

# OnePlus will launch its first 5G phone in the second quarter, but it won't start in the US

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Chinese smartphone maker OnePlus has built its brand on offering powerful phones at cheaper costs than comparable rivals from Apple, Google or Samsung.

Priding itself on offering the latest specs, with the race to 5G the company hopes to be among the first batch of manufacturers with a 5G device in the second quarter of the year.

Unfortunately, that [phone](#) won't be launching in the U.S.

The phone, which OnePlus will be showing a prototype of at the Mobile World Congress tradeshow in Barcelona next week, will first launch on United Kingdom carrier EE and Finnish carrier Elisa during the second quarter of the year.

OnePlus shared an image of the prototype device it will displaying with USA TODAY. Wrapped in a protective casing, not much is discernible about the device but it will run Qualcomm's latest Snapdragon 855 processor and utilize the company's X50 modem.

That is the same speedy processor Samsung is using in its new Galaxy S10 line.

"It's still very early days for 5G, and we want to take the opportunity to raise more awareness particularly within the OnePlus community, but not just limited to the OnePlus community, in what we can look forward

to with 5G," OnePlus founder and CEO Pete Lau said through a translator in an interview with USA TODAY.

It remains to be seen how consumers will take advantage of the speed and latency improvements 5G will offer, but Lau is bullish on the network's potential impact of off-loading powerful processing to a server in the cloud, particularly when it comes to gaming.

The company will be showing off the game "Ace Combat 7" to highlight the 5G device's potential for gaming and computing when "the vast majority of computing is done on the cloud level rather than on the device."

## **The future is 5G**

The company has plans for other 5G devices that will work in the U.S. in the future as the technology evolves and compatibility between varying 5G networks is improved.

"The U.S. is our most important market, so a longterm 5G focus is critically important," Lau says.

In the short term, a 4G LTE version of the phone is also in the works. While there might be slight differences between it and the 5G version, the two models will be largely similar and the 4G LTE version will work with U.S. carriers.

"Apart from that chipset, and the ability to support the 5G network, the device itself doesn't necessarily have to have other technical differences from a 4G device," Lau says, later adding that "there will be some differences but it won't be huge" and that the company won't be making the 5G phone "dramatically" different just because it supports the new network technology.

Lau says the name of the 5G device also hasn't been decided.

OnePlus' previous phone, the 6T, launched in the U.S. with T-Mobile but also was available in an unlocked variety that worked on AT&T and Verizon.

Retailing at a starting price of \$549, the phone helped OnePlus rise to become a top 5 brand of phones sold above \$500 in the U.S. during the fourth quarter of 2018, according to research firm IDC.

While it still trails Apple, Google, Samsung and LG, the move is notable for the company, which only first started selling phones in 2014.

Lau would not disclose how many OnePlus 6T phones the company sold but said that the company was "very happy" with the T-Mobile partnership and teased that company was "looking forward to doing even more this year" with the carrier.

Samsung introduced a new 5G variant of the Galaxy S10 this week but did not disclose its price. However, with a bigger screen, extra camera and the 5G chipset, it is very possible the phone tops the \$999.99 starting price the [company](#) charges for its Galaxy S10+.

So how much will OnePlus, a brand that has become known for its value, charge for its first 5G phone? Lau wouldn't say, but he hopes to keep the device under \$1,000.

"There's a definite significant cost difference" between the 5G and 4G devices, Lau says, "but we will definitely do our best to control" the pricing "and we'll keep the [device](#) within \$1,000."

"Going above \$1,000," Lau adds, "the devices become too expensive."

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