

iPhone vs Palm Pre – Who wins?

How I ended up with an iPhone in Australia

”Do AT&T data plans work in Australia?” I asked curiously, taking advantage of this rare opportunity to pick the brain of an AT&T VP.

”AT&T has data coverage in over 140 countries.” He replied. I was honestly just trying to figure out how I would stay connected while in Australia, little did I know that this conversation would lead to AT&T providing me with free international data while I was in Australia. The free service would also lead to me finally getting a chance to try out the iPhone for myself.

”Why don’t we just provide you with a free card for your trip? Think of it as a sample,” he told me.

In the end I was sent an AT&T Sierra Air Card, and a sim card providing me with unlimited international data for my entire month in Australia. In addition, I was provided with a SIM Card that I was able to insert into an iPhone (which I had to purchase myself)- and was basically able to try out AT&T’s service and the iPhone for the month of March. Special thanks to AT&T for the sample data card and sim for my iPhone- it greatly enhanced my trip to a foreign country having coverage. The service was great all through Australia, except in Queensland- but as most Australians will tell you- nothing works quite right in Queensland.

Most importantly I was able to evaluate the pro and cons of the iPhone versus the Palm Pre. The results were quite surprising- I love the iPhone, but after trying them both out- they each have some uniquely awesome characteristics. For those of you considering the iPhone or Palm Pre, this breakdown may be helpful to you:

Advantages of the iPhone

1. The iPhone has thousands and thousands of apps. While I don’t need thousands of apps, I do need Tweetdeck- an awesome app for using Twitter- and it is currently not available on the Palm Pre. This feature alone is the single biggest motivator for me to switch to the iPhone.
2. iPhone has a much bigger screen, so viewing streaming video on the iPhone is better than the palm pre.



This is an iPhone

3. iPhone has a longer battery life- although this is helped by the fact that iPhone can only run one application at a time, at the end of the day the iPhone is working while the Palm Pre is a useless piece of plastic.

4. The iPhone has predictive text so even though the keyboard is harder to use than the palm pre- many time the words will be completed for you. This sometimes annoying when maybe 10% of the time the keyboard predicted the wrong words, and I had to end up erasing the words. (so maybe this isn't as much an advantage as somewhere in the middle)

5. The iPhone works EVERYWHERE- 140 countries with data service, over 200 countries with phone service. For globe trotters- this is a big deal. It is a hassle to track down which phone works where each time your travel. AT&T certainly has the better international service offering

Advantages of the Palm Pre

1. When dialing on the Palm Pre you can see though the dial pad to the document that you were last working on. This is REALLY cool for taking a phone number from an email (if it isn't hyperlinked- or if it is hyperlinked but has an unnecessary area or country code.) This was my big frustion about the iPhone while I was in Australia- I couldn't see the number so I had to memorize it- or write it down on paper.)



This is the Palm Pre

2. The Palm Pre calender interfaces seamlessly with Gmail calender. Perhaps I simply had a bad experience with the iPhone, but I could never get the phone to change the time zone on the iPhone calender, so all of my Australia appointment were transposed into Eastern Standard Time. Luckily I was aware of this from the beginning, so I made sure that I simply used the Gmail calendar interface through a browser. I'm sure there was a way to change this- but it was not obvious, as there was no "settings" feature in the Calendar itself. The palm pre changes this automatically when you change time zones.

3. The Palm Pre has a keyboard. For better or for worse, the real application of this is that with the Palm Pre you can text while you drive with one hand. This is far more difficult, and more dangerous with the iPhone. (Note: not that I would ever text while I was driving, I'm just saying- if you wanted to...)

4. Multi-tasking. You can have multiple browsers open at once- this is a really cool feature. As I said in part one- it is especially helpful if you are taking work product from one document and transferring it to another one. After using the Palm Pre for about 10 months, it was frustrating to lost that fuctionality.

5. Contract is less expensive. According to my estimates a data + calls plan with Sprint is roughly \$40 cheaper than a comparable AT&T plan. (To switch to the iPhone it would also require me to break my contract with Sprint- which would cost me somewhere between \$300-500)

iPhone users scoff at the idea that the Palm Pre is competition for a product designed by their sacred Steve Jobs, but the truth is that the Palm Pre is potentially a real match for the iPhone. But what about the apps? Great point, and I will tell you honestly, if we took all the apps out of the picture (and international coverage), I would pick the Palm Pre hands down. I have spent more time with the Palm Pre, but even in the first month- the Palm Pre was a better user experience for me. What about when we put apps back in

the equation? Different story altogether. I love Tweetdeck, a great app for the iPhone, but more importantly the Mac has an army of 3rd party developers building awesome stuff for the iPhone. I was hoping Sprint would create a similar environment for the Palm Pre, but it just hasn't happened. A year later, and there is still not a good Twitter app for the Palm Pre. I would imagine this is the case for tons of other apps for various industries. All the developers are focusing on the iPhone, so the coolest stuff is created for the iPhoneplatform.

Decision Time

Am I missing something? What other advantages are there for the iPhone? In the next week I need to make a decision as to whether I sell the practically new iPhone back, or if I break my contract with Sprint. I honestly haven't decided what I am going to do (although if breaking my old contract weren't an issue- it would certainly sway me towards the iPhone) Any huge Palm Pre lovers out there? (feel free to post anonymously if your are afraid of nerd backlash)