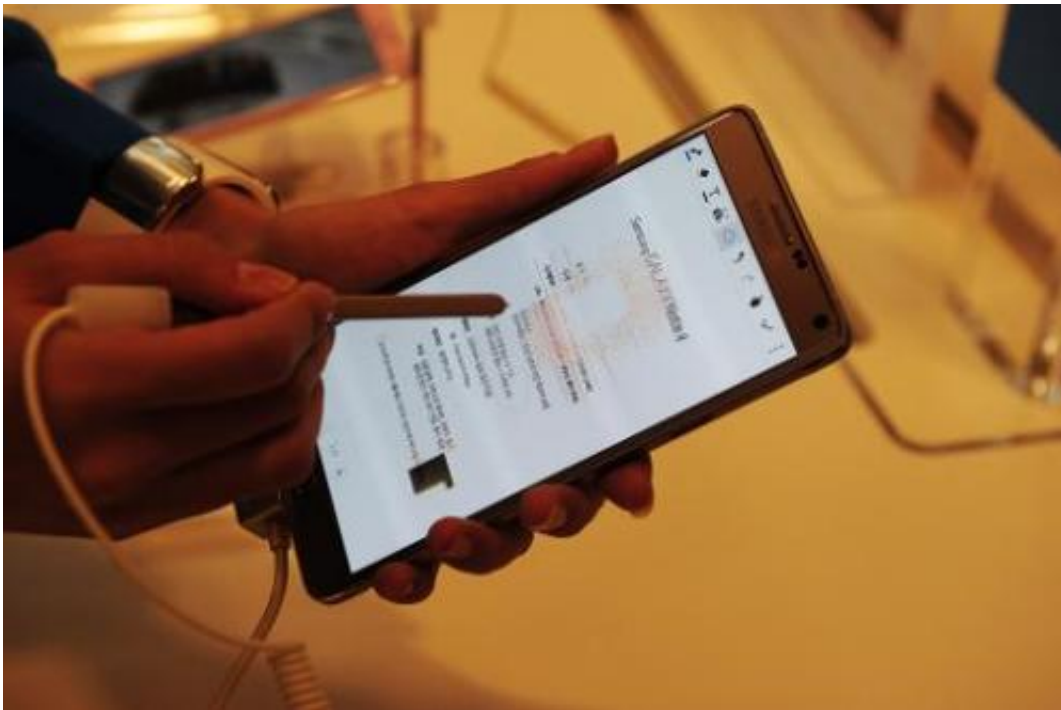


# Samsung, BlackBerry speed arrivals of new smartphones

September 24 2014, by Jung Ha-Won, With Michel Comte In Ottawa

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A Samsung Galaxy Note 4 tablet is seen at a launch event in Seoul, on September 24, 2014

South Korea's Samsung on Wednesday moved up the release date for its hotly anticipated Galaxy Note 4 big-screen smartphone, hitting the key Chinese market ahead of arch-rival Apple.

Samsung's head start in the sizzling "phablet" race came as Apple

stumbled, abruptly pulling back an update for the iOS software powering the iPhone after users complained of bugs, including one that disabled cellular service.

In a statement to the news website TechCrunch, Apple said: "We have received reports of an issue with the iOS 8.0.1 update. We are actively investigating these reports and will provide information as quickly as we can. In the meantime we have pulled back the iOS 8.0.1 update."

The apparently botched update came after a rash of complaints posted on social media about new-model, large-screen iPhones bending when stuffed in pockets of snug pants. Some users posted videos showing the handsets warping under pressure.

Samsung is credited with starting the "phablet" craze with the first Note that meshed tablet and smartphone features, particularly enhanced screen size.

Apple capitalized on the trend with the September 19 release of iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus in a handful of markets, not including China.

Samsung announced that the Note 4 smartphone will be launched in South Korea and China this week, ahead of the planned worldwide debut on October 17.

It marks first time a flagship Samsung product has gone on sale in China ahead of other markets, reflecting the firm's desire to battle growing competition from rivals.

Note 4 will be for sale in 140 markets by the end of October, according to Samsung.

## **Pinning hopes on Passport**

The Note 4 release overshadowed the kickoff of BlackBerry's newest Passport smartphone, aimed at business users in an effort to revive the fortunes of the struggling Canadian manufacturer.



A woman holds the BlackBerry Passport smartphone at a launch event in London on September 24, 2014

The launches came after Apple reported a record opening weekend for its latest range of iPhones, the US firm's first foray into the big-screen market.

Sales of new iPhone models topped 10 million in just three days following Friday's launch in the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Puerto Rico and Singapore. Apple has not announced plans for selling the new iPhone in

China.

The Passport is BlackBerry's first global launch of a product under John Chen since the chief executive took over last November.

The Passport, named for its approximate size to the travel document and will be available in stores in two weeks, is "packed with power" and "a lot of groundbreaking stuff," said Chen, appearing at a Toronto launch event with hockey legend Wayne Gretzky.

Analyst Avi Greengart described the new phone as "the first competitive BlackBerry in years, because it isn't competing head on" with Apple or Samsung.

It is the third of four new phones to be launched by BlackBerry this year, after a budget Z3 smartphone was launched in Indonesia (one of its last bastions), and a sleek Porsche-designed phone sold in Dubai.

The upcoming BlackBerry Classic—which will be similar to the Passport—will be launched "between now and the end of the year," Chen said.

BlackBerry helped create a culture of mobile users glued to smartphones, but appetites have since shifted to iPhones or devices using Android software like Samsung's Galaxy line.

## **Saturated smartphone market**



Samsung Galaxy Note 4 tablets are displayed at a launch event in Seoul, on September 24, 2014

The mobile market has become increasingly saturated, while competition has intensified from Chinese handset makers such as Huawei and Lenovo.

In July, Samsung reported a 20 percent drop in net profit for the second quarter, and its shares are sitting at a two-year low.

Sales of Galaxy Note 3 topped 10 million in two months after its launch in 2013, and Lee predicted the Note 4 would outperform that.

The 5.7-inch Note 4 comes with S-pen stylus allowing users to draw and write on the screen and perform various tasks simultaneously. It will sell off-contract at prices ranging from around \$700 to \$900, depending on

the country.

The presence of a stylus—not offered by Apple—offers a "unique input methodology," said Lee Young-Hee, executive vice president of Samsung's mobile unit.

According to International Data Corp., a record-high 295.3 million smartphones were shipped worldwide in the second quarter.

Samsung remained the world's top vendor, moving 74 million handsets, but saw its overall market share slip seven percentage points to 25.2 percent, while China's Huawei nearly doubled its shipments from the same quarter a year ago.

Samsung also announced Wednesday it plans an October launch for a new version of its Galaxy Gear smartwatch, as well as a virtual reality headset, Gear VR.

The Apple Watch unveiled earlier this month is expected in stores early next year.

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Citation: Samsung, BlackBerry speed arrivals of new smartphones (2014, September 24)  
retrieved 3 May 2024 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2014-09-samsung-blackberry-smartphones.html>

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