

Huawei bets on AI phone in challenge to Apple, Samsung

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Chinese technology group Huawei unveiled its latest smartphone Monday, talking up the advanced artificial intelligence capabilities it hopes will cement its place among the world's three biggest manufacturers.

The Shenzhen-based group's new Mate 10 phone appears just weeks after Apple unveiled its top-of-the-line iPhone X, a timing choice many industry observers have read as a direct challenge to the California tech titan.

Huawei has become a fixture in listings of the top three smartphone makers by worldwide unit sales in recent years, investing heavily in technology and design to vault beyond the low- and mid-range devices that still round out its range.

Like rivals Apple and Samsung, it has built AI features directly into the processor at the heart of its latest phone, allowing the device to help users translate between languages, choose the most appropriate camera settings or take over busywork like organising files and photos.

Ideally, AI can help shift such everyday tinkering into the background, saving people time and minimising annoyance.

"This phone is designed for ultimate performance, that's the most important thing," Huawei consumer electronics chief Richard Yu told journalists and bloggers in the southern German city of Munich.

Huawei uses Google's Android operating system rather than keeping the same tight control over hardware, operating system and third-party apps as Apple.

Google executive Jamie Rosenberg made a brief appearance on stage to promise new tools early next year to let developers access the phone's AI processor.

"Computing is undergoing a fundamental shift from being mobile first to AI first," Rosenberg said.

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