Vodafone BlackBerry 7100v
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WHEN Vodafone launched the RIM BlackBerry 7230 for consumers in September, there were those who found it great for sending and receiving email and playing games, but not so great to use as a phone. "It's like holding a sardine tin to my face," one wag said. RIM, the maker of BlackBerry devices, must have seen this coming, so now we have the BlackBerry 7100, which looks very much the mobile phone, but retains all the functions of the 7230. How can this be, you ask, when it cannot possibly have a qwerty keypad?

Good question, Holmes. This matter is solved by adding two extra rows of keys – one on each side of the usual mobile phone configuration. True, you still don't get full qwerty, you get sort of half qwerty, with each button containing two characters instead of one.

It's not perfect, but a big improvement on picking and pecking your way through SMS on a typical mobile phone.

Apart from the keypad, all the functions of the 7230 on Vodafone are there – even the BrickBreaker game and email from up to 10 POP accounts can be pushed to you on the device. Ian Cuthbertson

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: $799
Weight: 120g
Extras: Read and send email, open attachments, SureType advanced messaging services.

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