

HTC gives Taiwan first look at virtual reality headset

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Smartphone maker HTC unveiled Tuesday to Taiwanese gamers its virtual reality headset for the first time, as the company pins its hopes on the new product to help revive struggling sales.

HTC has been suffering losses as it grapples with intense competition in the crowded smartphone sector from Samsung, Apple and rising Chinese brands.

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Gamers in the capital Taipei queued at a tech mall for 10-minute trials of the headset, during which they played games including shooting zombies and exploring a sunken ship.

"It's exciting to feel like you're in the scene," Judy Chen, 30, told AFP.

"It feels quite real and gives you that sense of distance," she said, adding she would consider buying one if it was priced around Tw\$30,000 (\$917).

The company has yet to announce pricing for HTC Vive, created with US game developer Valve.

"The sensory aspect of it is quite different. You're not just looking but interacting," said Shawn Chen, 24, but he worried a lack of space would prevent him playing at home.

The Taiwanese company has showcased HTC Vive in the US and Europe after announcing the device earlier this year.

The lightweight head gear will also be shown at a developer conference in Beijing on Friday and at the Sundance Film Festival in January.

HTC will start taking pre-orders in February, with the official sales launch in April.

In a bid to boost its flagging fortunes, HTC also launched a new flagship smartphone—the One A9—in October to take on Apple's latest iPhones.

HTC reported a second straight quarterly loss in the three months to September, just weeks after announcing job cuts.

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