

Design Brief – Variation 1

Part I – Existing Design Description

(Excerpted and edited from “Is This \$139 Smartphone The New OnePlus?” by Janhoi McGregor
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaymcgregor/2020/12/19/is-this-139-teracube-2e-the-new-oneplus/>)

I don't usually review super cheap phones, because there are so many no-name, quick-hit cheap handsets out there that disappear as quickly as they arrive. The common thing about all of those cheap phones is that they only offer one Android update and one year of security updates - if they do at all, which is part of how they stay so cheap.

Providing software support is expensive. Even big companies like Motorola only offer one or two years support for their flagship phones. But this phone, the Teracube 2e, offers three years of Android and security updates. Longer OS support makes sure your phone maintains and improves performance as Google tweaks the OS, and security updates keep your phone safe. True value for money isn't what the product costs upfront, but how long it lasts before you have to buy a new one.

The Teracube 2e is a budget phone and it's as cheap as you'd expect. But there are some nice features here, too. It has stock Android and a fast and responsive fingerprint reader on the back, and a decent display for a phone in this price range. Teracube says the 2e is supposed to be a more environmentally friendly device that partially solves the issue of electrical waste created by other companies that don't make their phones repairable. If you know about how Apple - and now Samsung - serialise the internal parts of their phones so they're harder to repair independently, then you know there's some truth to that.

To do this the 4000mAh battery is replaceable and I can't tell you how good it is to have this feature again. The Teracube 2e is also made from 25 percent recycled plastics and comes equipped with a fully biodegradable case made of wheat starch and biodegradable polymers. I didn't get the case, but this kind of bioplastic is becoming increasingly popular in sustainable production. There's no charging brick and the box is recycled paper. The intent and the execution in terms of the company's environmental credentials are there. It's noble.

Although Teracube's stated mission is to solve the smartphone environmental crisis, I don't see how making another phone - that will be ultimately thrown away - is an answer to that problem.

My quick verdict on the phone is that it's OK. The battery life is good, it lasted over a day with moderate usage and the replacement battery option can be factored into overall lasting power. It doesn't have the fun stuff of more expensive phones, like a high refresh rate, a sharp display or

even a competitive camera, but it's also a fraction of the price. Ultimately price and camera are the two things people care about - this phone only delivers on one, and is passable on the other.

Part II – Design Strategies

1. Persuasive Computing using the following persuasive affordance: “promote understanding of cause-effect relationships”
2. Modernist Design