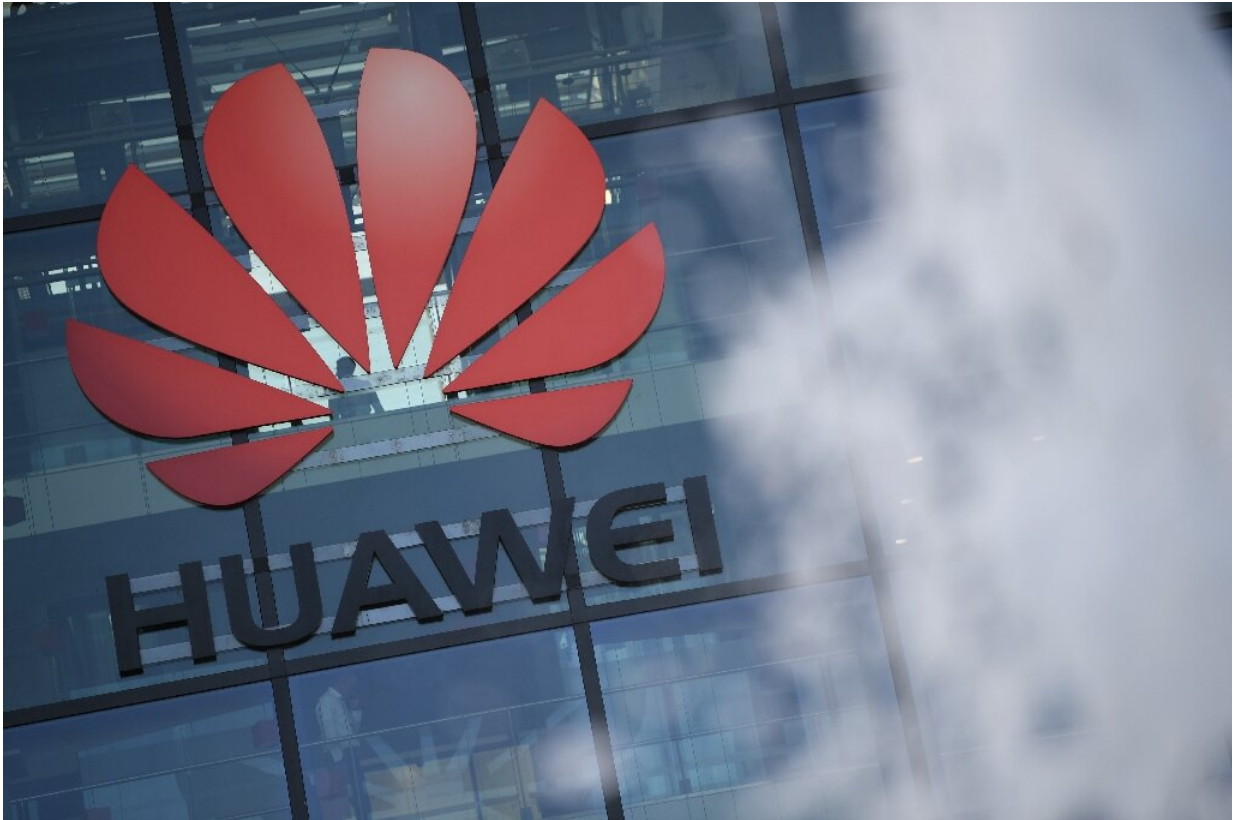


Huawei flagship phone goes Google-free

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While Huawei's new P40 might not be the company's first Google-free phone, it is the first top-line phone meant to seduce early adopters and show off its technological prowess

Huawei drove into its post-Google era Thursday with a flagship smartphone that uses none of the Android maker's apps now that the Chinese group has been blacklisted by US authorities.

The new P40 might not be the first Google-free phone launched by Huawei, it is the first top-line phone meant to seduce early adopters and show off its technological prowess.

The United States has expressed concern that Huawei mobile phone network equipment could contain security loopholes that allow China to spy on global communications traffic, and while the company has denied the accusation, it has been effectively barred from working with US companies.

For smartphones, that means Huawei has had to forgo Google's Android operating system and the plethora of apps available to run on it.

Huawei, which was the world's second largest smartphone-maker last year behind Samsung with a 17 percent market share, now faces the challenge of creating an alternative that is sufficiently attractive to lure both app developers and consumers.

According to the presentation broadcast on YouTube, the P40 smartphones sold in France, Germany, and Italy will use a European search engine called Qwant instead of Google.

Huawei is progressively eliminating Google software from its phones after having shipped its first Google-free model last year, but it has not given a date when it expects to complete the switch.

The P40 will be available from April 7 at a price ranging from 799 to 1,399 euros (\$880-1,540), depending on the specifications.

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