

# World watches for 'iPhone 5' unveiling Wednesday

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Apple becomes the focus of the technology universe Wednesday as the world awaits a new iPhone with a big, beautiful touchscreen and connectivity to blazingly fast telecom networks.

[Apple](#) has been tight-lipped about what is in store at its media event in San Francisco, but hinted at a keenly anticipated "[iPhone 5](#)" in invitations that bore the cryptic message "It's almost here."

Leaks and rumors portray the new [iPhone](#) as having a larger [touchscreen](#) than its predecessor and say that it will be available by the end of the month.

"They need to come out with a bigger screen since the market is clearly moving in that direction and they need to give the iPhone LTE 4G connectivity," said NPD Group analyst Stephen Baker.

"Both of those are features people want and Apple is clearly ready to make them part of the iPhone."

[Telecom providers](#) have been rolling out fourth-generation, or 4G, networks boasting top speeds for Internet-linked wireless devices.

Demand for what is being referred to as "iPhone 5" is likely to be hot, with analysts convinced many people have put off purchases to wait for Apple's latest.

Canaccord Genuity brokerage told investors to expect record iPhone sales after a new model launches, and Piper Jaffray predicted that as many as 10 million could be bought during the week after launch.

"Pent-up demand for the iPhone 5 is such that Apple will sell every one they can make" in the coming weeks, said analyst [Rob Enderle](#) of Enderle Group.

Enderle said he expected the iPhone 5 to dominate until next year, when "fan demand" could give way to device-neutral shoppers [saving money](#) by opting for Android-powered rivals from firms like Samsung.

"Samsung has gone beyond copying iPhone to improving on it," Enderle said.

Smartphones powered by Google's Android software continued to dominate with 52.2 percent of the US market, but Apple's iOS was the second most popular smartphone platform with 33.4 percent, comScore reported.

Samsung mobile phones remained the most popular in the United States with 25.6 percent of the market, but third-place Apple gained ground to claim 16.3 percent as of the end of July, according to [comScore](#).

Google and Microsoft introduced new champions in the fiercely competitive smartphone arena a week ahead of the Apple event.

Microsoft and Nokia boosted their smartphone arsenal with two new Lumia handsets powered by Windows 8 software.

Motorola Mobility added three powerful Android smartphones to its Droid family, the first major product news from the company since it was bought by Internet giant Google a year ago in a \$12.5 billion deal.

While unlikely to dull iPhone 5 frenzy, challengers "set bars" for smartphone battery life, screen quality, and wireless recharging, according to analysts.

"(Microsoft and [Google](#)) platforms are really out-innovating Apple but that might not matter to consumers," said Gartner Research vice president of mobile computing Ken Delaney.

"The consumer goes into a store with a heavy bias to buy an Apple product and you have to do a lot to unseat them from that love affair."

Apple usually uses its September media events to show off improvements to its iPod line, the stars of which are "Touch" models that are essentially iPhones without mobile phone features.

A separate media event is expected in October to unveil a new, smaller version of its wildly popular iPad tablet.

It remained a mystery whether the Cupertino, California-based company would confirm reports that it is in talks to license music for an online radio service.

Some analysts thought Apple might bring in a celebrity to infuse the Wednesday media event with magical energy that has been missing in the absence of company co-founder Steve Jobs, who died last year.

"You might have a celebrity on stage to re-create that old Steve Jobs excitement," Enderle said. "Hopefully, it won't be Clint Eastwood talking to a chair where Steve used to sit."

Apple shares climbed to a new high on Friday, eclipsing \$680 for the first time and giving it a market value of \$637.5 billion, extending its lead as the world's most valuable company.

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