

Smartphones set to lead global handset market: survey

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A Samsung phone (R) and an Apple iPhone 4. Smartphones are set to make up a majority of the global handset market next year, fueled by surging demand from consumers in both wealthy and emerging nations, a survey showed Tuesday.

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The report by IHS [iSuppli](#) said smartphone shipments in 2013 are forecast to account for 54 percent of the total [mobile phone market](#), up from 46 percent in 2012 and 35 percent in 2011.

It said 2013 will mark the first time that smartphones will make up more than half of all cell phone shipments, two years earlier than previously projected by the research firm.

"This represents a major upgrade for the outlook compared to a year ago, when smartphones weren't expected to take the lead until 2015," said Wayne Lam, senior analyst at IHS.

"Over the past 12 months, smartphones have fallen in price, and a wider variety of models have become available, spurring sales of both low-end smartphones in regions like Asia-Pacific, as well as mid-range to high-end phones in the United States and Europe."

By 2016, IHS said, smartphones will represent 67.4 percent of the total mobile [handset market](#).

The report said that by the end of this year, smartphone sales will already begin to outstrip sales of so-called feature phones, which often have cameras and simple Web interfaces but lack the [sophisticated software](#) and apps of smartphones like the iPhone or Android handsets.

Feature phones accounted for 46 percent of the market last year, but IHS said these would drop to 41 percent this year and 28 percent by 2016.

The entry-level, ultra-low-cost handset will account for 14 percent of sales this year and drop to 4.2 percent by 2016.

The survey noted that Samsung of South Korea became the overall worldwide leader in handsets during the first quarter, overtaking Nokia of Finland.

US-based Apple, which makes the [iPhone](#), was third overall. Apple last week won a \$1 billion award against Samsung in a US court for [patent infringement](#) and is seeking to ban some Samsung sales in the United States.

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