
Visorphone PDQ

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Data de publicació: 25-06-2015

Handspring Releases Visor Phone Module

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Dec 17th, 2000 3:00 PM EST | News

Months after announcing their plans to ship such a unit, Handspring has shipped the Visor Phone. The new Springboard Module adds full GSM phone compatibility to your Visor Handheld. Long considered an advantage of the Visor over its Palm counterparts, the Springboard Module allows users to add a multitude of modules to enhance the power of the system. Perhaps the most anticipated is the Visor Phone, allowing users to eliminate one of their technology gadgets.

While many mobile phones are trying to incorporate PDA like features, often the products fall short for one major reason; entering text in a mobile phone is difficult. Technologies like the T9 text service have helped, but that is the largest barrier facing mobile phones today. By way of comparison, the Palm operating system gives users all the PDA functionality they could ever want, and now with voice capabilities. According to Handspring:

Handspring today will begin selling its VisorPhone Springboard expansion module, combining the power of voice communications with the simplicity and versatility of the Visor handheld computer. VisorPhone is available now at Handspring.com with competitive service plans available in select regions from Cingular Wireless, a leading GSM (Global Systems for Mobile Communications) carrier in the United States.

For customers with access to Cingular Wireless services, VisorPhone can be purchased for U.S. \$299, with the simultaneous service plan activation (Visor handhelds are sold separately). Handspring expects to sell VisorPhone through physical distribution channels in the U.S. in the first half of 2001.

ABOUT VISORPHONE

VisorPhone is a compact mobile phone module that extends slightly above and beyond the top and back of Visor itself. VisorPhone contains a battery, speaker, antenna, and three buttons: one to power VisorPhone on and off and two that allow a user to switch between voice and text messaging functions.

As with all Springboard modules, all software needed to use VisorPhone is included in the module itself. Springboard modules are self-installing and self-de-installing and can run in place so there is no need to transfer software between Visor and the module. The process is automatic and fast. To use VisorPhone, a person simply inserts the module into the Springboard slot. When powered on, VisorPhone will automatically register to the GSM network. When the module is

removed, software is automatically deinstalled, leaving Visor in a clean state. The Visor need not be turned on or off, or applications closed, to insert or remove VisorPhone.

VISORPHONE SERVICE PLANS

VisorPhone operates on the GSM standard, the most widely used digital phone standard in the world, and is designed to function exclusively with the Springboard expansion slot. The GSM standard allows users to receive wireless coverage in over 4,600 cities and towns throughout North America. Handspring is selling service plans from Cingular Wireless initially with an expanded rollout expected in early 2001. This regional rollout will make VisorPhone first available to PacBell customers in California and Nevada on the West coast and to BellSouth Mobility customers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Eastern Tennessee and Coastal Georgia on the East coast. A one-stop shopping purchase and activation process is now available exclusively at Handspring.com allowing customers to easily choose the service plan that best fits their specific needs.

The service providers, not Handspring, determined pricing plans based on current competitive offerings. For a full list of pricing plans and options, simply type in your zip code at the following URL: <http://www.handspring.com/products/visorphone> and click on the "Buy it!" button to see what service is available in your area. Pricing is in line with plans offered for mobile phones today. Additional carrier information and activation details are provided at Handspring.com. Customers can purchase the VisorPhone without a service plan for U.S. \$499 from Handspring.com.