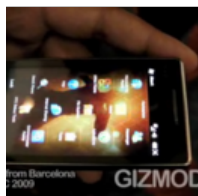




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DEALZMODO HACKS

Dealzmodo Hack: Revitalize Your Windows Mobile Phone

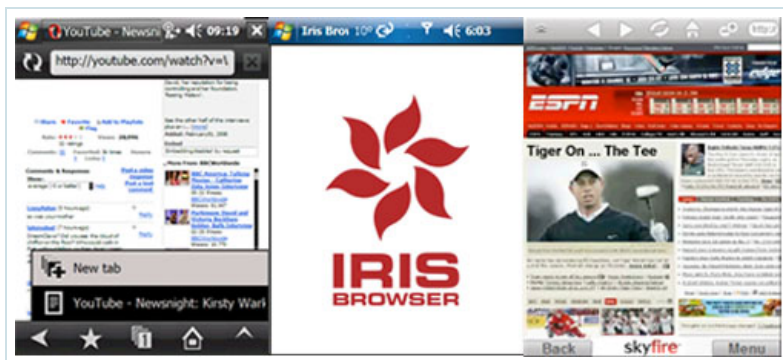
By [John Herrman](#), 2:00 PM on Thu Jan 15 2009, 34,395 views



For the legions of helpless Windows Mobile users, the **Pre** is just the latest in an endless, corrosive barrage of ego-draining next-gen phones. But living with Windows Mobile doesn't have to be so bad.

Work rules, lame carriers, prohibitive contracts—whatever the reason you're shackled up with a WinMo phone, you've been through the same experience. You toil with the layers of menus, hidden device settings, poor browsing and crashy, inconsistent performance. Surrounded by fancy, shiny phones with even fancier, shinier OSes, you're even getting a bit jealous, and feel like you have a genuinely last-gen device. Well, as Windows Mobile enthusiasts (who are out there in droves) will tell you, it's not *that terrible*. With the right apps you can get quite a

lot of utility and—yes—enjoyment out of your aging phone.



For God's sake, get a new browser

Internet Explorer Mobile, even in its latest incarnation, has rarely been described as "good." In fact, it's pretty much the **complete opposite**. No

worries though—Windows Mobile, through third parties, has the broadest and most versatile collection of browsers of any of its competitors.

Opera Mini/Mobile: A Java-based browser, Opera Mini is a free download that will immediately give your phone a new lease on life. Fancy this: Now, with your phone, you can visit *actual* websites, rendered to a reasonable degree of accuracy! OH MY GOD!

There's also **Opera Mobile**, a native app with a few more advanced features, which has recently shifted its emphasis to a relatively narrow set of touchscreen devices (mostly from HTC and Samsung), on which it performs as a reasonable counterpart to Safari Mobile or Chrome Mobile. It's free when it's in beta, but will cost you for long term use.

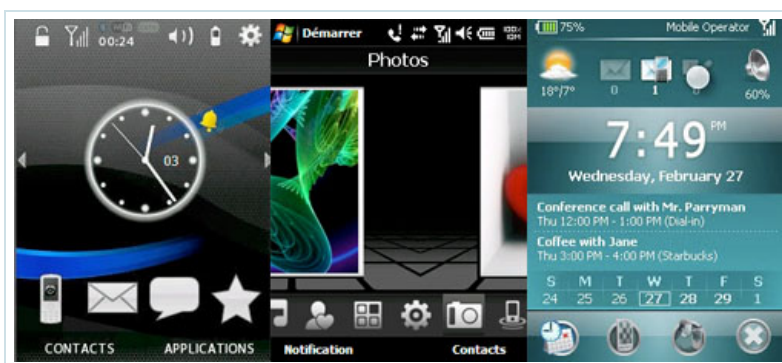
~~Both browsers~~ Opera Mini routes content through Opera's servers for optimization and compression, which can occasionally break formatting. **Update:** Opera Mobile runs independently of Opera's servers, though there is noticeable compression performed—presumably locally—on some images.

Skyfire: This upstart company has produced a phenomenal browser, dedicated to bringing a full desktop browsing experience to Windows Mobile phones. This powerhouse app is now available to the public, and lives up to most of its claims.

Skyfire routes web content through its servers like Opera Mini does, but with a greater emphasis on exact page reproduction. For the end user, that means fully optimized streaming Flash video, which will allow you to watch everything from

Hulu to Megaporn—all automatically transcoded into a lower, EDGE or 3G-appropriate bitrate. Skyfire works wonderfully on most WinMo phones, touchscreen or not, but its version for VGA-resolution phones needs better visuals.

TorchMobile Iris: This is another browser that claims to bring the "desktop experience" to your phone, and for the most part it does, assuming your phone has a touchscreen. It got its start on the LG Dare, where it performed **relatively well**. In short, this WebKit-based browser render quite well, but it's not terribly fast and the navigation paradigm isn't the most intuitive of the lot. But! It's free and it's not Mobile IE, and for this I am grateful.



Give your old phone a new look

This is where Windows Mobile feels the most out of date; its interface is a classic example of design by committee, only this time the committee was

made up primarily of the visionaries responsible for Windows Bob, Windows ME, Windows Vista and possibly the Pontiac Aztec. The solution? Skin it.

PointUI: About a year ago, our own Jason Chen **raved about PointUI**, and not much has changed—it's still fantastic. This layer, not unlike those designed by HTC, Samsung and Sony to mask WinMo, will provide pretty, finger-friendly navigation to a touchscreen Windows Mobile phone. It looks like the project is on temporary hiatus, but the app is still available **here**.

SPB Mobile Shell: This one isn't free (\$30, actually) but does provide a fairly complete conversion. It reaches deeper into layers of the interface than PointUI does, is a bit more friendly for QWERTY-based phones and offers a load of user skins.

ThrottleLauncher: HTC's TouchFlo 3D is a wonderful Windows Mobile shell, but unfortunately can be difficult to port due to its 3D acceleration requirement.

ThrottleLauncher is a TF3D replacement, which works on most Windows Mobile touchscreen phones. It looks like TF3D, and offers skins to look like Android, iPhone OS and others. There are a fair number of bugs present, but they're tolerable.



Fill out your app list:

Most of those things that modern smartphones have—the swank maps, the messaging services, the productivity apps—you can have too. They may not be as polished, but they work

very, very well.

Google Apps: Aside from plethora of mobile web apps offered by Google, there are a few native ones as well. **Google Maps** is a must-download, and provides almost all of the functionality of its iPhone/G1 brother, including GPS integration.

Google Mail provides a nice, speedy interface for your Gmail account, offering relief from Windows Mobile's occasionally frustrating mail app, and allowing for relatively easy switching between accounts.

Skype: Here's an area where Windows Mobile generally trumps all others OSes—voice over IP. The native Skype app is *lovely*, functioning well over Wi-Fi and cellular data connections, provided your carrier allows the latter.

Palringo: Palringo is a multiprotocol IM app, which enables messaging on many networks at once in a single program. AIM, MSN, Yahoo, ICQ—they're all there. Like any decent IM app it works with the WinMo notification system *and* runs in the background, so you can be constantly apprised of your new messages, just like those smug BlackBerry users. In fact, I think it's fair to say that in the area of messaging, Windows Mobile shines. Similar, also good: **Fring**.

TCPMP Media Player: Its development has been discontinued, but the app is perfectly usable as is. What is it? It's a barebones media player that'll handle almost any codec, audio or video, that you throw at it. In other words, you can

encode video for mobile consumption however you like, something that can't be said of most other OSes (cough*Apple*cough).

Pocket Scrobbler: An unofficial client for the fantastic Last.fm internet radio/social network service, this app will handily stream endless, personally catered internet radio over a cellular data connection or Wi-Fi. Windows Mobile actually has a distinct advantage with this type of programs: the ability to run apps in the background!

*Dealzmodo Hacks are intended to help you sustain your **crippling gadget addiction through tighter times**. If you come across any on your own that are particularly useful, send it to our tips line (Subject: Dealzmodo Hack). **Check back every other Thursday for free DIY tricks to breathe new life into hardware that you already own.***

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