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Apple closes in on Samsung in Western Europe smartphone race

Apple's share of smartphone shipments in Western Europe grew 15 percent last year, putting the company within range of overtaking Samsung.



By [Liam Tung](#) | February 18, 2015 -- 10:24 GMT (10:24 GMT) | Topic: [Mobility](#)

Once the undisputed king of smartphones, Samsung saw its market share slide dramatically in China and Europe last year, according to new research.

It's no secret that 2014 was a tough year for Samsung's smartphone business, and as the company gears up to launch the [Galaxy S6 in early March](#) (<http://www.zdnet.com/article/samsung-galaxy-s6-what-we-know-so-far-about-the-upcoming-flagship/>), figures from analysts IDC released this week show how far it has to go to reclaim its status as the world's top smartphone maker.

As [ZDNet reported yesterday](#) (<http://www.zdnet.com/article/china-rings-up-420m-smartphones-in-2014-xiaomi-leads-market/>), Samsung devices accounted for 12.1 percent of the 420.7 million smartphones shipped in China last year - roughly one-third of the 1.3 billion that shipped worldwide in 2014.

While analyst firm [Canalys recently reported that Xiaomi had](#) (<http://www.cnet.com/news/xiaomi-tops-samsung-as-chinas-largest-smartphone-vendor/>) shipped more devices than Samsung in the second quarter last year, updated figures from IDC show that Xiaomi took the crown for the full year too with a 12.5 percent share of shipments in China.

While Samsung doesn't face the same challenges from low-cost vendors in Western Europe, the company has seen a similar decline there at the hands of Apple and smaller rivals.

Smartphone shipments in Europe were up 6.4 percent year on year in 2014, up from 137 million units in 2013 to 145 million last year, [according to IDC](#)

(<http://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUK25438915>).

Samsung is still the top vendor in Western Europe, though its lead over Apple has decreased in recent quarters. Samsung shipped 51 million smartphones in 2014, down from 58 million in 2013, while Apple's shipments climbed from 26.9 million to 30.9 million. Samsung's share of smartphone shipments slipped from 42.6 percent in 2013 to 35 percent in 2014, while Apple's share grew slightly from 19.6 percent to 21.2 percent over the same period.

Microsoft's shipments meanwhile climbed 31 percent from 7.6 million to 10 million for the year; however, that still left it with a 6.9 percent share of the market, behind Sony's 10.4 percent with 15.2 million units sold, but ahead of LG, which shipped 8.6 million units, accounting for 5.9 percent of total shipments.

According to IDC, the European smartphone market was worth \$62.4bn in 2014, up 1.7 percent year on year.

Feature phone shipments continued to decline, down 39 percent year on year to 28.4 million units. Feature phone shipments accounted for 16 percent of the 174 million mobile devices shipped in Europe.

Growth in smartphone shipments to Europe came despite the market's already high adoption of smartphones, which IDC attributed mostly to the recent release of [Apple's iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus](#) (<http://www.zdnet.com/article/apples-iphone-6-watch-revealed-roundup/>).

"Seven out of ten people in Western Europe now have a smartphone. The success of the new iPhones 6 and 6 Plus, the increasing popularity of phablets and the explosion of



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devices priced under \$150, were the biggest contributors to this growth," said Francisco Jeronimo, European mobile devices research director at IDC.

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