

Samsung finally releases Tizen-powered smartphone

India is first market for a long-delayed handset running on the company's homegrown operating system

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Samsung has at last released a smartphone running on the Tizen operating system in an effort to reduce its reliance on Android.

The South Korean company first announced the platform in 2012 and a phone based on Tizen was set to go on sale in the second half of last year. However, its release was subsequently postponed to "further enhance" the operating system.

The Z1 goes on sale today and costs 5,700 rupees (£60). It is powered by a 1.2GHz dual-core processor and has 3G capability, a 4-inch display and a 3.1m megapixel camera.

'Dead on arrival'

A camera and smartwatches run show in Las Vegas last week. The and fridges in the future.

However, analysts remain sceptical about the prospects for Tizen. Francisco Jeronimo, research director at IDC, said it was "dead on arrival" given the absence of apps for the operating system.

He also questioned why Samsung had opted to release its first Tizen smartphone in a market such as India, where 96% of such devices ran on Android. "Even if it's cheap it will be very difficult to compete with offerings from local competitors - it's a huge challenge," Jeronimo said.

Sales of the Z1 will govern whether developers decide to write apps for Tizen, which in turn will play a crucial role in its uptake. In a bid to encourage developers to create apps Samsung will give them all revenues from the Tizen app store for 12 months.

Strategy Analytics has predicted that Tizen would become one of the fastest-growing operating systems along with Firefox and Microsoft's Windows over the next six years, but added that it was unlikely to become a mass-market proposition.

Almost all of the company's devices, including its popular Galaxy S smartphone range, use the Android operating system. However, many hardware makers are growing increasingly concerned at their dependence on the Google-owned platform.

Despite being the biggest television and smartphone manufacturer, Samsung has failed to create compelling software. It has a history of withdrawing apps or services despite lavish promotion, such as the decision to axe the mobile operating system Bada.

Tizen dates back to 2011, when Intel and the Linux Foundation started working on the operating system. Samsung then merged Bada into Tizen later that year.

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