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Gartner Says Worldwide Smartphone Sales Grew 9.7 Percent in Fourth Quarter of 2015

Global Smartphone Sales Exhibited Slowest Growth Since 2008

iPhone Sales Declined for the First Time

Global sales of smartphones to end users totaled 403 million units in the fourth quarter of 2015, a 9.7 percent increase over the same period in 2014, according to Gartner, Inc. However, this was their slowest growth rate since 2008. In 2015 as a whole, smartphone sales reached 1.4 billion units, an increase of 14.4 percent from 2014.

“Low-cost smartphones in emerging markets, and strong demand for premium smartphones, continued to be the driving factors,” said Anshul Gupta (<http://www.gartner.com/analyst/30427>), research director at Gartner. “An aggressive pricing from local and Chinese brands in the midrange and entry-level segments of emerging markets led to consumers upgrading more quickly to affordable smartphones.”

Mr. Gupta said that 85 percent of users in the emerging Asia/Pacific market are replacing their current midrange phone with the same category of phone. In addition, currency devaluations against the U.S. dollar in many emerging markets are putting further margin pressure on many vendors that import devices. Current market conditions are prompting some vendors to consider setting up manufacturing operations in India and Indonesia to avoid being hit by future unfavorable currency devaluations and high import taxes.

In the fourth quarter of 2015, Samsung and Huawei were the only two top-five smartphone vendors to increase their sales to end users (see Table 1). Apple suffered its first decline in sales of smartphones — iPhone sales were down 4.4 percent.

Table 1

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Vendor in 4Q15 (Thousands of Units)

Company	4Q15	4Q15 Market	4Q14	4Q14 Market
	Units	Share (%)	Units	Share (%)
Samsung	83,437.7	20.7	73,031.5	19.9
Apple	71,525.9	17.7	74,831.7	20.4
Huawei	32,116.5	8.0	21,038.1	5.7
Lenovo*	20,014.7	5.0	24,299.9	6.6

Xiaomi	18,216.6	4.5	18,581.6	5.1
Others	177,798.0	44.1	155,551.6	42.3
Total	403,109.4	100.0	367,334.4	100.0

*The figures for Lenovo include sales of mobile phones by both Lenovo and Motorola

Source: Gartner (February 2016)

Although Samsung was the No.1 vendor, Gartner analysts said the company faces challenges. “For Samsung to stop falling sales of premium smartphones, it needs to introduce new flagship smartphones that can compete with iPhones and stop the churn to iOS devices,” said Mr. Gupta.

With an increase in sales of 53 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015, Huawei achieved the best performance year over year. Huawei’s increased brand visibility overseas, and its decision to sell almost only smartphones, gave it a higher average selling price in 2015.

For total sales of smartphones in 2015, Samsung maintained the No. 1 position, but its market share declined by 2.2 percentage points (see Table 2). In 2015, Apple sold 225.9 million iPhones, to achieve a market share of almost 16 percent. Huawei’s smartphone sales approached 104 million units, up 53 percent year over year.

Table 2

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Vendor in 2015 (Thousands of Units)

Company	2015 Units	2015 Market Share (%)	2014 Units	2014 Market Share (%)
Samsung	320,219.7	22.5	307,596.9	24.7
Apple	225,850.6	15.9	191,425.8	15.4
Huawei	104,094.7	7.3	68,080.7	5.5
Lenovo*	72,748.2	5.1	81,415.8	6.5
Xiaomi	65,618.6	4.6	56,529.3	4.5
Others	635,368.5	44.6	539,691.3	43.4
Total	1,423,900.3	100.0	1,244,739.8	100.0

*The figures for Lenovo include sales of mobile phones by both Lenovo and Motorola

Source: Gartner (February 2016)

In terms of smartphone operating system (<http://www.gartner.com/it-glossary/os-operating-system>) (OS) market, Android increased 16.6 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015, to account for 80.7 percent of the global total (see Table 3). “Android benefited from continued demand for affordable smartphones

of the global total (see table 3). Android benefited from continued demand for entry-level smartphones and from the slowdown of iOS units in the premium market in the fourth quarter of 2015,” said Roberta Cozza (<http://www.gartner.com/analyst/13774>), research director at Gartner. In the premium segment, despite Apple's slower year-over-year fourth-quarter sales, Apple narrowed the market share gap with Samsung in 2015 as a whole.

Table 3**Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Operating System in 4Q15 (Thousands of Units)**

Operating System	4Q15	4Q15 Market Share (%)	4Q14	4Q14 Market Share (%)
	Units		Units	
Android	325,394.4	80.7	279,057.5	76.0
iOS	71,525.9	17.7	74,831.7	20.4
Windows	4,395.0	1.1	10,424.5	2.8
Blackberry	906.9	0.2	1,733.9	0.5
Others	887.3	0.2	1,286.9	0.4
Total	403,109.4	100.0	367,334.4	100.0

Source: Gartner (February 2016)

Additional information is available in the Gartner report “Market Share: Devices, All Countries, 4Q15 Update. (<http://gtnr.it/1QltqtL>)”

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