

Samsung on top in growing smartphone market

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Visitors pass signboards for Samsung Electronics' Galaxy S5 at its showroom in Seoul on April 29, 2014

South Korea's Samsung remained at the top of the rapidly growing smartphone market in early 2014 as Chinese rivals gained ground, a survey showed Wednesday.

The overall global [smartphone](#) market grew 28.6 percent from a year ago with 218.8 million units sold, according to the IDC survey. That was

down 2.8 percent from the fourth quarter, with a seasonal impact on sales.

Samsung had a 30.2 percent market share, compared with 31.9 percent a year earlier.

Apple remained the number two global vendor at 15.5 percent, which was down from 17.1 percent one year earlier.

Chinese firm Huawei held third place with a 4.7 percent global share, with year-over-year sales growth of 47 percent.

Fellow Chinese maker Lenovo saw 63 percent sales growth and grabbed a share of 4.6 percent, ahead of South Korean LG's 4.4 percent.

IDC expects 19 percent sales growth in smartphones this year, following the first billion-plus sales year in 2013.

IDC analyst Ramon Llamas said he sees "sustained strong demand, driven by emerging markets, low-cost devices, and the proliferation of 4G networks."

This suggests "another record-breaking quarter at the end of the year," he added.

IDC research manager Melissa Chau said the smartphone market is being driven increasingly by China.

"The face of the smartphone market is changing rapidly to reflect the rise of its largest market, China, where a record 40 percent of the smartphones shipped worldwide in the first quarter were bound to Chinese consumers," said Chau.

"In a quarter where global shipments declined sequentially, China bucked the trend. The [market](#) benefited from its seasonal Lunar New Year uptick, greater emphasis on 4G devices... and the official launch of Apple at China Mobile resulted in volumes a third higher than fourth quarter levels."

The latest survey did not break down sales by operating system, but suggests that the Google Android system remains dominant, after grabbing roughly 80 percent of sales in late 2013.

Apple and Samsung are locked in a legal battle in the United States and elsewhere, with the US giant accusing its rival of infringing on patents.

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