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HTC is launching the One Max phablet with fingerprint security

The latest Android tablet-phone from HTC is taking on Samsung's successful Galaxy Note 3, but betters it by adding a fingerprint scanner

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theguardian.com, Monday 14 October 2013 18.23 BST



The HTC One Max phablet sports a fingerprint scanner on the rear of the phone

Taiwanese smartphone manufacturer HTC announced its latest flagship phone on Monday, revealing a fingerprint scanning security feature and 5.9in screen on the HTC One Max.

The One Max comes less than one month after [Apple revealed the iPhone 5S](#), which garnered huge attention for its fingerprint sensor which unlocks the device.

HTC's phablet - an oversized smartphone, or small tablet - resembles the slim profile and curved metal back design of the well-received 5in [HTC One Android smartphone](#),

but features a larger 5.9in full HD screen that makes watching movies and sharing content with friends easier.

“The addition of the HTC One max means that we now have an HTC One phone for everyone,” said Peter Chou, chief executive of HTC. “The HTC One max delivers the size and power required to do everything you want, and more, without compromise.”

Unlocked with up to three fingerprints

The rear of the device features a fingerprint scanner, which sits below the phone’s 4-Ultrapixel camera and allows the phone to be unlocked with up to three pre-stored fingerprints replacing the need for a PIN or password.



HTC One Max phablet has a fingerprint scanner on the back.

Security is a concern, according to Carolina Milanesi, vice president at research analysis firm Gartner:

"Considering that Apple was not able to avoid spoofing of its Touch ID for longer than 48 hours, I doubt HTC will have much more success. Where it has positioned the fingerprint scanner shows it will be more about convenience than security to me."

Each stored fingerprint can also be used to trigger a different app while unlocking the device, providing rapid access to your favourite applications. The fluidity of the experience will be key when it comes to a feature that buyers might actually use on a daily basis, however.

"Unlike Apple's use of the technology, HTC's use of the fingerprint of sensor is clunky, not ergonomic and runs the risk of not being used to its full extent - if it's not a smooth experience that genuinely adds value why would the general user actually use it?" said Francisco Jeronimo research director of European mobile devices for research firm IDC.

Like the One, but bigger

The One Max runs Android 4.3 Jelly Bean with HTC's updated "Sense 5.5" user interface customisations with the same 1.7GHz quad-core processor that HTC chose for the original One.

The Max has 2GB of RAM and 16 or 32GB of built-in storage with a micro SD slot for adding up to 64GB of additional of space.

The One Max also has a larger, 3,300mAh battery to offset the increased demand placed on it by the larger 5.9in screen and maintain battery life.



HTC One Max phablet

Stiff competition

The HTC One Max joins a raft of new phablets that have launched this year, including stiff competition from both the 5.7in Samsung Galaxy Note 3 and 6.44in Sony Xperia Z Ultra.

"There are two markets for the phablet - the multimedia market, where the cheapest largest screen wins, and the professional market, where the phablet with the most value-added features triumphs," said Jeronimo.

Samsung's Galaxy Note line of devices differentiate themselves from the phablet competition, including HTC's new One Max, by coming equipped with a feature-packed stylus that not only allows drawing on the screen but also provides multiple multi-tasking modes such as Samsung's multi-window.

It is these value-added features that attract the highly lucrative professional market, according to Jeronimo.

"The stylus tips the buyer in the Note's favour at the point of sale because, despite whether or not they will ever use the features, the more features available the more attractive the proposition when the price is equal," he said.

Phablets outpacing PCs

Analysts predicted that 2013 would be "the year of the phablet" in January, after analysing the rapid rise of the large-screened phones in 2012.

Phablet shipments outpaced both tablets and portable PCs in the last year in the Asia-Pacific region (excluding Japan), with a total of 25.2m phablets shipped compared to 12.6m tablets (over 7in) and 12.7m portable PCs, according data from IDC.

While phablet shipments are still a small proportion of overall global smartphone shipments, they are seeing a marked increase in sales according to IDC's data.

"Most vendors need a device in the phablet sector to compete, however, their sales figures are unlikely to be high given the strong competition from Samsung," concluded Jeronimo.

- **HTC insists it will stay out of the low-end as it aims to compete with Samsung and Apple**



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