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The maturing of the smartphone industry should be celebrated, not lamented

智能手机业的成熟化值得庆祝, 而不是抱怨

When Apple cut its revenue estimate for the last quarter of 2018 because of unexpectedly slow sales of iPhones, markets convulsed.

在苹果公司因为 iPhone 销量低于预期, 削减了 2018 年最后一个季度的营收预期之后, 各大股市发生了剧烈的震荡。

Analysts reckon that the number of smartphones sold in 2018 will be slightly lower than in 2017, the industry's first ever annual decline. All this is terrible news for investors who had banked on continued growth. But step back and look at the bigger picture. That smartphone sales have peaked, and seem to be levelling off at around 1.4bn units a year, is good news for humanity.

据分析师推算, 2018 年智能手机的销售量将会略低于 2017 年——这将是该行业首次出现年度销量的下滑。对于那些曾指望行业持续增长的投资者来说, 这一切都是糟糕的消息。但我们不妨退一步, 着眼于一个更大的格局。智能手机销量触顶, 并显示出稳定在一年 14 亿台左右的

趋势，对于全人类来说是一件好事。

People have voted with their wallets to make the smartphone the most successful consumer product in history: nearly 4bn of the 5.5bn adults on the planet now have one. And no wonder. They connect billions of people to the internet's plethora of information and services. Phones make markets more efficient, compensate for poor infrastructure in developing countries and boost growth. They might be the most effective tool of development in existence.

人们通过“用钱包投票”，已经将智能手机推上了史上最成功的消费产品的地位——全球 55 亿成年人中，将近 40 亿人目前都拥有一台。这也不奇怪。智能手机让数十亿人连接到了互联网海量的信息和服务。手机提升了市场的效率，弥补了发展中国家落后的基础设施的不足，并促进了经济增长。它们可能是当今最有效的发展工具。

The slowdown does not reflect disenchantment; quite the contrary. It is the result of market saturation. After a decade of rapid adoption, there is much less scope to sell handsets to first-time buyers as so few of them are left. That hits Apple the hardest because, despite a relatively small market share (13% of smartphone users), it captures almost all of the industry's profits.

销量下滑体现的并不是消费者热情的退却。恰恰相反，它是市场饱和的结果。在持续了 10 年的快速普及之后，现在首次购买手机的人所剩无几，市场空间已经极大缩水。这对于苹果的打击是最沉重的，因为它虽然市场份额相对较小（只占有智能机用户的 13%），却赚走了行业里几乎全部的利润。

But Apple's pain is humanity's gain. The recent slowing of smartphone sales is bad news for the industry, obviously. But for the rest of humanity it is a welcome sign that a transformative technology has become almost universal.

但苹果的损失，却是人类的收获。近年来智能手机销量的下降，对于这个行业来说显然是坏消息。但对于行业以外的大多数人来说，这却是一个好兆头，象征这项革命性的技术即将惠及四海。

----- 文章来源 / 经济学人

重点词汇

convulse/kən'vʌls/

v. 抽搐；剧烈震荡

- The patient began to convulse.

- Many stock markets convulsed.

bank on sth.

指望，依赖某事

- I bank with the Bank of China. (v., n.)

peak/pi:k/

v. 达到顶峰

- Flu activity often peaks in February.

level off/out

进入水平飞行；进入稳定状态

vote with one's wallet

通过消费行为表明偏好

- vote with one's feet

plethora/'pleθərə/

n. 极多，海量；过多

- Video websites today boast a plethora of content.

compensate/'kɑ:mpenseɪt/

v. 补偿；弥补

- His enthusiasm compensates for his lack of skill.

disenchantment/'disɪn'tʃæntmənt/

n. 热情的退却，失望

market saturation

市场饱和

- Market saturation is a situation that arises when the volume of a product in a marketplace has been maximized.

adoption/ə'dɑ:pʃn/

n. 接受，接纳；普及

- the adoption of mobile payment

scope/skoʊp/

n. 机会

- the scope for sth. / to do sth.

handset/'hændset/

n. 手机

welcome/'welkəm/

adj. 受欢迎的；好的，不错的

- You're welcome to ask questions of my interpretations of the article.
- He has made a welcome change to his attitude.

transformative/træns'fɔ:rmətɪv/

adj. 革命性的，变革性的

- Mobile phones have transformed the world we live in. (v.)