

Amazon reportedly plans to release a smartphone this year

April 15 2014

After years of rumors, Amazon.com Inc. might finally be getting into the smartphone business.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the Seattle e-commerce giant will release a smartphone in the second half of the year, citing people briefed on the company's plans.

Those people said Amazon plans to announce the [phone](#) by the end of June and begin shipping units by the end of September.

A smartphone would be the latest hardware addition for Amazon, which already competes against Apple and Samsung in the tablet space with its Kindle Fire. Its newly announced Kindle Fire TV is an Internet video-streaming set-top box that is going up against the likes of Apple TV, Roku and Google Chromecast.

A smartphone would be a major move for CEO Jeff Bezos' company, elevating the Amazon brand to a front-and-center position in consumers' pockets. If Amazon follows its tablet and e-reader pricing model, consumers can expect a mid-priced smartphone.

The Journal said Amazon has been demoing versions of the phone to developers in recent weeks. The phone reportedly features a screen capable of displaying 3-D images without special glasses.

"They said the phone would employ retina-tracking technology

embedded in four front-facing cameras, or sensors, to make some images appear to be 3-D, similar to a hologram," the Journal story said.

Amazon didn't immediately return a call or email for comment.

Previous reports of Amazon's smartphone plans did not come to fruition.

In 2011, a Citi analyst said Amazon would probably release a [smartphone](#) by the fourth quarter of 2012, one that would cost less than \$200 and would be customized to work with Amazon's digital movies, music and e-books.

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