

LG to launch new smartwatch this year

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: LG will launch its first smartwatch in 2014 allowing it to tap into the nascent market for wearable devices seen as the mobile industry's new source of growth.



LG's chief executive Park Jong Seok says the company will launch a smartwatch later this year. Image: [Mobile Blur](#)

The announcement from the South Korean smartphone manufacturer came after industry leader Samsung launched the second generation of its own Internet-enabled smartwatch, the Gear 2.

"We are working on the development of a watch," said Park Jong-Seok, chief executive of LG Electronics' mobile unit.

"(It) will come out this year," he said, adding the watch would be remotely linked to smartphones.

"We're working hard to put on the table something that other companies have not offered yet," Park said, without elaborating further.

LG - the world's fourth-largest smartphone maker - has not yet entered the market for wearable devices currently dominated by firms like Samsung, Sony and Pebble.

Rising Chinese smartphone manufacturer Huawei also unveiled a connected watch called TalkBand to rival Gear 2, on the eve of the World Mobile Congress, a mobile fair in Barcelona, Spain.

Wearables increasing fast

A typical smartwatch allows users to make calls, receive texts and emails, take photos and access apps. So far, few

companies have managed to generate much consumer excitement or sales in the market, also eyed by firms like Apple and Google.

Apple is believed to be set to launch its own smartwatch soon, while Google is moving towards a wider consumer launch of its Internet-enabled eyewear Glass later this year.

The much-anticipated "Galaxy Gear" smartwatch launched by Samsung last September was received coldly by consumers, who viewed it as unfashionable and unwieldy.

Now Samsung - the world's top manufacturer of smartphones and mobile phones - seeks to lure more consumers with an array of new features on the Gear 2, including sport tracking software, a heart rate monitor and remote control for devices such as TVs.

Many handset makers are banking on smart devices to boost revenue as sales of smartphones slow in the mature, and most profitable markets.

Gartner says smartphone sales rose 42.4% to 968m units last year with most of the growth coming from developing markets like Latin America, India and China. Sales in mature markets such as western Europe and the United States slowed down during the period.

Meanwhile, global smartwatch sales are expected to grow this year by more than 500% from the 1.9m units sold last year.

Strategy Analytics expects that advanced markets, including the US and Western Europe, will drive the growth in sales of smartwatches.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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