

Apple developing iPhones and tablets with bigger screens: report

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Apple could roll out smartphones and tablets with bigger screens in a move analysts say is an attempt to catch up with a trend set by its major rival Samsung.

The Californian tech giant and its Asian suppliers are testing [smartphone](#) screens larger than four inches and tablet screens slightly less than 13 inches, the Wall Street Journal reported, without naming the suppliers.

Samsung, which has released a series of handsets and tablets with increasingly larger screens, has seen its global market share rise as consumers flock to their products putting Apple under pressure to follow suit.

The paper said it was not clear if such designs would ever make their way onto the market, but analysts said smartphones with bigger displays are increasingly popular because they meet the needs of users.

"Such designs are understandable as people tend to use their smartphones more for apps than for making calls," Kuo Ming-chi, at the Taipei-based KGI Securities Investment Advisory Co, told AFP.

Currently, the iPhone 5 has a four-inch screen, compared with Samsung's S4, an improved version of the South Korean company's popular predecessor the S3 and which boasts a five-inch screen.

Such handsets are often referred to as "phablets" because their size sits

in between a phone and a tablet.

By offering multiple screen size options and handset prices, Samsung has seen its market share rise to 33.1 percent in the three months to March, while Apple was lagging with 17.9 percent, according to research by Strategy Analytics.

During the same three-month period, Samsung also witnessed its global [tablet market](#) share rise to 17.9 percent, up from 11.3 percent a year ago, while Apple's market share dived to 39.6 percent, a sharp decline from 58.1 percent the previous year, according to IDC.

While admitting Apple may still defend its argument that smartphones should be designed for one-hand use, Kuo said the continued improvement of battery and processor technologies could lead to re-thinking that policy.

"Bigger displays mean greater consumption of power. But that thinking may change with bigger batteries and improvement of chip manufacturing technologies which have made energy consumption more efficient," he said.

Kuo added Apple might also try bigger screens for its tablet products to meet the demand of users who hope to work on their devices.

"But then again, tablets with bigger screens may be too heavy to carry for some users. That is something Apple may need to find a compromise on," he said.

The current iPad has a 9.7-inch screen while iPad Mini is armed with a 7.9-inch screen.

The Journal cited officials at suppliers as saying that they had started

mass producing components for the new iPhone in June, and its assembler Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., to ship the new iPhones in late August.

Hon Hai declined to comment on the report, as did Apple.

But a person familiar with matter told AFP that the shipment of new iPhones may be slightly later than the reported schedule.

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