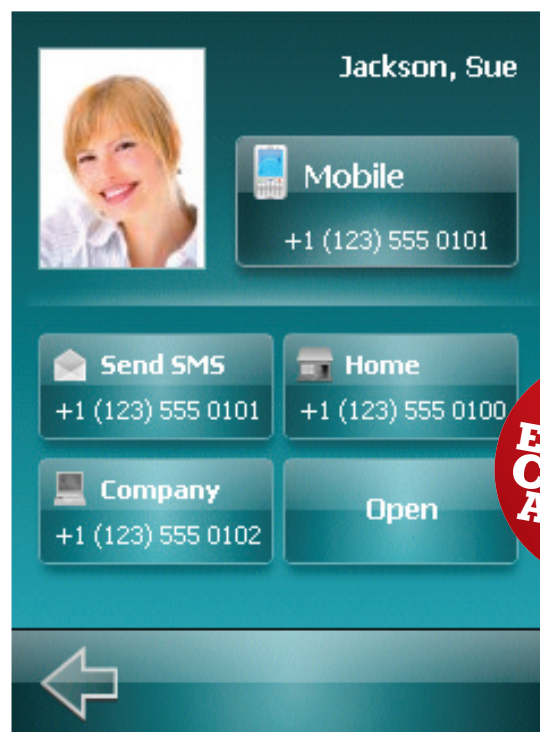
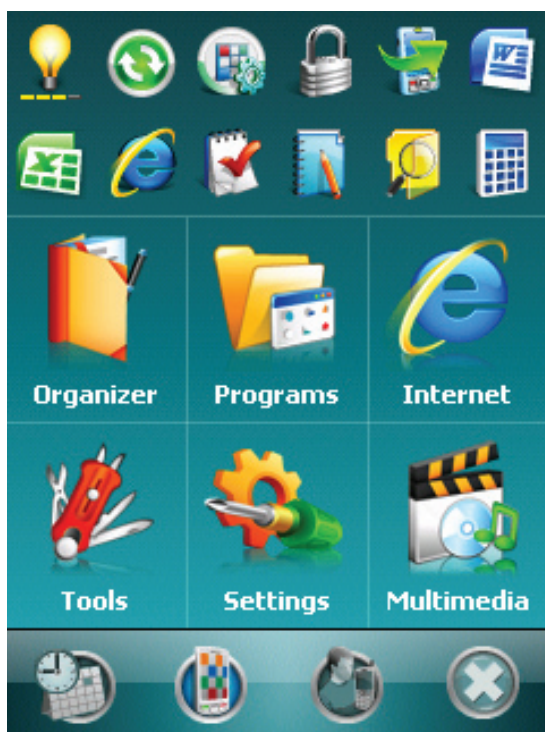


Reviews

Handheld software

A dynamic launcher screen is one of the main features of Mobile Shell



Mobile Shell comes with its own full-featured contact manager

WINDOWS MOBILE (PPC)

Spb Mobile Shell 2 **\$29.95**

More information:
www.spbsoftwarehouse.com

Completely overhaul the look and feel of your Windows Mobile device with this superb new app

The success of the iPhone in 2007 may have focused everyone's attention on the user interface, but Spb was already well on the way to making the WM platform more usable than ever. Version 1 of Mobile Shell brought large finger-friendly buttons and widespread customisation to the PPC interface to replace the stylus-sized icons and unwieldy menu system. With version 2 it has refined the app further, confirming its place as one of the first programs a new WM user should install.

Mobile Shell is built around three main panels. The Now screen is a kind of Today replacement, with a large clock, weather, profiles and more. The menu panel contains large buttons linking to all your device's apps, tools and functions. You can launch apps, create text messages, manage tasks, etc. Rows of icons for your most recently used apps also fill up, making common tasks more accessible than ever. It's all beautifully presented, with smooth scrolling animations and transitions, and is remarkably light on system resources. The third panel is for photo contacts, which also offers access to Mobile Shell's contact management utility.

The basics of Mobile Shell are simple, and only when you delve into the settings do you realise how complex a piece of software it is. In fact, it can be daunting to see how far you can customise the program to match your workflow. And in terms of features we've barely touched the surface – it's unlikely you'll have seen a smartphone app this powerful.

It's not all perfect. Accessing wireless management functions is more difficult than it might be, and there are no data connection status icons to show when you're online. We'd also like to be able to configure the third panel to launch our own third-party contact manager. These are all on Spb's to-do list and will be implemented in future updates.

But Mobile Shell is almost entirely successful. And if its main aim is to take an awkward, PC-like interface and turn it into something befitting a modern smartphone, where ease of use and intuitiveness are at its core, that's no small feat.

Simply stunning – a must for anyone with a PPC Phone

Verdict **9**