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16

NOKIA 9000 COMMUNICATOR

Announced

14 March 1996

Codename

Responder

Features

The Nokia 9000 Communicator was announced at the CeBIT exhibition in 1996. It was the first product in its Communicator range. Six further Communicator devices followed over the next 11 years. It was a revolutionary device that stunned the industry when it was launched. It was developed at Nokia's offices in Tampere, Finland by a team led by Reijo Paananen. It was described as a "Communicator" as it was considered to be a completely new product category. The term smartphone had not been used at this point. The 9000 Communicator had two interfaces. When closed it looked like an oversized conventional mobile phone with strong similarities to the Nokia 2110. However, when opened it revealed a full QWERTY keyboard and a large screen. Nokia used the term 'interfaces' to stress the point that these two functions were being provided by the same underlying hardware and that this device was not simply two devices enclosed within the same case. For example, the address book on the phone interface was the same as the contacts within the Communicator interface. The complexity of the 9000 Communicator was reflected in the sheer number of components and component suppliers that it required. With nearly 30 component suppliers and over 1000 components (compared to the 100 to 150 discreet components in a typical mobile phone at the time), it was an expensive and challenging device to deliver. The component integration required a seven-layer printed circuit board (PCB) to be designed. Internally it had 8MB of memory of which 4 MB was used for its GEOS 3.0 operating system, 2 MB for programs and 2 MB for user data and it was powered by an Intel 24MHz 386 microprocessor. The GEOS 3.0 operating system had several breakthrough features including the ability to support third-party applications built using a software development kit (SDK). In addition to the basic phone, address book (contacts) and SMS functions, the Nokia 9000 Communicator had a document handling and editing feature called Notes, a fully featured calendar and diary application, a clock showing world time and an alarm, a calculator, Composer for creating your own ringtones and alerts, a currency converter and connection to a PC via an Infra-red port through which documents could be exchanged and software downloaded and installed. The most important feature was the provision of Internet and WWW services via a circuit-switched data connection. These services were supported through a Nokia web browser, an SMTP, MIME and POP3-compliant email client, and Telnet and Terminal programs for remote access to computing services using VT100 emulation. When the Nokia 9000 was launched, the web was still in its infancy, so providing fully integrated Internet and WWW access within a mobile was very much at the technological cutting edge. The device was first shown to leading industry executives at Nokia's annual VIP customer gathering at Zell Am See in Austria in February 1996 and was subsequently officially launched at the CeBIT show in Germany in March 2006. By August 1996, Nokia CEO Jorma Ollila told the Financial Times newspaper that the company was "shipping all the Communicators it could make" which was believed to be tens of thousands of units per week. The revolutionary, futuristic and innovative design of the Nokia 9000 Communicator saw it starring in the 1997 feature film, The Saint, released by Paramount Pictures. In the film, the Saint was played by Val Kilmer and he is seen using the Nokia 9000 Communicator throughout the film to get out of tight situations. *Some information courtesy of Nigel Linge & Andy Sutton, the authors of 30 Years of Mobile Phones in the UK (Paid Link)*

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