Samsung Galaxy Note Fan Edition Teardown

Teardown of the refurbished Galaxy Note Fan Edition on July 12, 2017

Written By: Evan Noronha
INTRODUCTION

Last year's Galaxy Note7 fanned the flames of our smartphone discontent, but it also fanned the flames of ... well, flames. Now it's back, reincarnated as the Galaxy Note Fan Edition. Let's tear it down. Hopefully no flames this time. For more detailed analysis, check out our Note Fan Edition blog post.

Stay up to date with the latest repair news: find us on Twitter, join our inner circle on Facebook, and check out our Instagram.

TOOLS:

- Phillips #00 Screwdriver (1)
- iOpener (1)
- Halberd Spudger (1)
- iFixit Opening Picks set of 6 (1)
- Spudger (1)
- Tweezers (1)
- Suction Handle (1)
Stop us if you've heard these specs before:

- Curved panel 5.7" Super AMOLED display with 2560 × 1440 resolution (518 ppi) and Gorilla Glass 5
- Exynos 8890 Octa Core processor with 4 GB RAM + Mali-T880 MP12 GPU
- 12-megapixel, f/1.7 rear camera with OIS, dual pixel autofocus, 4K video; 5-megapixel/1080p selfie camera
- 64 GB internal storage, with an additional 256 GB available via MicroSD expansion
- Iris scanner, fingerprint scanner
- S Pen stylus, USB-C, and headphone jack
- IP68 dust and water resistance rating
Step 2

- Hats off to Samsung for giving new life to at least some of these ill-fated Note7 units, rather than consigning them all to the e-waste bin.

  - Reportedly only 400,000 Fan Editions are being produced, well shy of the ~4 million phones recalled. Still, something is better than nothing.

- We dust off our Note7 for a quick visual comparison, sticky notes and all.
  - Wait, sticky notes?
  - Yep. Last time we took this apart, we left ourselves a little note or three.
Step 3

- After finally prying that nasty glass panel off the back of the newest Note (spoiler alert: it's just as bad as last time), we get a peek at the refurbished hardware.

- At first glance, it seems like nothing has changed. On second glance, there's a subtle difference in the antenna traces.

  Judging by the "KOR" on our Korea-sourced phone, we're gonna guess it's for compatibility with Korean cellular networks.

- With the antenna assembly peeled away, we finally get a glance at the battery...
Step 4

- Baby's got a brand-new battery. This one's dated June 20th, so it's real new.

- The capacity is indeed smaller, clocking in at 12.32 Wh compared to the OG Note7's 13.48 Wh whopper.

- That's still more than the comparably sized iPhone 7 Plus (with 11.1 Wh), but apparently this ~9% reduction is enough to make the Note safe again.

For the data hungry: at 45.4 g the new battery weighs 2.3 grams less, and measures in at 37.4 mm x 97.2 mm x ~5.0 mm compared with the Note7's 37.9 mm x 97.8 mm x 4.9 mm. So it does seem to have lost a bit of mass.

Let's not lose sight of the fact that Samsung's entire recall fiasco could have been largely avoided if they'd simply designed the Note7 with a removable battery. You know, like they used to do?
Step 5

- There were some rumors that this refurb'd unit would ship with a newer Snapdragon 821 processor versus the Samsung Exynos Octa Core found in the Note7. So we removed the shields over the CPU to take a closer look:

  - Samsung K3RG2G20CM-CGCJ
  4 GB LPDDR4 RAM layered over an Exynos 8890 Octa Core CPU

  No, there're no markings on the RAM to ID the CPU, but the box says Octa Core while the Snapdragon 820/821 have 4 cores. Our best guess is that there is no change.

  - Samsung KLUCG4J1CB-B0B1
  64GB UFS 2.0
Step 6

- The Fan Edition inherits just about everything else from the Note7, including its repairability score.

- That's a wrap! We've given Samsung a hard time for the Note7 fiasco, but credit where credit is due: they owned up to the problem and did the responsible thing.

  Here's hoping the rest of the mothballed mobiles see the light of day!

- We wrote a ton about the whole Note7 fiasco, plus some analysis about this refurbished edition, in our Galaxy Note Fan Edition blog post.
Step 7 — Final Thoughts

Samsung Galaxy Note Fan Edition

Repairability Score: **4 out of 10** (10 is easiest to repair).

- Many components are modular and can be replaced independently.

- Improved cable routing means the charging port board can be removed without disassembling the display.

- The battery can be removed without first ousted the motherboard, but tough adhesive and a glued-on rear panel make replacement very difficult.

- Front and back glass make for double the crackability, and strong adhesive on the rear glass makes it very difficult to gain entry into the device.

- Because of the curved screen, replacing the front glass without destroying the display is probably impossible.