

Smartphones to have 'watershed' year, IDS expects

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A group of people use their smartphones at a shopping mall in Bangkok, March 21, 2013. Smartphone sales will eclipse those of basic mobile phones this year for the first time as desire for handheld computing power grows, a market tracker said Tuesday.

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International Data Corporation (IDC) expected smartphone shipments worldwide to reach 958.8 million units, topping last year's total by 32.7 percent to account for 52.2 percent of the [mobile phone market](#).

"2013 will mark a watershed year for smartphones," said IDC mobile phones program research manager Ramon Llamas.

"Looking ahead, we expect the gulf between smartphones and feature phones to grow ever wider."

Demand for smartphones is shifting to emerging markets, with average selling prices dropping to win customers, according to IDC.

"It is often the first affordable means of computing for these markets," IDC analyst Ryan Reith said of smartphones.

"These are markets where average [personal income](#) is far less than in developed markets, and therefore vendors have been forced to create smartphone computing experiences for the low end of the market."

Shipments of smartphones topped those of basic mobile phones for the first time ever in the first three months of this year, according to IDC.

The rise of smartphones has put power in the hands of California-based Apple and South Korea's Samsung, but Chinese companies such as ZTE and [Huawei](#) have muscled their way into the top-five sellers, according to IDC.

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