

Palm Pre users in US reporting handset problems

Owners have complained of cracked screens and wobbly keyboards on the Palm Pre, which is due to go on sale in the UK later this year.



Palm Pre Photo: REUTERS

By Claudine Beaumont

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Palm has not commented on the number of handsets that have been returned to stores since the device went on sale on June 6, but some owners are complaining on internet forums about problems with the Pre.

The device, which will be available exclusively on the O2 network in the UK later this year, is being touted by some experts as a potential iPhone competitor. It features a large touch-screen display, slide-out keyboard, three-megapixel camera with flash, and an innovative new operating system, dubbed WebOS, which pulls contact information from sites such as Facebook in to a single address book.

Some of the issues Palm Pre users are reporting include cracked screens, unsealed seams around the edge of the case, dead pixels on the display, and wobbly keyboards.

One owner, Sivan, wrote on the PreCentral.net forum that he had returned his phone four times because of technical issues.

However, one analyst said the complaints were hard to quantify. Edward Snyder, an analyst with Charter Equity Research, told ABC News that the estimated return rate for the Palm Pre was well below the average 10 to 15 per cent return rate across the whole smartphone category.

“There are glitches here and there that need to be worked through,” he said. “But the success or failure of the company is hinged more on the WebOS.”

Palm’s new device has earned rave reviews in the United States, and fans are eagerly awaiting its release in the UK. O2 is thought to have won exclusive rights to sell the device, meaning that the network operator will have two leading handsets – Apple’s iPhone and Palm’s Pre – on its roster.

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