

Samsung launches new premium 'smart' TVs

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Models present Samsung's 75-inch F8000 Smart LED TV during a media conference in Seoul on February 19, 2013. Samsung on Tuesday launched a range of giant Internet-enabled TVs as part of a strategy to cement its lead in slowing global markets by focusing on premium models.

South Korea's Samsung Electronics Tuesday launched a range of giant Internet-enabled televisions as part of a strategy to cement its lead in slowing global markets by focusing on premium models.

The 16 new "[smart TV](#)" models, which come in sizes ranging from 46 to

75 inches, allow users to navigate the Internet, offer specialised apps such as video games and recognise various spoken queries and hand motions.

Questions such as "What's today's TV schedule for football matches?" or "Any action films scheduled on TV this weekend?" will result in a list of requested TV programmes.

They also zoom in and out, or rotate images on screen as well as change channels by recognising certain hand motions. The firm said the new models would hit South Korean stores on Saturday but did not say when overseas sales would start.

One 55-inch model is priced at nearly 6.0 million won (\$5,550).

Samsung, the world's biggest flat-screen TV maker, and domestic rival LG have aggressively promoted pricier premium TV models in recent years to cushion the fallout from the global slowdown which has dampened demand.

Kim Hyun-Suk, head of Samsung's TV business, said global TV sales would likely grow about five percent this year in volume but remain stagnant or slightly shrink in revenue.

"We will create new growth momentum in the stagnant TV market... our strategy is focusing on the premium TV segment to further strengthen our lead," Kim told reporters.

The market for high-end TVs larger than 60 inches was expected to grow more than 30 percent this year, he said.

"This... is a segment that we're investing and marketing most aggressively," Kim said.

LG said last week it would increase television sales by 15 percent this year by focusing more on premium models such as Internet-enabled TVs, or those using new display technologies such as organic light-emitting diodes (OLED).

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