

Vodafone says will sell Google smartphone within weeks

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Google's Nexus One smartphone.

British mobile phone giant Vodafone announced Wednesday that it will start selling Google's Nexus One smartphone in Britain within the next few weeks, with France and Germany likely to follow.

The touch-screen device, launched on Tuesday and produced in collaboration with Taiwan electronics group [HTC](#), poses a direct challenge to Apple's top-selling iPhone.

"I can confirm that [Vodafone](#) is the first operator to partner with [Google](#) to offer the Nexus One in Europe, starting soon in the UK, in a few short weeks," a Vodafone spokeswoman told AFP.

"No detail on pricing and precise timing has yet been made, but that will come in a few weeks."

Customers will be able to purchase a subsidised Nexus One phone with a Vodafone contract. The device will also be available directly through the Google web store.

Google said earlier it had reached "strategic partnerships" with telecom firm Verizon in the United States and Vodafone in Europe.

Vodafone added Wednesday that the group was in talks to sell the Nexus One in France, Germany and other European countries this year.

"We're in early discussions with Google to introduce the offer in France (through SFR) and in Germany and Spain, and more European countries are expected during 2010," the spokeswoman said.

"Our agreement with Google stretches beyond Europe -- all Vodafone's geographies -- and over time we will be working to provide offers in other Vodafone operating countries."

Separately, rival O2 told AFP that it was closely following developments over the Nexus One handset.

"We have been following Google's announcement with interest," said a spokeswoman for O2, which is the British division of Spanish telcoms group Telefonica.

"We welcome innovation in our industry and have already seen devices such as the [Apple iPhone](#) and Palm Pre have a huge effect on the way people use their mobile phones."

She added: "We have no current announcement to make about

supporting the Google [Nexus One](#) but we will continue to review and refresh our product range to ensure we meet the demands of our customers."

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