

Strong demand of Apple's iPhone 5 series driving an "anti-fragmentation" of iOS

Just three weeks after Apple launched the new iPhone 5c and 5s, total iPhone Web traffic share attributed to iPhone 5 or newer models is up more than four percentage points to 40.6 percent, highlighting a rapid transition to modern hardware that's the exact opposite of the fragmentation occurring on Android.

Data from Web ad network Chitika [tracking](#) the source of mobile web requests in North America indicates what the company called "a "remarkable achievement" and represents a "significant impact on the iPhone ecosystem," with "obvious implications for mobile application and Web developers in terms of compatibility and functionality issues, but also for the technology industry as a whole."

While Apple is already known to have a growing percentage of smartphone [sales](#) (via Kantar) and [subscribers](#) (via comScore) in North America, the premium route buyers are taking to arrive on iOS is also newsworthy.

While Apple had made its latest iOS 7 software available to devices dating back to the iPhone 4 released in 2010, users are aggressively upgrading in large numbers to Apple's newest hardware. The majority of new iPhones sold last year were iPhone 5. That trend is continuing even faster now that Apple sells two iPhone 5 models, representing an increasing percentage of the iPhone installed base with a high-end model.

Just last month, Chitika saw 36.5 percent of North American iPhone web traffic originating from the iPhone 5. In three weeks, that figure has jumped by more than ten percent. As the trend continues, the firm notes that within a few months, "Apple will have a plurality, and possibly a majority, of its iPhone customer base using a device less than one and a half years old."

The company observed, "Should this occur, it would be a remarkable achievement, especially for an industry player as large as Apple."

Down on Frag'le 'Roid

In stark contrast, Android's growth, primarily through its leading licensee Samsung, was won through shipments of large volumes of low end, budget-priced devices equipped with old versions of Google's OS.

Sales of higher end, iPhone-class smartphones, such as the Galaxy S4 and HTC One, have fallen significantly below expectations.

That's perpetuating fragmentation on the Android platform, most obviously in software. Developers have little incentive to take advantage of new features and must write for the lowest common denominator to reach a wide installed base of users, as even relatively new phones often ship with an old OS and rarely get software upgrades.

Analysts have repeatedly voiced expectations that Android's volumes would eventually attract developers' attention away from iOS, but that isn't happening. However, Android's fragmentation is also rooted in hardware, because low end, volume shipments are distributing outdated devices that are not only unreliable and frustratingly laggy, but also cut corners with weak graphics, slow processors, limited memory and other design shortcuts that make it difficult to develop apps and games that work well across the platform.

Google has acknowledged and pointedly sought to address Android's fragmentation problems for more than two years. Despite those efforts, the ACLU issued a complaint with the FCC this year describing how Android's fragmentation was exposing users to significant privacy risks.

Research firm Flurry also documented how Android's fragmentation makes things difficult for developers, particularly smaller independent programmers seeking to get started.

"This further clarifies why developer support for iOS is disproportionate to iOS's share of the installed device space," wrote the company's Dr. Mary Ellen Gordon. "Developers can reach more active devices by developing for a smaller number of device models on iOS and they can also capture the attention of very active users."

Analysts have repeatedly voiced expectations that Android's volumes would eventually attract developers' attention away from iOS, but that isn't happening due to the market barriers and risks involved with Android's fragmented platform.

A Schmidt-load of failed predictions

Two years ago, Google's chairman Eric Schmidt predicted that within six months, developers would be targeting Android first instead of iOS, and said they would be taking advantage of features in the newly released Android 4.0.

Android

That didn't happen. Instead, two years later just two-thirds of the installed base of active Google Play users are even running a variant of Android 4.0, and few developers are taking any special advantage of its features. Most apps are aimed at running on Android 2.x devices, from the paleolithic era of Apple's iOS 3.0.

Schmidt made similarly hollow predictions about widespread adoption of Google TV and more recently insisted that Android is "more secure than the iPhone," a remark that was met by laughter during a Gartner Symposium earlier this month.

The iPhone 5S: a phone that looks like the iPhone 5, but goes so much further under the hood. Is that going to be enough to impress the baying hoardes?

We've been here before: the iPhone 'S' conundrum. The new phone comes along, taking the shell of the previous model, adds some new bits and pieces, and then claims to be an entirely new phone.

Scores in depth

Design

Features

Performance

Usability

Value

Which it is, of course. But also it isn't. Well, mostly is. To be sure, it's the kind of move that only Apple can pull off with any kind of conviction: the notion that it can take the same chassis, have a little tinker, throw in a new CPU, slightly better battery and camera, and call it an all-conquering device.

But then again, such is the clamour to know all about it, is that such a bad move? There are literally millions of people the world over who can't wait to see what the next handset from Apple will be, and there was no surprise with the iPhone 5S.

There are a few who question whether it's 'fair' to launch a phone and then append an 'S' to the same thing a year later - Apple's response would likely be that nobody is forcing you to buy the new hardware. And that's a fair point. Yes, this is a phone that bears far too many hallmarks of its predecessor. And yes, this is the third time Apple has done this.

It's also managed to try to pop it onto the market complete as one of the most expensive smartphones out there, even on 3G plans. You'll be looking at post £50 a month to get one without an upfront fee in the UK, and £549 will be the price if you want the low end model, pushing all the way up to over £700 for the 64GB variant.

iPhone 5S review

But if it was such a bad business move, if the market wasn't willing to accept such a thing, then Apple would have folded as a smartphone brand years ago... or at least been lagging behind the competition.

That said, times are changing in the smartphone landscape. Where before Apple was able to just create the phone it wanted, and forget the competition in the knowledge that it wasn't going to have to worry about losing consumers to a competitor, now it's been forced to realise that there are at least four decent options for a consumer to think about if they want to get a rather good handset.

Apple is obviously aware of this change, be it the aluminium unibody of the HTC One, the new fight into low-light cameras or the need for a strong processor as a headline to shout about. And to be fair, it's addressed these needs to some degree or other on the iPhone 5S.

iPhone 5S unboxing, in association with O2 Guru

Be it the all-new Touch ID home button (which is excellent, more on that later), the huge jump in CPU power or the fact the camera has, once again, been improved no end, the new iPhone is clearly Apple's attempt at bringing as much as it can to the party without having to re-design the whole concept all over again.

There are many that think releasing the same design twice is cheeky, and there are others who realise that sometimes there's no need for change. It's easy to fall into the former camp, and while Apple will happily point out it's not forcing anyone to buy its phones, it's acutely aware the competition is now scarily strong and it needed to bring its best to stay relevant.

Despite a number of rumors and patent filings, Apple has yet to give any of its iOS devices the power of wireless charging. While many manufacturers have built the technology into their handsets, iPhones continue to use the plug-n-charge approach.

Luckily, for those looking for wireless charging, there are a handful of third party options available. And today, we're going to talk about a new one called iQi Mobile. It's a Qi standard wireless charging receiver, with a unique, ultra-thin flexible design...

The iQi Mobile supports the iPhone 5, 5C, 5S and the 5th gen iPod touch. The receiver uses your typical Qi wireless charging tech—a built-in coil interfaces with the charging pad's coil to transmit power—and it connects through your phone's Lightning port.

It's extremely thin size means that there's no need to keep your device in an ugly, bulky, proprietary case. So, unlike many of the other third-party wireless options on the market, the iQi Mobile can be used in conjunction with your favorite slim iPhone case.

As you've probably figured out by now, the iQi Mobile isn't available yet. The creators have working prototypes and have [taken to Indiegogo](#) to help kickstart production. If you're interested, a pledge of just \$50 gets you an iQi receiver and a charging puck.

It's worth noting that the iQi isn't MFi-certified, meaning it's quite possible you could run into issues down the road, but people don't really seem to be worried about that. As of this writing, [the project](#) is nearing \$140,000 in funds—well past its \$30k goal.

What do you think of the iQi Mobile wireless charger?