

Humane AI Pin review: not even close

The idea behind the Humane AI Pin is a simple one: it's a phone without a screen. Instead of asking you to open apps and tap on a keyboard, this little wearable abstracts everything away behind an AI assistant and an operating system Humane calls CosmOS. Want to make a phone call, send a text message, calculate the tip, write something down, or learn the population of Copenhagen? Just ask the AI Pin. It uses a cellular connection (only through T-Mobile and, annoyingly, not connected to your existing number) to be online all the time and a network of AI models to try to answer your questions and execute your commands. It's not just an app; it's all the apps.

Humane has spent the last year making the case that the AI Pin is the beginning of a post-smartphone future in which we spend less time with our heads and minds buried in the screens of our phones and more time back in the real world. How that might work, whether that's something we want, and whether it's even possible feel like fundamental questions for the future of our relationship with technology.

I came into this review with two big questions about the AI Pin. The first is the big-picture one: is this thing... anything? In just shy of two weeks of testing, I've come to realize that there are, in fact, a lot of things for which my phone actually sucks. Often, all I want to do is check the time or write something down or text my wife, and I end up sucked in by TikTok or my email or whatever unwanted notification is sitting there on my screen. Plus, have you ever thought about how often your hands are occupied with groceries / clothes / leashes / children / steering wheels, and how annoying / unsafe it is to try to balance your phone at the same time? I've learned I do lots of things on my phone

that I might like to do somewhere else. So, yeah, this is something. Maybe something big. AI models aren't good enough to handle everything yet, but I've seen enough glimmers of what's coming that I'm optimistic about the future.

That raises the second question: should you buy this thing? That one's easy. Nope. Nuh-uh. No way. The AI Pin is an interesting idea that is so thoroughly unfinished and so totally broken in so many unacceptable ways that I can't think of anyone to whom I'd recommend spending the \$699 for the device and the \$24 monthly subscription.

"AI Pin and its AI OS, Cosmos, are about beginning the story of ambient computing," Humane's co-founders, Imran Chaudhri and Bethany Bongiorno, told me in a statement after I described some of the issues I've had with the AI Pin. "Today marks not the first chapter, but the first page. We have an ambitious roadmap with software refinements, new features, additional partnerships, and our SDK. All of this will enable your AI Pin to become smarter and more powerful over time. Our vision is for Cosmos to eventually exist in many different devices and form factors, to unlock new ways to interact with all of your devices."

As the overall state of AI improves, the AI Pin will probably get better, and I'm bullish on AI's long-term ability to do a lot of fiddly things on our behalf. But there are too many basic things it can't do, too many things it doesn't do well enough, and too many things it does well but only sometimes that I'm hard-pressed to name a single thing it's genuinely good at. None of this – not the hardware, not the software, not even GPT-4 – is ready yet.

4Verge Score

Humane AI Pin

\$ 699

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p]:mb-8 [&>ul>li]:mb-6 [&>ul>li]:leading-140 [&>ul]:my-0
[&>ul]:mb-16 [&>ul]:py-0 md:[&>ul]:mb-0 [&_*]:font-polysans-
mono [&_*]:text-14 [&_a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin
[&_a]:shadow-underline-black [&_li]:marker:text-franklin
[&_p]:font-light [&_strong]:font-medium [&_ul]:font-light
md:w-1/2 md:border-t-0 md:first:border-r md:first:pr-16
md:last:pl-16" readability="36">
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The Bad

Just doesn't work half the time

Really slow even when it does work

Missing way too many basic things

How we rate and review products

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a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-
underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-
gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-
underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-
gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-
gray-63">The AI Pin's designed location
is right above your chest, where either
hand can reach it.
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The bar here is high, though, because of

how you're meant to use the AI Pin. In all of Humane's demos and marketing, the AI Pin sits in the same place: on the right or left side of your chest, right below your collarbone, attached via a magnet that also acts as a "battery booster." It's a pin on a lapel. (It's a little fiddly to get situated, but the magnet does hold through all but the thickest of clothes.) You don't have to use it this way – you can hold it in your hand or even talk to it while it's in its desk charger – but the AI Pin's built-in microphones are designed to hear you best from that angle; the slightly downward-facing camera sees best from there, and the upward-firing speakers work best in that spot.

The AI Pin is also just incredibly unsubtle. When you stand in front of a building, tapping your chest and nattering away to yourself, people will notice. And everything gets in the way, too. My backpack straps rubbed against

it, and my messenger bag went right over it. Both my son and my dog have accidentally set the AI Pin off while climbing on top of me. If you buy this thing, I recommend also buying the \$50 clip that makes it easier to attach to a waistband or a bag strap, where I actually prefer to keep it.

a: hover]: text-black [>a: hover]: shadow-underline-black dark:[>a: hover]: text-gray-e9 dark:[>a: hover]: shadow-underline-gray-63 [>a]: shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[>a]: shadow-underline-gray-63">*The AI Pin's projector is the closest thing it has to a screen.*

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[>a: hover]: shadow-underline-black
dark:[>a: hover]: text-gray-**

e9 dark:[&>a: hover]: shadow-
underline-gray-63

[&>a]: shadow-underline-
gray-13 dark:[&>a]: shadow-
underline-gray-63">*I*

*figured out the hand
placement pretty fast – but
not the actual interface.*

The projector's user
interface is – how can I
put this nicely? – bananas.
To unlock your device,
which you have to do every
time you magnetically
reattach the AI Pin, you
move your hand forward and

backward through a series of numbers and then pinch your thumb and forefinger together to select a number. It feels a bit like sliding a tiny trombone. Once you're unlocked, you see a homescreen of sorts, where you can see if you've gotten any recent texts or calls and tap your fingers through a menu of the time, the date, and the weather. To scroll, you tilt your hand forward and backward very slightly. To get to

settings, you move your hand away from your body – but not too far, or the projector loses you – until a new radial menu comes up. To navigate that menu, you're supposed to roll your hand around like there's a marble in your palm. I swear to you, I never once managed to select the correct icon the first time. It's way too many interaction systems to memorize, especially when none of them work very

well.

It feels like Humane decided early on that the AI Pin couldn't have a screen *no matter what* and did a bunch of product and interface gymnastics when a tiny touchscreen would have handled all of these things much better. Kudos to Humane for swinging big, but if you're going to try to do phone things, just make a phone.

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franklin

dark:[&>a: hover]: shadow-
highlight-franklin

[&>a]: shadow-underline-
black dark:[&>a]: shadow-
underline-white">Asked and
unanswered

The single coolest thing
I've been able to do with
the AI Pin is something
I've done a few times now.
I stand in front of a store
or restaurant, press and
hold on the touchpad, and
say, "Look at this
restaurant and tell me if

it has good reviews.” The AI Pin snaps a photo with its camera, pings some image recognition models, figures out what I’m looking at, scours the web for reviews, and returns it back. Tacombi has great reviews, it might say. People really like the tacos and the friendly staff.

That’s the best-case scenario. And I have experienced it a few times!

It's very neat, and it's the sort of thing that would take much longer and many more steps on a smartphone. But far more often, I'll stand in front of a restaurant, ask the AI Pin about it, and wait for what feels like forever only for it to fail entirely. It can't find the restaurant; the servers are not responding; it can't figure out what restaurant it is despite the gigantic "Joe & The Juice" sign four

feet in front of me and the GPS chip in the device. Bongiorno says these issues can come from model hallucinations, server issues, and more, and that they'll get better over time.

In general, I would say that for every successful interaction with the AI Pin, I've had three or four unsuccessful ones. I'll ask the weather in New York and get the right answer; then,

I'll ask the weather in Dubai, and the AI Pin tells me that "the current weather in Dubai is not available for the provided user location in New York." I'll ask about "the thing with the presidents in South Dakota," and it'll correctly tell me I mean Mount Rushmore, but then it will confidently misidentify the Brooklyn Bridge as the Triborough Bridge. And half the time – seriously, at least half

– I don't even get an answer. The system just waits, and waits, and fails.

When I first started testing the AI Pin, I was excited to try it as a music player. I dream of going on walks or runs while leaving my phone at home, and the always-connected AI Pin seemed like a possible answer. It's not. For one thing, it only connects with Tidal,

which means most people are immediately ruled out and also means no podcast support. For another, that connection is as broken as anything else on the AI Pin: I ask to play Beyoncé's new album or "songs by The 1975," and the AI Pin either can't connect to Tidal at all or can't play the song I'm looking for. Sometimes it works fine! Way more often, I have interactions like this one:

- Me: “Play ‘Texas Hold ‘Em’ by Beyoncé.”
- The AI Pin: “Songs not found for request: Play Texas Hold ‘Em by Beyonc\u00e9. Try again using your actions find a relevant track, album, artist, or playlist; Create a new PlayMusic action with at least one of the slots filled in. If you find a relevant track or album play it, avoid asking for clarification or what

they want to hear.”

That’s a real exchange I had, multiple times, over multiple days with the AI Pin. Bongiorno says this particular bug has been fixed, but I still can’t get Tidal to play *Cowboy Carter* consistently. It’s just broken.