

There's an app for that...

The most well-known example is Spb Mobile Shell (www.spbsoftwarehouse.com, \$29.95). It's well known for a reason – it is the most in-depth app of its kind, offering the deepest levels of customisation. It's also pretty daunting because of this if you delve into the settings immediately after installing it. Far better is to leave it pretty much on the default setup at first, and then tweak it as you go along.

Mobile Shell 3 takes its cue from the UI on the Android OS, something that HTC has recently developed even further with its fantastic new Sense UI on the Hero smartphone. You get three home screens in two layouts (for business and personal use) and need to pack them with widgets to give you instant access to essential functions on your device. Widgets can be shortcuts to contacts, applications or functions within applications, as well as things like clocks, weather, or a media player. What is obviously missing at the moment are true 'live' widgets that download data direct to your home screen in real-time. You can create a shortcut to a Twitter app, for example, but cannot get Twitter updates within Mobile Shell itself.

For the standard functions like calendar, contacts and time, Mobile Shell has its own custom finger-friendly screens. It is likely that a wider array of widgets will be added in a forthcoming update, or even in a separate downloadable widget pack, which could ensure you never need to view the stylus-centric Windows interface, apart from when using specific apps. In the meantime, though, Mobile Shell still remains the easiest way to give your device a quick overhaul.