

Samsung unveils its new foldable phone, the Galaxy Z Flip

February 11 2020, by Rachel Lerman and Kelvin Chan



A Samsung worker gives a demonstration of the Galaxy Z Flip Phone at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

Samsung on Tuesday unveiled a new foldable phone, the Galaxy Z Flip,

its second attempt to sell consumers on phones with bendable screens and clamshell designs.

The new phone can unfold from a small square upward into a traditional smartphone form, and will go on sale Feb. 14 starting at \$1,380. The company announced the phone at a product event in San Francisco.

Samsung's first foldable phone, the Galaxy Fold, finally went on sale last September after delays and reports of screens breaking. The Fold, which carries a price tag of nearly \$2,000, folds at a vertical crease rather than horizontally as a flip-phone design would. Motorola has also taken the flip-phone approach with its new \$1,500 Razr phone.

The foldable phones represent manufacturers' attempt to energize a market where sales have slowed. Many consumers are holding onto old phones longer, in part because new phone features offer increasingly marginal benefits. But these foldable models come with higher price tags and are likely to appeal for now mostly to tech enthusiasts and others at the forefront of technology.

"While there's a lot of excitement around this new category, it is still early days and they will evolve significantly." said Paolo Pescatore, an analyst at PP Foresight. "While these innovative new designs are nice to have, they're not must-have, sought-after features among users."

The Z Flip can stay open at different angles for use watching videos or taking photos. When the phone is closed, it will take selfies and display notifications in a small window on the cover. Unfolded, its screen measures 6.7 inches diagonally.

Samsung says it added fibers to the gap between the hinge and the phone to keep out dust and improve hinge function, likely to address shortcomings of the Galaxy Fold.

On the more traditional front, Samsung offers its S series. In a nod to the start of the 2020s, the South Korean company showed off the Galaxy S20, S20 Plus and S20 Ultra, skipping directly to the S20 from its previous S10 series.

The S20 phones are designed to take high-quality pictures in dark settings, Samsung product manager Mark Holloway said. The phones can take both video and photos at the same time, using artificial intelligence to zero in on the best moments to capture the still images.



A Samsung worker gives a demonstration of the Galaxy Z Flip Phone at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



A woman holds a Samsung Galaxy Z Flip Phone displayed at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

Samsung's renewed focus on the camera follows other smartphone makers. Apple last fall announced the iPhone 11, which offers an additional lens for wider-angle shots and combined multiple shots with software to improve low-light images. Google's Pixel phones also offer a similar low-light feature.

Samsung's S phones already offer the wider angle and some features for low-lighting. But the company says the new phones will focus on high-resolution photos and the ability to zoom in 30 to 100 times, depending on the model.

The camera on the S20 series is "a giant leap," said Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights & Strategy, who argued that people might gravitate toward the more expensive models even as the sales of smartphones slow.

Gartner analyst Tuong Nguyen called the S20 "astounding," but worried that the crowd at the event had a muted response.



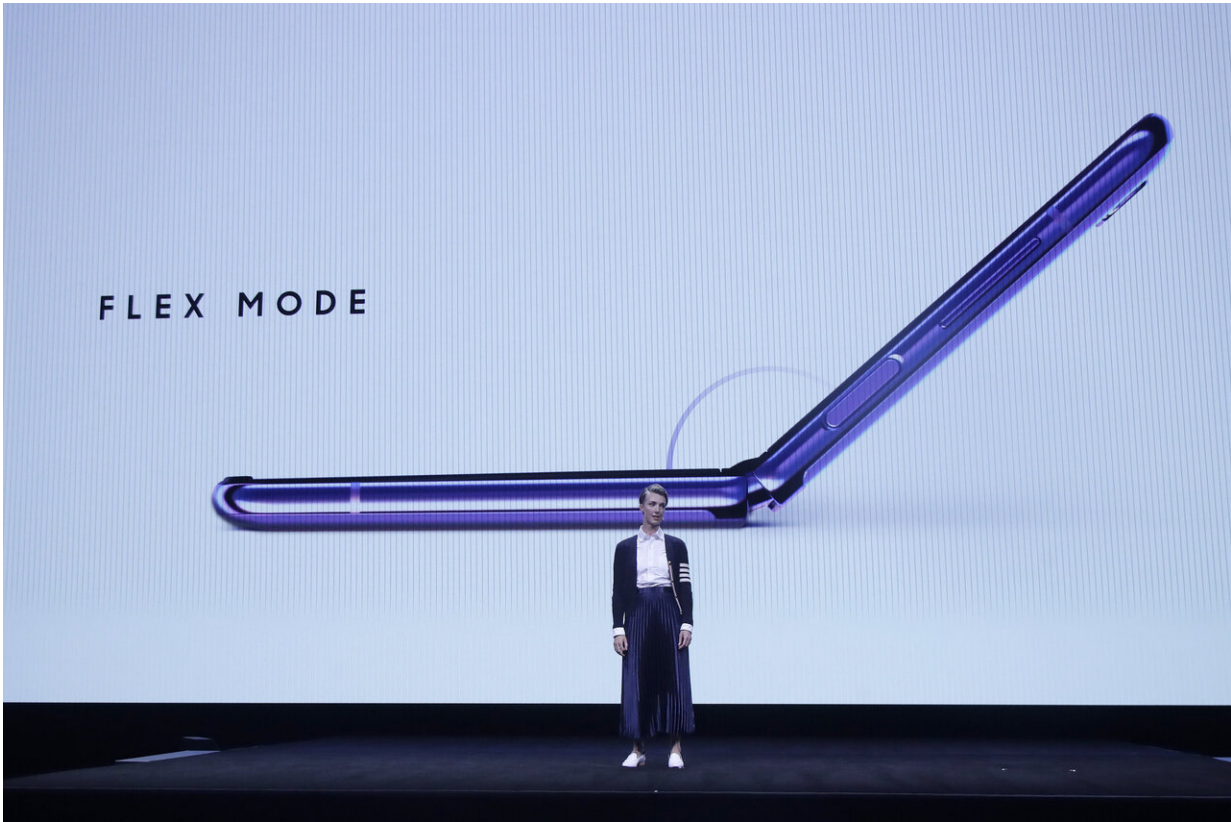
A Samsung worker gives a demonstration of the Galaxy Z Flip Phone at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



Rebecca Hirst, head of UK Mobile Product Development, speaks in front of photos of Samsung Galaxy Z Flip Phones at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



Rebecca Hirst, head of UK Mobile Product Development, holds a Samsung Galaxy Z Flip Phone while speaking at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



Rebecca Hirst, head of UK Mobile Product Development, speaks in front of a photo of the Samsung Galaxy Z Flip Phone at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



This Friday, Feb. 7, 2020, photo shows the S20 series of phones, the South Korean tech company's latest flagship smartphone, on display in London during a preview for reporters ahead of the official launch on Tuesday, Feb. 11. (AP Photo/Kelvin Chan)



TM Roh, President and Head of Mobile Communications Business, holds a Samsung Galaxy S20 Ultra 5G phone while speaking at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



This Friday, Feb. 7, 2020, photo shows an S20 series phone, the South Korean tech company's latest flagship smartphone, on display in London during a preview for reporters ahead of the official launch on Tuesday, Feb. 11. (AP Photo/Kelvin Chan)



TM Roh, President and Head of Mobile Communications Business, speaks at the Samsung Galaxy Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



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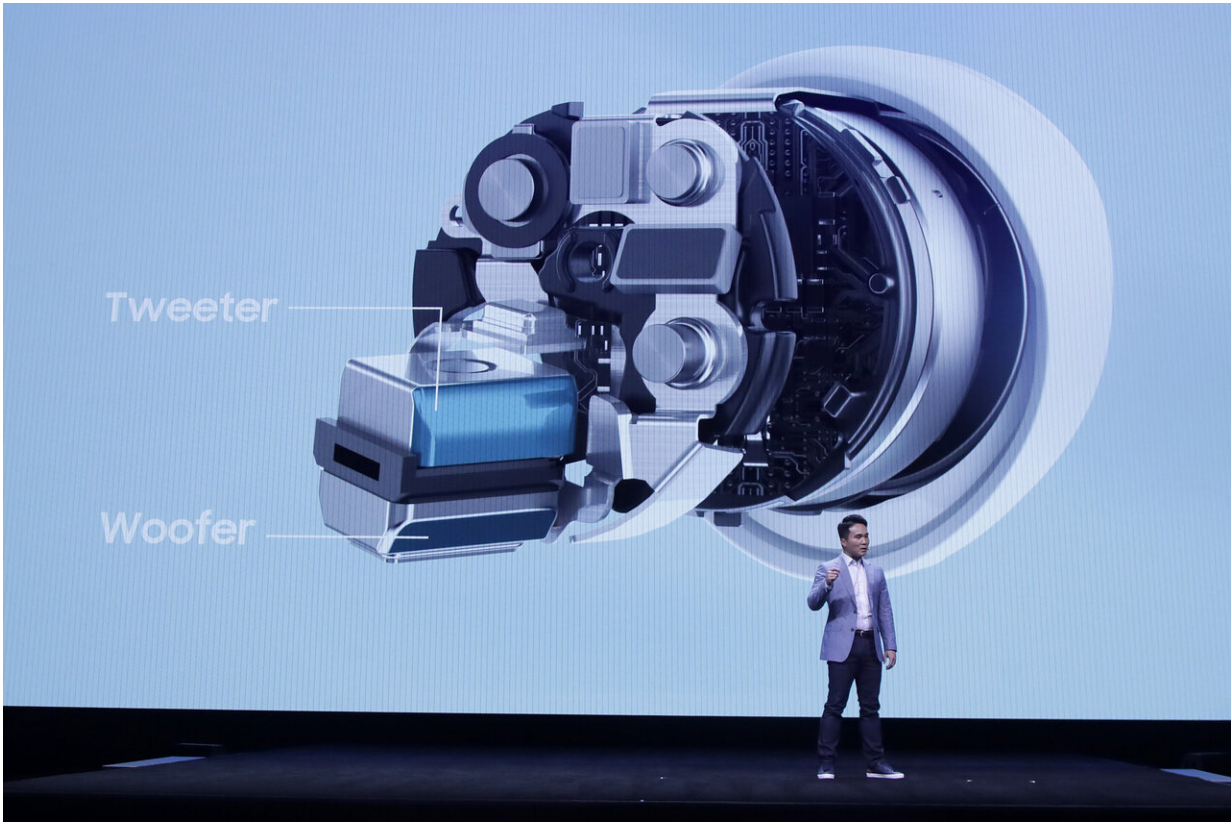
Drew Blackard, Head of U.S. Mobile Product Management, speaks at Samsung Galaxy Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



TM Roh, President and Head of Mobile Communications Business, speaks in front of a photo of Samsung Galaxy S20 Ultra 5G phones while speaking at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



Samsung Galaxy Z Flip Phones are displayed at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



David S. Park, head of U.S. Mobile Channel Marketing, speaks under an image of Galaxy Buds Plus at the Samsung Galaxy Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



A Samsung worker gives a demonstration of the Galaxy Z Flip Phone at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



Samsung Galaxy S20 phones are displayed at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



David S. Park, head of U.S. Mobile Channel Marketing, speaks under Samsung Galaxy S20 5G phones at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



People look at different Samsung Galaxy S20 5G phones displayed at the Unpacked 2020 event in San Francisco, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

"I think we've reached the point in the technology timeline that all of us have technology that's so good, better than we can even grasp or take advantage of, that anything new that's introduced is not greeted with the same enthusiasm," he said.

The S20 phones go on sale in the U.S. on March 6, and will range in price from \$1,000 to \$1,400. All S20 models will be compatible with next-generation cellular networks known as 5G, although it's still an early technology that consumers typically won't need yet. The Z Flip will not work with 5G networks.

As people packed into San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts for Samsung's launch event, they passed a team taking remote temperatures in the security line, likely a precaution to check for the coronavirus. Samsung also offered hand sanitizer stations and face masks inside the event lobby.

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