

Firefox launches its cheap new phone

MADRID, SPAIN: A smartphone powered by the Firefox operating system has been launched in Spain.



The new phone, ZTE Open, went on sale Tuesday (2 July) at €69 running the Firefox operating system developed by the Mozilla Foundation.

Mozilla, a non-profit community of developers and users, enters as a minnow into a market dominated by the mighty duop of Apple and Google whose iOS and Android operating systems is used on 90% of smartphones available today.

Mozilla joined with Spain's Telefonica and Chinese handset maker ZTE to launch the new handset, which uses the Internet the platform for all its functions and applications.

"We believe that smartphones need to be more open and that the web is the platform for making this possible," Telefonica Espana chief executive Luis Miguel Gilperez said.

Telefonica said it planned to sell Firefox OS devices in other markets including Colombia and Venezuela in the "coming weeks".

More innovation predicted

Mozilla's chief operating officer Jay Sullivan predicted the new phone would stimulate a "new wave of innovation for the we

The ZTE Open has a 3.5-inch screen, 265 MB RAM, a 3.2 MP camera and comes with a 4GB microSD memory card. It has messaging, email, calendar, FM radio, camera, Nokia mapping and the Firefox browser.

First online reviews of the phone were mixed, though almost all admired the low price.

Online technology review site engadget.com said there was a "significant amount of lag" in the user interface when scrolling web pages or navigating applications.

But a reviewer on pcworld.com said he noticed no lag in a short test.

Telefonica said the ZTE Open was the first of a series of Firefox OS devices to be launched this year, noting support by other manufacturers including Alcatel OneTouch, LG, Huawei and Sony.

Mozilla, which aims to take third place behind Android and iOS, announced its plans for Firefox OS at a mobile telephone in Barcelona in February last year.

Google's Android ran 69% of all handsets sold last year and Apple's iOS 22%, said a study by independent analysts Canals.

Analysts say the two leaders will still dominate the market in 2013 although there could be room for a third company.

There are several operating systems vying for that number-three spot including Microsoft's Windows Phone, Blackberry, Firefox and Samsung's open-source project Tizen.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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