

New BlackBerry phone launched in US in key test

March 22 2013



The new touchscreen Z10 BlackBerry device is highlighted at its launch in central London on January 30, 2013. The newest version of the BlackBerry smartphone went on sale in the United States on Friday in what is seen as a crucial test for the struggling tech firm.

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The [BlackBerry](#) Z10, the first phone using the new BlackBerry 10 platform, is being sold through T-Mobile, AT&T and Verizon Wireless, and at US retailer Best Buy.

The new platform is seen as the Canadian firm's last opportunity to regain ground in a market dominated by Google's Android and Apple's iOS operating systems.

The touchscreen Z10 was already launched in other markets, including Britain, Australia and Indonesia. The company also plans a model with a physical keyboard called Q10.

While the launch lacked the crowds seen for the iPhone, an event held in New York's Times Square and recounted on the BlackBerry blog showed interest among US customers to be the first to get the device just after midnight.

"Here's Manny, an eager fan who 'just had to be the first' to get his hands on the new BlackBerry Z10 in the [United States](#)," said a caption for a picture on the blog. "He was met with cheers from the crowd as he held up his newly activated device."

While the new device has received generally positive reviews, analysts say it will be an uphill battle for BlackBerry, which has lost much of its market share.

According to research firm IDC, BlackBerry's global market share fell to 3.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012, from 8.1 percent a year earlier.

Gartner analyst Van Baker said it will be difficult to recoup those losses.

"Although BB10 presents a modernized new platform based on touch technology, market conditions will make it extremely difficult for

BlackBerry to rise above iOS, Android and Windows Phone 8 platforms," Baker said in a blog post.

"In fact, Gartner predicts that through 2016, BlackBerry will achieve less than five percent worldwide [smartphone](#) market share."

BlackBerry said this week it has 100,000 apps for the BB10 platform, with 30,000 added in the past seven weeks.

"The response to the BlackBerry 10 platform and applications has been outstanding," said company spokesman Martyn Mallick.

"We constantly hear from developers that the BlackBerry 10 tools are easy to build with and that we provide opportunities for app differentiation that they do not see on other platforms."

The company also announced it had teamed with global music distributor Zimbalam to provide a platform for independent musicians who are BlackBerry customers.

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