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Samsung Galaxy S III arrives with sights on Siri

By Ben Woods, 3 May, 2012 21:03

Samsung has unveiled the Galaxy S III, the successor to the successful Galaxy S II Android smartphone, saying it will launch in the UK before the end of May.



Samsung's Galaxy S III handset is marked for delivery in the UK in May. *Image credit: CNET UK*

The Ice Cream Sandwich-powered handset, revealed at a launch event in London on Thursday, has a 4.8-inch Super AMOLED HD display and a 1.4GHz quad-core Exynos 4 Quad processor. It also has a number of Samsung-specific features — such as S Voice, Direct Call and Smart Alert — that look to the lead of Apple's iPhone voice assistant Siri.

"The Galaxy S III's main [unique selling point] is that it enhances the interaction between the device and its owner," Samsung said in a

statement. "Smart enough to detect your face, voice and gestures, the Galaxy S III adapts to the individual user to provide a more convenient and natural user experience."

The S Voice feature, which Samsung describes as "an advanced natural language user interface", carries out actions in response to spoken input.

"In addition to allowing information search and basic device-user communication, S Voice provides powerful device control and commands," the company said.

The Galaxy S III also has features designed to make sharing content between different devices and screens easier, as it incorporates the Android Beam functionality found in the Galaxy Nexus, under the name of S Beam.

Beyond its Siri-like features and sharing capabilities, the Galaxy S III has an 8-megapixel camera and a 1.9-megapixel front-facing camera capable of HD video capture. It has a 4.8-inch display, but is only 8.6mm thick and weighs only 133g.

The device, which runs on the latest version of Android — Ice Cream Sandwich, or version 4.0 — will go up against other range-topping Android handsets from rival manufacturers, such as Sony's Xperia range as well as other platforms like the iOS-based iPhone 4S or Nokia's Lumia family that use the Windows Phone operating system.

The 3G version of the S III is scheduled to arrive in Europe on 29 May, while the LTE 4G versions will go on sale in the US in June, Samsung said. Pricing details were not disclosed.

Samsung will be hoping to continue the strong sales performance the company has seen recently, through handsets such as the Galaxy S and S II, and the Note smartphone-tablet hybrid. On 27 April, research firm Strategy Analytics reported that Samsung now sells more mobile phones, not just smartphones, than any other manufacturer, taking the top spot away from struggling Finnish manufacturer Nokia.

However, despite the addition of new features, IDC mobile analyst Francisco Jeronimo said that the company could have gone further with the design changes in order to stay competitive against Apple.

"Despite probably being the best Android device on the market, I believe Samsung could have gone a lot further than just ticking the boxes with must-have features and top-end specifications," Jeronimo said in a statement. "Samsung could have taken a bolder approach and seized the opportunity to lead in innovation of design and usability, where everyone fails to compete with Apple."

"After the excellent performance of the previous version of the Galaxy S, Samsung needs to keep the momentum high, especially when its main competitor, Apple, is expected to launch a new device in 2012 that could be disruptive again," he added.

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