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Nokia Goes For Camera Phone Crown With 41-Megapixel Lumia - But Will Consumers Care?

Nokia is wowing the smartphone industry again with a eye-popping, 41-megapixel camera phone — but it may yet struggle to grab more mainstream smartphone customers. The company launched its new flagship 1020 Lumia phone powered by Windows in New York today, its primary selling point being a high-quality camera that combines an image stabiliser, large sensor and 41 megapixel camera. What does 41 megapixels get you? Super-sharp images and a lot more detail when zooming into a scene. Check out [this example from Nokia here](#), and good luck if you've got a slow browser.



Nokia's new Lumia 1020 Windows Phone, featuring a 41 MP camera; image via Nokia.

The phone is debuting in the United States with AT&T on July 26, at \$300 on a two-year contract.

Nokia is essentially transferring the imaging technology from the 41-megapixel [PureView phone it first unveiled last February](#) at [Mobile World Congress](#), to a phone targeted at mainstream consumers. While the PureView was a little more [brick-like at 13.9 mm thick](#), the Lumia 1020 is now just 10.4 mm thick, and fits more snugly design wise into the Lumia range. Full specs sheet [here](#).

Nokia's management look as though they are trying to position their high-end smartphones as the best for taking photos. Smartphones sold by Apple, Samsung and HTC tend to come with cameras with 8 MP or 12 MP cameras at most, though there's an argument that the race to higher megapixels is largely a marketing gimmick, since high megapixels don't necessarily translate to better images. (See: ["Can We Get A Decent Smartphone Camera?"](#))

Nokia could not be reached for comment at the time of writing.

Though I haven't tested the 1020 myself, [IDC analyst Francisco Jeronimo](#)

tried out the Lumia 1020 at an analyst event in Helsinki and said the photo quality was impressive. “For an amateur or professional photographer who needs a quality camera on the move, this is the best option available on the smartphone,” he said.

But therein lies a risk that a phone with monster-sized megapixels will have more niche, than mass, appeal. Jeronimo points to a [survey IDC carried out last December](#) which showed that out of the 23 most important features that consumers thought about when buying a smartphone, camera resolution ranked at 15. More important was audio quality, battery life, ease of use and operating system.

While shoppers will typically try out a smartphone’s camera before making a purchase decision, vendors like Samsung and Sony “already deliver very good cameras in their flagship devices,” Jeronimo says, adding that 71% of total smartphone shipments in the first quarter of 2013 featured a 5 MP camera or higher, but only 4% featured a 10 MP camera.

It is also hard to appreciate 41 megapixels on the small screen of a smartphone, which is where users tend to view most of their photos anyway – not large-screen televisions or big print-outs where high megapixels will come in handy.

“To be able to compete with Apple and Samsung, Nokia will need to price it aggressively and to increase activities in the stores to show consumers how better the camera performs against the competition,” said Jeronimo. “Failing that, the Nokia Lumia 1020 will become a niche product for a niche segment – professional mobile photographers.”

Pictures of the Lumia 1020:

[Nokia Lumia 1020](#)

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