

Beat: Technology

Samsung widens lead over Apple as smartphone sales hit 1 billion

-, 28.01.2014, 16:11 Time

USPA News - A record one billion smartphones were shipped worldwide last year, with Samsung extending its lead over Apple as the world's biggest vendor, according to a report published on Tuesday. The overall global smartphone market increased by nearly 40 percent.

Market intelligence provider International Data Corporation (IDC) said vendors shipped a total of 1,004,200,000 smartphones worldwide last year, up 38.4 percent from the 725,300,000 units in 2012. The numbers for 2013 were slightly below IDC's forecast of 1,010,400,000 units. "The sheer volume and strong growth attest to the smartphones continued popularity in 2013," said Ramon Llamas, Research Manager with IDC's Mobile Phone team. "Total smartphone shipments reached 494.4 million units worldwide in 2011, and doubling that volume in just two years demonstrates strong end-user demand and vendor strategies to highlight smartphones." Overall, vendors shipped 1,821,800,000 mobile phones last year, up 4.8 percent from the 1,738,100,000 mobile phone units shipped in 2012. Smartphones accounted for 55.1 percent of all mobile phone shipments last year, up from the 41.7 percent of all mobile phone shipments in 2012. "Among the top trends driving smartphone growth are large screen devices and low cost," said Ryan Reith, Program Director with IDC's Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker. "Of the two, I have to say that low cost is the key difference maker. Cheap devices are not the attractive segment that normally grabs headlines, but IDC data shows this is the portion of the market that is driving volume." Reith said mobile phone markets in China and India, which have a combined population of more than 2.5 billion, are moving toward a point where below-\$150 smartphones are the majority of shipments, bringing a solid computing experience to the hands of many in poorer parts of the world. Despite Apple reaching a new iPhone sales record last year, Samsung was able to widen its lead as the world's biggest vendor of smartphones. IDC data showed Samsung shipped 313,900,000 smartphones last year, up 42.9 percent from the 219,700,000 smartphones shipped in 2012. In comparison, Apple shipped 153,400,000 smartphones last year, up 12.9 percent from 135,900,000 smartphones shipped in 2012. This puts Apple's market share for smartphones at 15.3 percent, significantly lower than Samsung's 31.3 percent, but well ahead of Huawei's 3.9 percent.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1844/samsung-widens-lead-over-apple-as-smartphone-sales-hit-1-billion.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619