

# Smartphone market seen as cooling

December 3 2015

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People take photos with smartphones in Budapest on July 27, 2014

Global smartphone sales growth will cool to single digits for the first time ever amid a slowdown in China, a new market forecast said Thursday.

The research firm IDC said it expects worldwide smartphone shipments to grow 9.8 percent in 2015 to a total of 1.43 billion units.

The forecast was updated to reflect slower growth in many Asian markets, Latin America and western Europe.

The cooling is expected to continue through 2019, IDC said.

One key [market](#) in focus is China, which will be hit by an [economic slowdown](#) and is largely saturated.

"IDC maintains its view that China has largely become a replacement market," the new forecast report said.

The strongest growth will come from the Middle East and Africa, with gains of nearly 50 percent, overtaking other emerging economies such as India and Indonesia.

"With the [smartphone market](#) finally slowing to single-digit growth, maintaining momentum will depend on several factors," said IDC analyst Ryan Reith.

"The main driver has been and will continue to be the success of low-cost smartphones in emerging markets. This, in turn, will depend on capturing value-oriented first-time smartphone buyers as well as replacement buyers."

In some emerging economies replacement cycles will be less than the typical two-year rate, "mainly because the components that comprise a sub-\$100 smartphone simply do not have the ability to survive two years," Reith said.

"Offering products that appeal to both types of buyers at a suitable price point will be crucial to maintaining [growth](#) and vendor success."

IDC said Android is likely to remain dominant this year with a market

share of 81.2 percent while Apple captures 15.8 percent of the market. It expects Windows Phone to hold just 2.2 percent of the market and other operating systems 0.8 percent.

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