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First Look: Samsung Vibrant Rips Off iPhone 3G Design

· By [Priya Ganapati](#)

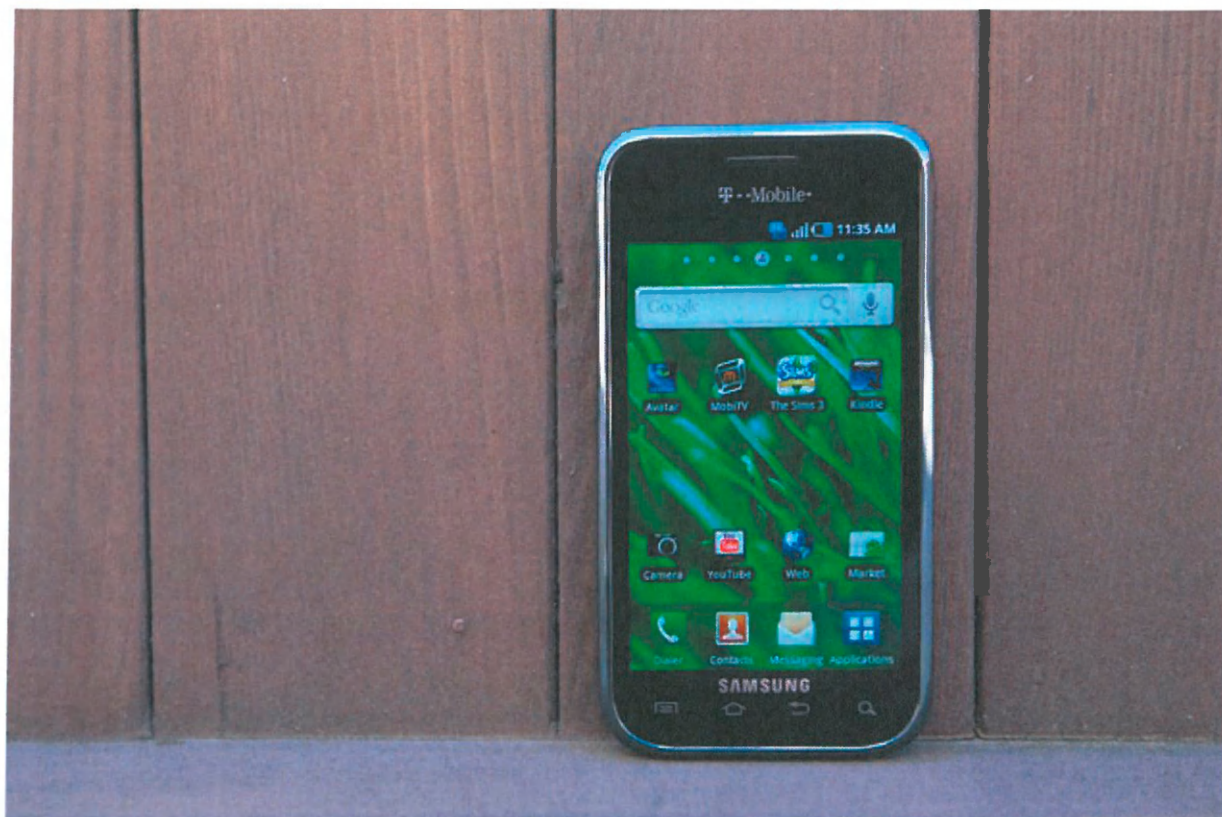
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Updated at 12.30 EST to change the release date of the phone

Samsung's latest phone, the Vibrant, has the body of an iPhone and the brains of an Android.

The Vibrant's industrial design is shockingly similar to the iPhone 3G: The rounded curves at the corners, the candybar shape, the glossy, black finish and the chrome-colored metallic border around the display.

The Vibrant even has its volume and ringer buttons in almost the same spot as the iPhone 3G.

But if you are willing to get past the derivative design, the Vibrant has some sweet tech specs. The Vibrant is part of Samsung's new portfolio of Android devices collectively called 'Galaxy S.'

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The Vibrant has a 4-inch AMOLED screen that's bright and vivid and the 1-GHz Hummingbird processor makes the device pretty zippy. There's GPS, Wi-Fi and a 5-megapixel camera. Overall, the phone (weighing 4.16 ounces) feels remarkably light. By comparison, the iPhone 3G weighs around 4.7 ounces.

There's one disturbing thing about the phone. The device comes packed with apps you probably don't need: MobiTV, GoGo Inflight internet and Electronic Arts' *The Sims 3* game. Sure, you can always delete these apps if you don't use them, but why bundle them into the phone instead of giving users the option to download the apps if they want them? We'd hate to see bloatware start to overwhelm brand-new phones with junk the way it does with most new PCs.

The Vibrant runs version 2.1 of the Android operating system. That means access to all the standard Google apps such as maps, YouTube and e-mail. Setup, as with most Android phones, is easy —just enter your Google e-mail address and the device unlocks access to your Google account and to the Android Market. Samsung's skin for the Android is clean and easy to use. But the square icons are, again, very similar in their looks to the iPhone 3G's.

Samsung has created a Social Hub widget for the device that integrates Facebook, Twitter and MySpace feeds into a single window. That has its limitations, though. For instance, it's easy to reply and retweet messages, but you can't see @replies or direct messages from Twitter through the widget.

Samsung's Vibrant will cost \$200 (with a two-year contract) on T-Mobile. The phone, which was originally scheduled to launch on July 21 will now be available starting July 15. But there's little to make the phone notable, apart from its striking similarity to the iPhone. Without that, the Vibrant is then just another Android phone, albeit one with a pretty good screen and surprisingly light weight.

Check out the photo of the Samsung Vibrant next to the iPhone 3G below.



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