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Nokia E71 review: Nokia E71

Nokia E7



Bonnie Cha

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8 min read

It may be that the Nokia E series sometimes suffers from Jan Brady syndrome, as it gets overshadowed by a flashier member of its family--the [Nokia N series](#) (aka Marcia Brady). But the E series is just as bright and deserves some recognition too. Traditionally, the E series devices have been very corporate-centric and serious in design, but now Nokia is updating the line with the introduction of the Nokia E66 and Nokia E71, bringing with them a modernized look and a fresh set of features.



8.0

Nokia E71

THE GOOD

The Nokia E71 features a slim design, while still managing to have a full QWERTY keyboard. The Symbian smartphone is stocked with features, including Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, GPS, and U.S. 3G support. Voice, messaging, and productivity tools are also strong.

THE BAD

The E71 is expensive, and the display is on the smaller side. The keyboard is a bit cramped as well.

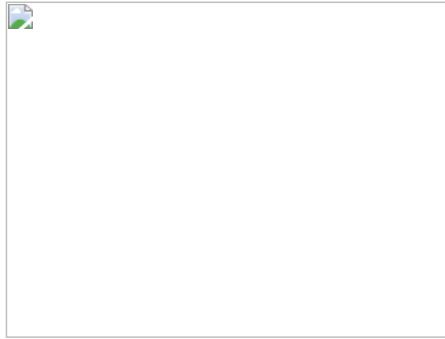
THE BOTTOM LINE

Mobile professionals who need a powerful but sleek messaging-centric smartphone will be well-served by the Nokia E71; just be prepared to pay a price.

For this review, we took a look at the Nokia E71, which steps in to relieve the older [Nokia E61i](#). What the company has done with the E71's design is remarkable, as it's taken the once-bulky smartphone and turned it into an incredibly sleek QWERTY device. You do lose a bit in screen and keyboard size, but we feel it's manageable. Plus, with its strong messaging, productivity, and connectivity features and solid performance, it's worth those little sacrifices. The only downfall is that it has yet to be picked up by a U.S. carrier, so your wallet will take a hit, as an unlocked version of the Nokia E71 will go for about \$500.

Design

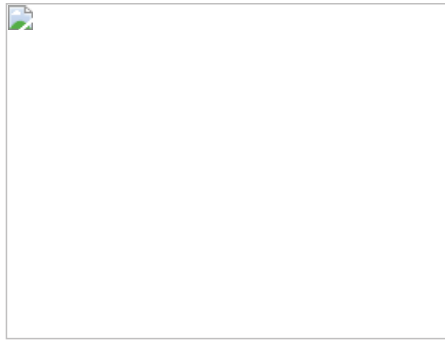
The first thing you'll notice about the Nokia E71 is its design. It's noticeably sleeker and sexier than the Nokia E61i, sporting a compact frame that measures 4.4 inches tall by 2.2 inches wide by 0.4 inch deep and 4.4 ounces. The slimness is especially noticeable when you use the E71 as a phone, or just hold it in the palm of your hand. In addition, the handset has a solid construction with its steel frame. Our only complaint, and it's a minor one, is that the back gets a bit tarnished with fingerprints and smudges.



The Nokia E71 is an extremely sleek smartphone, considering it has a full QWERTY keyboard. Here it is next to the RIM BlackBerry Curve 8310.

On front, there's a 2.36-inch QVGA nontouch display with a 16-million-color output and 320×240-pixel resolution. The screen is a bit on the smaller size, but text and images look sharp. It also has a light sensing technology that adjusts the display's brightness depending on what environment you're in. A new feature that's not readily apparent from looking at the phone is the Business and Personal home screens. You can now toggle between two different home views, depending on whether you're at work or at home. In Business mode, you'll have immediate access to work tools, such as e-mail, the Web, and the file manager. After hours, you can switch to Personal mode and have your music and photo gallery a click away. Of course, you're not really "off" from work since you can easily switch back, but its a nice thought anyway.

Below the display, there's a standard navigation array of two soft keys, Talk and End buttons, and a four-way toggle with a center select key. In addition, there are four shortcuts to the Home screen, Calendar, Contacts, and Messages. You also get a full QWERTY keyboard. Given that the E71 is physically smaller than the E61i, the layout is a bit more cramped with less spacing between the buttons. Still, I found it pretty easy to use, though I do have small fingers. Customers with larger thumbs might want to give it a test drive. On the bright side, the keys don't have that squishy feel of the E61i; they give more of a satisfying, clicky tactile feedback.



Given the phone's smaller size, the E71's full QWERTY keyboard is more cramped than the Nokia E61i. Still, we found it easy to use.

The left spine holds a microSD slot and a micro USB port. It seems Nokia is sticking with the decision to go with the less standard micro USB port at this time. It's definitely not a deal-breaker, just a minor inconvenience since you can't use the more widely used mini USB accessories. On the right side, you have a 2.5mm headset jack, a volume rocker, and a voice command activation key. Both sides also have buttons to release the battery cover. The power button is located on the top, while the power connector is on the bottom of the unit. Finally, you'll find the camera, flash, and self-portrait mirror on the back.

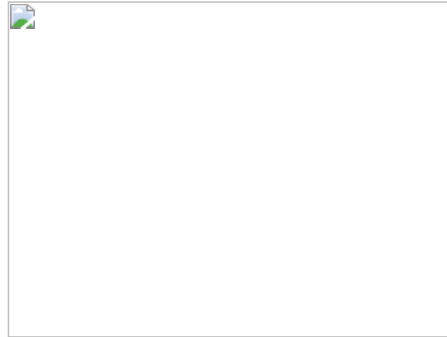
The Nokia E71 comes packaged with an AC adapter, a USB cable, a wired headset, a 2GB microSD card, a protective pouch, a lanyard, a software CD, and reference material. For more add-ons, please check our [cell phone accessories, ringtones, and help page](#)

Features

If the QWERTY keyboard didn't give it away, the Nokia E71 is a messaging-centric smartphone, though it's certainly not limited to just e-mail. The E71 works with Microsoft Exchange Server, POP3, IMAP, and SMTP accounts and has a full attachment viewer. The device is also compatible with a number of push e-mail solutions, including Intellisync Wireless E-mail, Visto, and Seven Always-On Mail. The E71 includes a new wizard to help set up your e-mail as it automatically looks for the settings needed to access your account. There are no instant messaging clients preloaded on the device, though you can certainly download software to do so. In fact, there is a download catalog right on the device where you can find such titles. We'd also suggest taking a look at [CNET Download.com](#) for more suggestions for third-party applications.

Using the new wizard, we configured our review unit to access our Yahoo Plus account by simply entering our username and password. There's also a voice aid utility that uses text-to-speech technology to read aloud not only your messages but also your call history, contacts, clock, and more. The feature worked fine in our tests, though the voice sounded quite robotic. We'd say this function might come in handy when you need to hear a message while driving; otherwise, it might just be easier to read the information off the phone.

The E71 runs Symbian OS 9.2, Series 60 3.1 edition, and comes with full support for viewing and editing Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents with the Quickoffice suite. It appears, however, that the company has done away with the Nokia Team Suite, which first debuted on the [Nokia E65](#). The E71 comes with the Nokia Web browser with support for Flash Lite 3.0, so you're able to view and use such sites as YouTube. The smartphone does have a number of other PIM applications and organization tools, including Adobe Reader, a Zip Manager, a calendar, notes, a calculator, a clock, a voice recorder, and a currency converter. There are also a number of security features, including memory encryption and mobile VPN. There's 110MB internal dynamic memory, and the microSD slot can accept up to 8GB cards.



On the left side, you'll find a microSD expansion slot, which accepts up to 8GB cards.

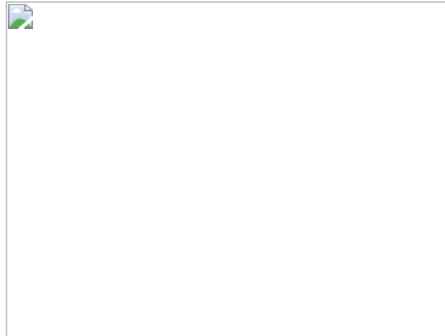
The Nokia E71's phone features include world roaming, a speakerphone, conference calling, speed dial, voice commands, VoIP calls, and text and multimedia messaging. The address book is limited only by the available memory, while the SIM card can hold an additional 250 contacts. Each entry has room for multiple numbers, an e-mail address, home and work addresses, a Web URL, and so forth. For caller ID purposes, you can pair a contact with a photo or one of 39 polyphonic ringtones. The E71 makes it easy to perform certain tasks from your contact list, as you simply press the right arrow button and a pull-down menu appears where you can choose to place a voice call or send a text, multimedia, or audio message.

The E71 works on U.S. 3.5G bands, more specifically the 850/1900MHz bands. This means you'll only get the HSDPA support on [AT&T](#) and not [T-Mobile's](#) 3G network, which operates on the 1700/2100 bands. Other wireless options include Bluetooth 2.0 and Wi-Fi. The smartphone supports a number of Bluetooth profiles, including mono and stereo Bluetooth headsets, hands-free kits, dial-up networking, and file transfer.

The E71 is equipped with a GPS chip, as well as assisted GPS, so it uses the help of cellular towers and Wi-Fi spots to more quickly get a fix on your position. The E71 comes preloaded with the Nokia Maps 2.0 application, which offers plenty of navigation tools, including satellite and hybrid maps, and pedestrian and bicycle modes. For turn-by-turn directions, however, you will need to pay \$125.77 for a one-year license or \$13.96 a month for the privilege.

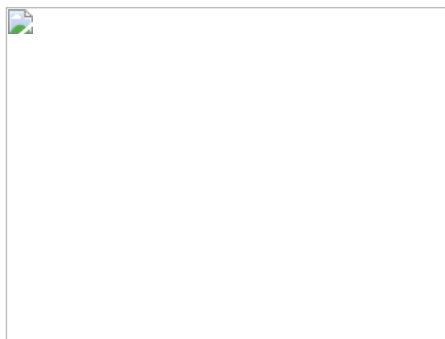
Finally, for those times you do want to switch from business to personal mode, there are a host of multimedia features on the smartphone. The built-in music player supports MP3, WMA, W4A, AAC, AAC+, and eAAC+ files, as well as OMA DRM 2.0- and WM DRM-protected songs. The music library categorizes tracks by artists, albums, genres, and composers; you can also create playlists right on the phone and

adjust the sound with the built-in equalizer. You can listen to your favorite podcasts or listen to the radio (you must use the included earbuds as it contains the FM tuner). If you'd like to watch other videos, you can use RealPlayer to check out 3GPP and MPEG-4 files. And while there is a direct link to the Nokia Music Store, it's not yet available in the United States.



Whether for work or play, you can snap photos with the Nokia E71's 3.2-megapixel camera.

The Nokia E71 is also equipped with 3.2-megapixel camera with video recording capabilities. There are a number of imaging tools, including autofocus, an LED flash, exposure compensation, and digital zoom. You also get multiple scene modes, white balance settings, and color adjustments. In video mode, there are three quality settings, but you only have access to controls for the scene mode, white balance, and color. Once you're done snapping photos or videos, you can share them via multimedia message, e-mail, or Bluetooth; set them as your phone's wallpaper or assign them to a contact; or post them to the Web, whether it be on Nokia's Ovi service or a site like Flickr.



Picture quality wasn't the greatest, since images had a grainy look to them.

Picture quality was disappointing. Though we could make out the images, there was a grainy quality to the photos, and the colors never looked right, even after tweaking some of the settings. Video, on the other hand, looked quite decent.

Performance

We tested the quad-band (GSM 850/900/1800/1900; HSDPA 850/1900) Nokia E71 in San Francisco using AT&T service, and call quality was good. We enjoyed clear and loud audio on our end, and we were able to use an airline's voice automated system with no problem. Meanwhile, our friends also reported good sound, though every now and then, they could hear an echo, but not enough to be distracting.

Speakerphone quality wasn't quite as stellar. Calls could sound patchy at times, and volume could be a problem in louder environments. We were able to successfully pair the E71 with the [Logitech Mobile Traveller Bluetooth headset](#) and the [Motorola S9 Active Bluetooth Headphones](#).

The Nokia E71 was a very responsive smartphone. Long performance lags were rare, and we never experienced any system crashes during our review period. Web browsing was swift, whether we were cruising on AT&T's HSDPA network or via Wi-Fi. One area that could use some improvement was multimedia. Music playback through the phone's speakers sounded flat, even after we fiddled with the equalizer. Watching video clips was fine in short spurts.

The Nokia E71's 1,500mAh battery has a rated talk time of 10.5 hours (GSM) and up to 17 days of standby time. We are still conducting our [battery drain tests](#), but will update this section when we have final results. According to [FCC radiation tests](#), the E71 has a digital SAR rating of 1.4 watts per kilogram.



8.0

Nokia E71

SCORE BREAKDOWN

Design	8
Features	8
Performance	8

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