

Huawei's HarmonyOS – A Battle that China Cannot Afford to Lose

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Huawei is China's national champion in telecommunications technology. The company was very close to outcompete Samsung and Apple on the global stage before it was placed on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Entity List. The inclusion means that Huawei can no longer have access to critical U.S. technology without government approval.

Since the U.S.-China rivalry expanded into technology, Huawei had been singled out by Pentagon as a national security risk to the United States without giving any solid evidence such as backdoors in its systems or contracts with the Chinese government or military.

Recently, Huawei officially launched its in-house operating system HarmonyOS and made it open-source and freely available to developers around the world, directly posing a challenge to the U.S. duopolies Android and iOS.

HarmonyOS supports not only smartphones, tablets, and laptops, but also a wide range of hardware from television, refrigerator, to vehicles. It is designed to be the infrastructure of the age of the Internet of Things, or IoT.

This is significant not only for Huawei but also China. To outcompete Western adversaries, operating system is one of the battles that China cannot afford to lose. For Huawei, HarmonyOS is both a challenge and an opportunity – it is a challenge because the difficulty in getting developers onboard is unpredictable; it is an opportunity because it can help Huawei to regain control in its battle with the U.S. and others. Either way, China must have its own OS and chip making technology to succeed in the coming decades as the U.S. and its allies are increasingly aggressive towards China.

HarmonyOS: <https://www.harmonyos.com/>

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