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Samsung dominates western Europe but can't stop market falling

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The smartphone market in western Europe shrank by 1.9% in the second quarter of this year as consumers wait for new smartphones.

New research by IDC said feature phone sales continued to slump, with shipments down 30% to 14.7 million. Consumers were opting for cheaper devices, with the highest growth coming in the €20-€40 band.



IDC report shows Sony Mobile overtaking RIM, driven by Xperia series

Smartphone shipments increased by 26% and now account for 65% of all phones shipped. While shipments increased by 26% to 27.4 million units in the three months to the end of June, this was not enough to offset the decline in feature phones. Android, bolstered by Samsung, continued its dominance of the smartphone sector. It grew by 71% year on year and was only outpaced by Windows Phone 7, which increased its share by 874% year on year.

Samsung hit an all-time high for market share with 41% of total shipments. This was driven by its strong smartphone performance. It lost feature phone market share to Nokia, although smartphone shipments increased 148% to 11.9 million.

Nokia's market share decline slowed compared with previous quarters, with its Lumia range overtaking its Symbian phones for the first time. Its share fell to 19.2%, with shipments dropping 10% to 8.1 million. However, IDC noted that its Asha and dual-Sim feature phones sold well. Apple's sales growth slowed as consumers await the forthcoming iPhone, which is expected to be launched on 12 September. Nevertheless, its share increased to 12.4% and shipments were up 13% to 5.2 million.

Sony had a strong second quarter, overtaking BlackBerry manufacturer RIM thanks to the performance of its Xperia portfolio of smartphones. Shipments grew by 5% to 2.3 million.

RIM had a poor quarter, with shipments slumping 37% to 1.9 million and its market share falling 35.7% to 4.5%. IDC said this could have been a lot worse if the manufacturer had not heavily discounted its handsets. RIM is looking to the first quarter of 2013 and the launch of its BlackBerry 10 handsets to turn its fortunes around.

Francisco Jeronimo, European mobile devices research manager at IDC, said: 'The second quarter was impacted by a weaker economic environment in wwestern Europe, which contributed to lower demand. Moreover, there are rumors that a number of devices will be unveiled in the third quarter and mobile operators are focused on clearing stocks ahead of the new launches. The Samsung Galaxy S III was the only major product release in the second quarter, and therefore the biggest seller in the quarter, which contributed to Samsung's dominance in the market.

'The third quarter will be flooded with a number of devices on different operating systems. The new devices may represent major developments from previous versions, and current devices may not be upgradable to the new platform releases. This has led consumers to postpone their upgrades and wait for the new 'crown jewels' from the major OEMs to be unveiled.'

Editor: Graeme Neill

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