

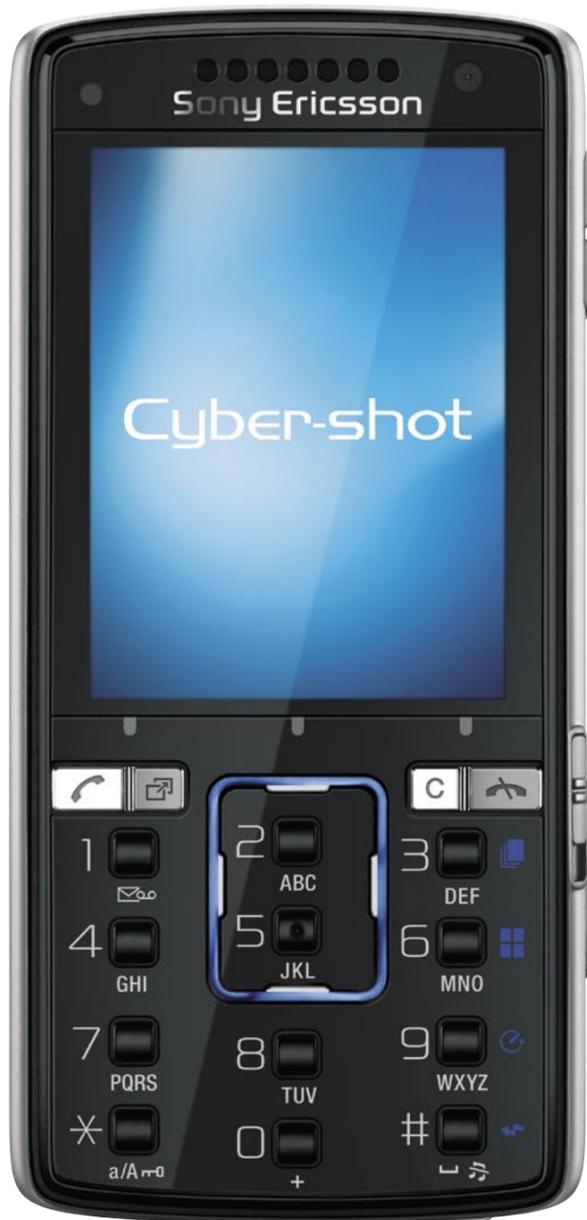
## Sony Ericsson K850i

Price: £349.99

www.sonyericsson.co.uk

## Photo fix

Sony Ericsson's Cyber-shot **K850i** is the successor to **Mobile Choice's** Best Camera Phone 2007, the K810i, but what does it add to an already winning formula?



**S**ONY Ericsson's Cyber-shot range has long been at the sharp end of the mobile camera phone revolution. Indeed, the Sony Ericsson K810i won this year's **Mobile Choice** Best Camera Phone Award. Yet, despite this, the manufacturer has been in no rush to add to the resolution to put its Cyber-shot devices on a par with five-megapixel powerhouses, such as the Nokia N95 and the Samsung G600. Until now, that is.

On paper, the new five-megapixel K850i Cyber-shot has all the specs to put it right at the top of the camera phone pile, but what's the reality? Marginally smaller than the K810i, the K850i actually boasts a slightly larger screen than its predecessor. When active, the phone looks great with both the screen and the somewhat 'different' keypad (more of which later) brightly illuminated. Despite its smaller body, the K850i is a good deal heavier than the K810i. And in our opinion, it's uglier. We're not convinced by the aesthetics or the plastic finish. However, Sony Ericsson has succeeded in making the K850i feel more like a digital camera than a mobile phone.

### A new look

Setting up your K850i, you'll be surprised to find that the battery and SIM card need to be inserted at the bottom of the handset as opposed to the back. The keys are small, but spaced out enough that even the wider fingered shouldn't have any problem entering numbers or typing text. After further investigation, it became apparent that, as with the Sony Ericsson W910i (see page 16) the back button has been ditched. Instead, the K850i boasts three touch-

screen keys found at the bottom of the screen. When in idle mode, from left to right they read media, menu and contact. The button on the right doubles up as the replacement 'back' button when using any functions.

The real move away from previous handsets, however, is the omission of the 'OK' button. Instead, the K850i has for a four-way joypad that surrounds keys 2 and 5. To confirm a command, users must press the middle touch-screen key. Cynics may dismiss this decision as being flawed and, admittedly, it takes some getting used to. But with a bit of perseverance, it should soon become second nature and while the touch-screen keys aren't haptic (i.e. respond with a vibration), they are responsive and quick enough to signify that your command has been processed.

### Camera capabilities

Sony Ericsson has included a useful on/off switch dedicated to the camera. Switch it on and the shutter will open – with a satisfying click – to reveal a killer lens. The back of the handset also houses the excellent Xenon flash along with a 3LED video light surrounded by a polished black cover. Unfortunately, the aforementioned cover is a magnet for grubby fingerprints, as is the front of the handset. Not only is this annoying, it causes a serious issue with regards to the quality of the picture, so expect to be constantly wiping the handset to retain the best results.

To take a picture, you need to hold the K850i just as you would a digital camera. In other words, horizontally. As well as to avoid smudging the fascia, it's also important to keep your fingers from



interfering with the lens, flash or, when in video mode, the 3LED video light. When using the camera, the side keys (now effectively on the top of the handset) act as the zoom in/out buttons. There's also a slider switch to alternate between camera, video camera and playback modes. When in camera or video camera mode, keys 3, 6, 9 and # act as shortcut keys to various functions.

### Improve your pictures

Packed with enough features to keep even the most enthusiastic of photographers entertained, our favourite would have to be the BestPic and Photo Fix applications. BestPic snaps nine shots in a rapid burst, giving you a selection from which to choose your best pic. This mode should really come into its own when taking snaps of sports, for example. Photo Fix is another useful tool as it improves the light balance of your photographs, making them clearer and sharper. The difference is quite remarkable, and Photo Fix is sure to be one of the most used applications.

Switch to playback mode and X-Pict Story should provide a fair deal of amusement. The premise is to create a slideshow of selected pictures that are shown in various close-ups and angles with accompanying music – sad, romantic, happy and energy. It's surprising how much fun can be had by viewing pictures of your two mates while an inappropriate romantic number is played. One gripe we had with the playback, however, is that when left idle, the phone goes into sleep mode. The only way to revive it is to press the back key on the touch-screen, or the on/off camera switch, both of

which result in you being directed back to the phone's idle screen, thus resulting in having to go through the motions of getting back to the playback mode. Annoying indeed, especially as this happens after about 12 seconds of non-action.

The Media function is where you can find all of your photos, videos and music. Photos can be tagged, filed under the month they were taken and viewed as thumbnails. The K850i comes with a 512MB memory card, but the handset can support both a MemoryStick Micro and a microSD card, so it's possible to store a vast amount of media info on the device.

### Accelerometers

The K850i is fitted with accelerometers that detect when the handset is being held upright or horizontally. This works a treat when viewing your photographs. The change from portrait to landscape and vice versa is almost instant and is another selling point for the handset. The accelerometers also come into play when using the media player.

With its new keypad and touch-screen buttons, Sony Ericsson can't be accused of regurgitating the same old design. Mixed opinion is sure to ensue, but beyond the phone's appearance, the K850i is up there with the best camera phones. The quality of snaps taken is astounding, as is its array of camera features. Coupled with HSDPA speeds of up to 3.6Mbps and the more than adequate media player, the Sony Ericsson Cyber-shot range has come up trumps yet again.

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## Sony Ericsson K850i

- **Size** 102x48x17mm
- **Weight** 118g
- **Display** 262,144 colours
- **Resolution** 240x320 pixels
- **Camera** Five megapixels
- **Video recording/playback/streaming** Yes/yes/yes
- **Video calling** Yes
- **Internal memory** 40MB (comes with a 512MB memory card)
- **Memory card slot** MemoryStick Micro (M2)/microSD
- **Ringtones** Polyphonic, MP3
- **Radio** Yes
- **Connectivity** USB, Bluetooth, A2DP
- **Messaging** SMS, MMS, email, instant messaging
- **Internet browser** WAP 2.0/HTML (NetFront)/RSS reader
- **Email client** POP3, SMTP, IMAP4
- **Java** Yes
- **Games** *Marble Madness 3D*, *Tennis Multiplay*
- **GPRS** Yes + HSDPA (3G)
- **Frequency** Quad-band
- **Talktime** 540 mins
- **Standby** 400 hours

### Features

- Five-megapixel camera with auto-focus
- Built-in Xenon flash
- BestPic and Photo Fix technology
- HSDPA
- Expandable memory



## Also consider

### Nokia N95

Another five-megapixel camera with HSDPA support. The N95 also has built-in GPS for sat nav and DVD-quality recording.

## Pros

Sony Ericsson has finally embraced the five-megapixel camera with the K850i, but that's only half the story. BestPic and Photo Fix are just two of the standout functions.

## Cons

To be frank, it's quite a boxy looking phone, and the finish is perfect for framing grubby fingerprints.

## MC SCORE

**Verdict** The K850i's camera ability is second to none, although the odd keypad layout may not appeal to everyone.



# 86%