

Tech tie-up says to launch phone system rival to iOS, Android

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Apple Senior Vice President of Software Engineering Craig Federighi speaks about iOS 7 on September 10, 2013 in Cupertino, California

A new smartphone operating system developed by a global collaboration of tech firms to rival Google's Android and Apple's iOS will be launched in the next few months, Japanese mobile phone operator NTT Docomo said Wednesday.

The system, an open source called Tizen based on Linux, is expected to be installed on telephones that are sold from the end of March, NTT Docomo spokesman Jun Otori told AFP.

Tizen is the product of a tie-up among companies from Japan, China, South Korea, Europe and the United States and comes despite tensions among the Asian neighbours over territorial disputes.

The consortium that makes up Tizen Association include US giant Intel, Japan's Fujitsu, South Korea's Samsung and LG, China's Huawei, and European mobile carriers Vodafone and Orange.

"Unlike Android and iOS, Tizen allows us to develop freely whatever we envision because it is an [open-source](#) operating system," said Otori.

Japanese mobile phones once led the world with cutting-edge technologies such as Docomo's i-mode, the world's first mobile web service, and software including electronic payment systems.

But their glory faded quickly with the emergence of Apple's iPhone, as their concentration on catering to the peculiarities of domestic consumers saw them diverge from the rest of the world, a phenomenon dubbed "Galapagos Syndrome".

"With Tizen, we hope to revitalise Japanese-developed services and create new services more freely," Otori said.

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