

# BBC NEWS

## TECHNOLOGY

---

1 August 2013 Last updated at 20:00

## Moto X 'always listening' phone launched by Google's Motorola

---

**By Dave Lee**

Technology reporter, BBC News

**Google-owned Motorola has announced a phone that is "always listening" for the owner's voice commands.**

Saying "OK Google now..." will prompt the Moto X's Touchless Control system to listen for instructions.

The phone will be manufactured in the US, with customers given extensive customisation options.

The device is the first to have been designed from scratch since Google's \$12.5bn (£7.9bn) takeover of Motorola last year.

Industry analysts said the release could prove disruptive to the Android market, as many other manufacturers using Google's operating system are struggling to turn a profit.

The hardware will be manufactured in the US at a newly-built plant in Texas, making Motorola the latest in a growing number of firms keen to bathe in positive "Made in USA" public relations.

It also means customers can change their customisation options - with multiple colourings, and personalised engravings to be on offer.

The company said there were over 2,000 possible combinations for what could be created.

### **Gaining control**

The Moto X is the first handset fully designed by the company since Google took it over in May last year.

While the company has released handsets since then, they had all been at least partly in development before the takeover.

It means the phone has been seen as the first real indicator of what Google itself thinks is possible on its own mobile platform.

Francisco Jeronimo, a mobile phones analyst at market intelligence firm IDC, said the company had targeted the basics - changing how a phone is controlled.

"The interaction with the phone, the way we speak, the way we activate the functions - it can be done in a different way," he said.

"Users have large screens, they have voice control - so at the end of the day what may attract users to replace their current smartphone is a completely new experience. In my opinion, it's one of the biggest trends of the next year."

Typical voice command systems require the user to press a button before saying commands, this system is triggered by saying the words "Ok Google now..." followed by the order.

"If I have a device that just gets activated with one command, then that will be a lot easier," said Mr Jeronimo.

"It's not a question of hardware, it's a question of user interface."

### **Samsung politics**

The Moto X launch has again raised questions around the delicate relationship between Google and Samsung.

As the dominant vendor - by a huge margin - in the Android market, Samsung finds itself in something of a polite tug-of-war with the search giant.

"Samsung represents 60% of total Android shipments across the world," said Mr Jeronimo. "They are basically dependent on each other."

For this reason, the release of the Moto X is interesting strategically, as while Google will want the phone to be a success, too much of a hit risks unnerving Samsung.

"What prevents Samsung from launching their own operating system using Android?" Mr Jeronimo added.

"A completely different ecosystem could be built overnight. Google needs to keep Samsung very close. What made Android popular was not the just the operating system itself - it was the money Samsung put into their devices."

In the first three months of 2013, Samsung captured a 95% share of all profits in the global Android smartphone market - highlighting the prospect of a whopping hole should it decide to change direction.

Samsung has never said it may consider that move, but last week, it announced it would be holding its first developers conference - an event where experts come together to discuss and learn about creating software and hardware to work for a specific platform or product.

Mr Jeronimo said he believed the Moto X launch was Google preparing itself for the possibility that Samsung may not always be an industry partner.

"For Google, it's a question of not letting Motorola die, making it profitable as soon as possible.

"Before Motorola they had no strong experience with building hardware, but now they are learning how to develop a high-end smartphone.

"This will give them the skills they need, and tools they need, in the future in case they see a strong movement towards a different operation system."

The Moto X will be released in the US, Canada and Latin America starting in late August or early September, the company said.

It will cost \$199 (£130) when bought as part of a two-year contract deal.

Follow Dave Lee [on Twitter @DaveLeeBBC](#)

## [More Technology stories](#)



### [Servers hacked to host abuse images](#)

[\[/news/uk-23551290\]](#)

Dozens of businesses are having their website servers hacked to host some of the worst images of child sexual abuse, the charity Internet Watch Foundation warns.

### [Toilet users warned of tech flaw](#)

[\[/news/technology-23575249\]](#)

### [Lab-grown burger to be unveiled](#)

[\[/news/science-environment-22885969\]](#)



BBC © 2013 The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read more.](#)