerpted from a popular gaming review site:

If you're wondering about GameSpot's reviews, you've come to the right place. In short, we take reviews of games seriously. Your time and your money are on the line when you're deciding whether or not you should purchase (or rent) a game. Our editorial staff consists of discerning, value-conscious game players, and it's been our mission since 1996 to provide all the information you need to decide whether a given game is right for you. Whether you quickly glance at our ratings and review summaries, watch our video reviews, read our full reviews in their entirety, or all of the above, I think you'll find us to be a dependable, entertaining source of honest information about how all the games out there really are.

"I've seen a lot of advertisements on your site from specific game companies. Does advertising affect your editorial mission in any way, shape, or form?"

Absolutely, positively not. Never in GameSpot's history has money changed hands with regard to a review, nor have we ever altered our verdict about any game due to advertiser pressure. We accept advertising from game publishers so that we can continue to provide you with free, high-quality services. However, GameSpot's business model is founded on the concept that if we provide our users with consistently trustworthy content, then they will visit us often and in great numbers. It is this large, dedicated audience that advertisers wish to speak to. We have operated on these principles for years and will continue to do so.

http://www.gamespot.com/misc/reviewguidelines.html

Invention

Choosing a product

- Write about what you know about
  For example, if you are an experienced user of instant macaroni and cheese, you might want to write a product evaluation of the three most expensive brands at your local grocery or a range of the product from least to most expensive. Alternately, if you spend way more time in online gaming sites than you do on your writing assignments, you might want to evaluate gaming sites for different users.
- Write about what you WANT to know about
  You can take advantage of this assignment to learn about a product that interests you, but that you have never really investigated. Like movie reviews, product evaluations require primary research. You will have to interact with the product and carefully annotate your observations and impressions to produce the level of detailed description that is such an important feature of product descriptions as well as present yourself as a knowledgeable source.

Therefore, make sure you have adequate access to the product you want to review. In the case of the macaroni, you can probably buy as many boxes as need without extra expense. If you want to review expensive electronic items such as televisions, you may have to spend a lot of time at your local electronics stores and review their documentation to gather the information you need.

- Write about something you use every day, but have never thought about in terms of quality. For example, do you brush your teeth? Ever thought of comparing toothbrushes? Do you wash your hands? Blow your nose? Think of all of the products you use every day. You may even be able to inject some humor into the assignment if you give it some thought.

Opening Research

- Write down everything you know about the product you've chosen.
- Create a list of everything you don't know, writing them as questions.
- Sort the questions into two initial categories;
    Questions that can be answered by primary research
    Questions that need secondary sources

Because your primary research will answer most of your questions and will form the basis of your basis, you should perform that research first and then refine the list of questions for which you will consult secondary sources.

This guide is designed to assist you in your research, but you will have to customize it to suit your product.

1. **Establish the parameters of your study**. How many entries in the product line will you need to evaluate in order to offer your readers an informed description and fair evaluation? In the case of the macaroni and cheese, do initial research at your grocery store—how many brands are available? How will you limit your evaluation by type? Will you evaluate only products that can be cooked in the microwave? Will you select a range according to expense? Will you restrict your study to national brands? Setting realistic limits on what you will include will allow you to become knowledge within that range.
2. **Establish evaluative criteria**.
    - Performance criteria: Why do buyers purchase this product/ What is the primary purpose of the product and how well does it fulfill its purpose? Is it supposed to be easy to prepare, taste great, and offer some

nutritional value? Is it supposed to deliver highly-defined images and a number of programming options? Is it supposed to make your teeth whiter while safeguarding your enamel?

- Secondary criteria: What other factors influence the value of the product? What other factors play into buying decisions? For example, while the primary purpose of a vacuum is to suck dirt out of carpets and off floors, the weight of the vacuum may be important to some users who have difficulty handling a large machine.
- Economic criteria. Is price an important consideration? Do higher priced products perform better? Is the difference in performance worth the extra money? Will some buyers be fine with a medium level of performance that would make the extra expense unnecessary? Who will the low end of the range satisfy? What readers will be happy only with the premier entry in a category?

3. **Create a grid** that will allow you to record your observations of the product under each of the categories you have devised by establishing the criteria. Include an area in which you can record the price or price range for the product.

Focused Research

Once you have established the categories and criteria for evaluation, you are ready to conduct the primary research by testing the product. What tests will you use to determine performance and so evaluate against that criteria? Evaluating food products, for example, would require that you cook and eat them, observing smell, taste, texture, and eye appeal, as well as other features such as the relative ease or difficulty of preparation. Evaluating televisions, alternatively, will require that you watch them and observe the quality of the image and sound, the range of features offered and that you try out their various features, as well as understand how they interact with peripherals, and what warranties are offered for their performance.

Note all of your observations carefully. Just as you learned to take careful notes throughout the process of running a lab experiment, and when conducting primary research for a film, you will need to do the same for your product evaluations. These are your field notes, and they should serve as your primary research material when you are ready to write a consumer report.

Assignment: This assignment is designed to allow you to demonstrate your ability to gather information through primary research, evaluate it, and use it to write a consumer report that readers can trust when they are making a buying decision.

Use the invention strategies above to choose a product to evaluate. Produce field notes that can serve as an appendix for a three to five page evaluation of a category of products.

Peer Review

Use these questions to respond to the work of your peers.

Does the writer clearly identify the product or product category?

Are the evaluative criteria established?

Does the writer offer an initial evaluation

Are the product features and limitations clearly established

Are categories clearly described and evaluated?

Does the review end with a summary evaluation?

Is the vocabulary well-chosen for anticipated audience?

Is any included graphic properly identified?

Is the length appropriate for the format?

Reflection:

Had you ever read a product evaluation before undertaking this assignment? Do you find the genre useful? If you chose to test a product yourself, how did you feel about the test? What was establishing the evaluative criteria like? Did engaging in this activity make you look at products you buy or at shopping differently? Can you do anything now that you couldn't do before?