

# Android software creator unveils 'Essential' phone

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Andy Rubin, pictured at a conference of the New Economy Summit 2013 in Tokyo, says his newly developed Essential smartphone allows the devices to evolve so they don't "become outdated every year"

A creator of the Android software powering most of the world's smartphones stepped into the competitive hardware market on Tuesday with a new handset called [Essential](#).

Andy Rubin said in an online post that he is tackling clutter, complexity and rapid obsolescence in the [smartphone](#) market by issuing a high-quality phone that allows for accessories such as a 360-camera to be magnetically snapped on when wanted.

"For all the good Android has done to help bring technology to nearly everyone, it has also helped create this weird new world where people are forced to fight with the very technology that was supposed to simplify their lives," he said.

The smartphones will first be released in the United States, where they can be reserved at the website [www.essential.com](http://www.essential.com) for \$699. A 360-camera that snaps on magnetically to the back of the phone can be ordered for an additional \$50.

Rubin said he created the company behind Essential to use "21st-century methods to build products for the way people want to live in the 21st century."

That mission includes letting people decide what features they want on phones, keeping products simple, using premium materials and enabling devices to evolve so they don't "become outdated every year."



Google's abandoned Project Ara dabbled with the idea of smartphones users could customize with modular components. Motorola now sells an Android-powered modular smartphone.

Rubin was a co-founder of Android, which Google bought in 2005.

Google makes Android software—which powers most smartphones sold—available free to device makers.

But Rubin left the company about three years ago to launch a fund devoted to cultivating hardware technology startups.



The Essential will have to compete in a crowded field.

"Andy Rubin has quite a reputation and anything he launches will be accorded a fair measure of respect," Jackdaw Research analyst Jan Dawson said.

"But the pitch here feels so much like almost every other new entrant in the [market](#)," he added. "I'm extremely skeptical that this phone will do any better than any other recent attempt to change the [smartphone market](#)."

**More information:** [www.essential.com/](http://www.essential.com/)

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