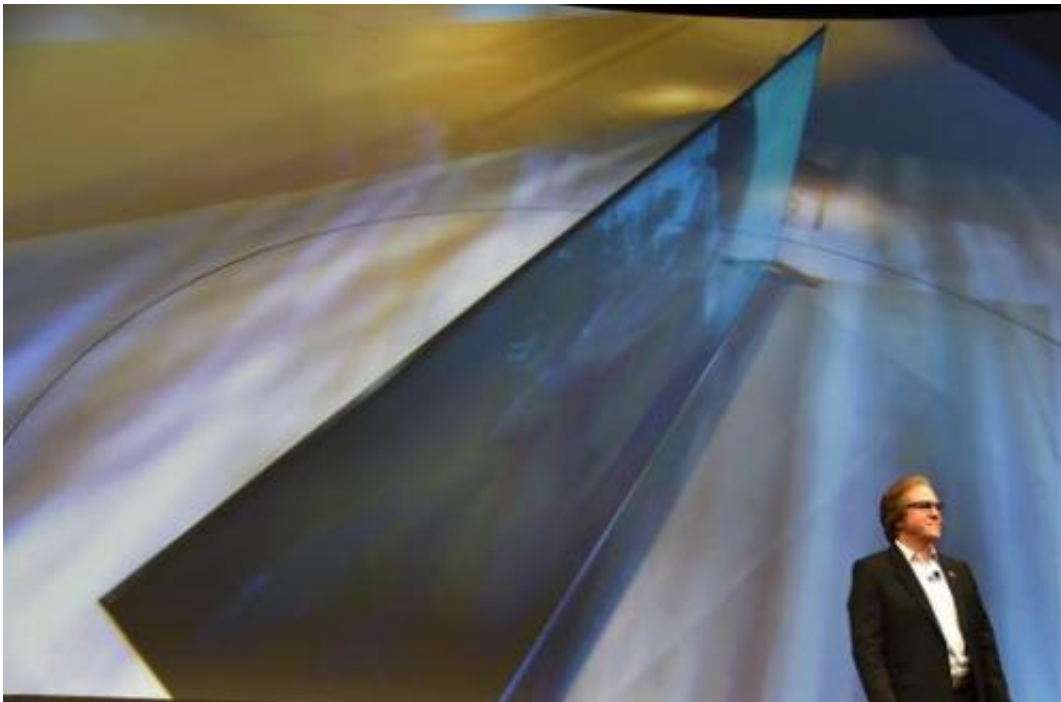


Google domain grows as Android takes root in TVs

January 6 2015, by Glenn Chapman



Mike Fasulo, president and COO of Sony Electronics, discusses the Bravia X900C 4K TV at the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, January 5, 2015

Google-backed Android software that leads the smartphone market is spreading to a new generation of smart televisions.

Along with unveilings of new ultra high-definition televisions at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week came word that

Android will be the Internet-linked brains of an array of models from major manufacturers.

"All of our 2015 televisions will run on the new Android TV platform," Sony Electronics chief operating officer Mike Fasulo said while showing off coming products at CES.

"Android is such a widely accepted operating system in the mobile space; you can enjoy content on your smartphone, tablet and TV seamlessly."

Android-powered Sony televisions will allow access to games, applications and other digital content at the online Google Play shop, and viewers will be able to control TVs using the Japanese consumer electronic titan's smartwatch, according to Fasulo.

Sony, Sharp, and Philips smart televisions powered by Android will begin shipping by the middle of this year, Google vice president of engineering Hiroshi Lockheimer said in a blog post.

"When we launched Android with a single phone in 2008, we never imagined that we could connect over a billion people," Lockheimer said.

"And now, we're working closely with an entire ecosystem of TV partners—hardware manufacturers, service providers, and chip makers—to reimagine the living room."



An Android icon is pictured during a media preview of Google's newest products, October 29, 2014 in New York

Google introduced Android TV late last year. While the California-based Internet titan has taken stabs at television through boxes that connect to sets, coming TV models will have Android software built-in so only a single remote control is involved.

Android televisions boast features such as voice search and automatically synching with Google Cast that lets content from smartphones or tablets be channeled to the bigger screens.

Android TV challengers

Android has challengers in the smart TV arena, with long-time smartphone partner Samsung stepping up as a contender.

Beginning this year, Samsung will power its new smart televisions with Tizen operating software initially introduced for mobile devices in what hinted at a desire to break away from dependence on Android for smartphones and tablets.

"Samsung failed to reduce its dependence to Google's Android in the smartphone space in 2014," said Forrester analyst Thomas Husson.

"By introducing Tizen in new smart TVs and leveraging their strong brand in consumer electronics and home appliances, they could use the back door to try to dominate the new computing battleground taking place in connected objects."



A sign for the Consumer Electronics Show is seen January 4, 2015 outside the Las Vegas Convention Center in Nevada

To be successful, however, Samsung will need more content, partnerships, developers to create content and services that enhance the Tizen "ecosystem," the analyst maintained.

South Korea-based LG announced at CES an upgraded version of the webOS software it uses to power smart televisions, and said it plans to extend it to other smart devices.

Panasonic, meanwhile, touted an alliance with Mozilla to use Firefox operating system in its televisions.

Popular mobile devices operating systems such as those fielded by Google and Apple are seen by analysts as well positioned to serve as platforms tying together the myriad smart devices in what has come to be referred to as the Internet of Things.

"It is a challenge to make the Internet of Things work," Reticle Research analyst Ross Rubin told AFP.

"Apple is making a play there and Google is making a play there because one place for access is certainly in the smartphone that is always with you."

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