

# Season's new phones are all about selfie image

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Chris Weber, CVP, Mobile Devices Sales of Microsoft, presents the new Lumia Selfie App for their smart phones during his keynote speech during a Microsoft Nokia presentation event at the consumer electronic fair IFA in Berlin, Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

Visit any tourist destination, and you're bound to see individuals and groups taking photos of themselves for sharing on social media. It's a declaration to the world that they were there.

Pop stars such as Rihanna and Justin Bieber have helped popularize the trend, too, by posting stylized selfies to their leagues of followers. Even politicians are taking selfies with ordinary folks these days as a way of showing how close they are to voters.

So it was only a matter of time before tech companies responded with phones and apps specifically designed to help people take more and better selfies.

Several phones unveiled at the IFA tech show in Berlin this week sport higher-resolution front cameras, so selfies will come out sharper. Some even have apps that let you use the rear cameras, too. That means even clearer photos—and the use of the flash, if you need it.

Promoting new phones as the perfect selfie [camera](#) is a natural move for manufacturers scrambling to stand out.

"The 'selfie [phone](#)' race resembles the megapixel race for cameras on the back of the phone," said Gerrit Schneemann, an analyst at research firm IHS. "Handset makers try to satisfy a specific use case by including more powerful features in the front camera."

One of the phones Microsoft announced Thursday, the Lumia 730, has a 5 megapixel front camera and software to help users touch up their image after taking it.



A dummy wears a 4k active video camera at the IFA, one of the world's largest trade fairs for consumer electronics and electrical home appliances in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. The IFA takes place in Berlin from Sept. 5 until Sept. 10, 2014. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)

For even better shots, it'll be possible to take selfies with the 6.7 [megapixel camera](#) on the rear. Users won't be able to see themselves on the screen, but an app called Lumia Selfie will use face-detection technology and beep to tell users where to hold the camera.

With a starting price of 199 euros (\$258) before taxes, the phone is likely to be particularly attractive to younger buyers and aspiring middle classes in developing countries.

It also fits neatly with Microsoft's stated strategy of prioritizing mobile phones and Internet-based services. The phones come with sizeable online storage space on Microsoft's OneDrive, where users can back up

their photos or share them with friends.

Microsoft's announcement follows Samsung's new Galaxy Note phones unveiled Wednesday. The Note 4 and the Note Edge come with a special wide-angle option, which allows users to fit more people into their selfies by stitching multiple images together.

The feature could help avoid bloopers such as the time Oscars host Ellen DeGeneres snapped a selfie with Meryl Streep, Brad Pitt and Jennifer Lawrence but cut out Jared Leto, who had just won an Academy Award but was too far over to the side. Coincidentally or not, Samsung was a sponsor of the Academy Awards, and DeGeneres was using a Samsung phone.

Not to be outdone, PC-maker Lenovo launched its Vibe Z2 and Vibe X2 phones, with 8 megapixel and 5 megapixel front cameras, respectively. The phones will also have a feature that triggers the camera to snap the shot by smiling, blinking or making a "V" gesture.



A man shows the new Lumia 830, left, and 730, right, smart phones during a Microsoft Nokia presentation event at the consumer electronic fair IFA in Berlin, Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

Taiwanese phone manufacturer HTC also unveiled an 8 megapixel front-facing camera for its new Desire 820 device, while China's Huawei can claim to have pioneered the selfie-phone idea earlier this year when it released the Ascend Mate2 4G. The Mate 2 has a 5 megapixel front camera and a wide-angle option similar to Samsung's.

But some are wondering whether users will really embrace the idea of capturing themselves in high resolution.

"I'm not sure people want selfies to be very sophisticated to start with," said Steve Jones, a professor of communications at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "There's something to be said about having selfies be kind of the modern-day version of the Polaroid—instant, but it has its own look and had its own style."



A woman shows the new Lumia 830 smart phone during a Microsoft Nokia presentation event at the consumer electronic fair IFA in Berlin, Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

For users who don't want to send around high-resolution images of themselves without a bit of prior enhancement, Microsoft's selfie app offers tools that let them make tired eyes bigger, whiten their teeth and slim down like airbrushed models on magazine covers.

Meanwhile, LG wants to take selfies to a whole new place. The South Korean consumer electronics firm presented a refrigerator Thursday that can send pictures of its contents to users while they're out shopping.

That's right, your fridge is soon going to be sending you [selfies](#).

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