

# Samsung unveils foldable smartphones in a bet on devices with bending screens

July 26 2023, by Kim Tong-Hyung

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Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 5 Phones displayed during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon

Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices.

The clamshell-designed Galaxy Z Flip 5 and Galaxy Z Fold 5, a larger device that opens and folds like a book, can be pre-ordered in certain markets including the United States and South Korea starting Wednesday.

Built with 6.7-inch and 7.6-inch main screens, the phones have bigger displays than Samsung's previous folding devices and are equipped with more advanced cameras, providing crisper visuals and more features for work, text and video chats, movies and games, the company said. Designed to be compact and easy to carry, the Flip 5 is also built with a 3.4-inch cover screen that allows it to be used folded in half.

The phones, which run on Qualcomm's Snapdragon 8 Gen 2 processor chips, are slightly sleeker and lighter than their predecessors but designed to be more durable and shock-resistant.

All that technology comes with hefty price tags. In the United States, Flip 5 will start at around \$1,000 while the Fold 5 is set at \$1,800.

Samsung, a South Korean technology giant that's also a major producer of computer memory chips, has been the longest provider of folding phones, releasing its first devices in 2019.

The company announced the new phones at a lavish product event in South Korea's capital, Seoul, choosing one of the markets where folding phones are closer to being mainstream products than novelties.

Foldable devices accounted for around 40% of Samsung's high-end devices sold in South Korea last year and the share is expected to

increase in 2023, TM Roh, chief of Samsung's mobile business, said during a meeting with a select group of reporters.

While Samsung has goals to develop cheaper folding phones, Roh said it's difficult to specify when they would come, considering the complicated engineering involved and the tradeoffs between cheaper components and advanced functions people expect for such devices.

But high prices will not prevent foldable phones from becoming mainstream in global markets, Roh said.

"The form factor is not something that's entirely new—it's actually something people have been very accustomed to for a long time," Roh said, pointing to a reporter's notebook that folded.

"People want products that fold, making them easier to carry and protect important information ... and then to flip them open to use and make notes. That has been a natural pattern for such a long time, for people in both the East and West."

There's optimism in the industry that the worldwide sales of foldable phones are growing at a faster pace with other vendors like Google, Motorola and Huawei now providing competition to Samsung.

According to Counterpoint, a technology market research firm, global shipments of foldable phones will approach 19 million units in 2023, which would mark a 45% increase from 2022, mainly fueled by rising consumer demands in China.



People look at products during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon

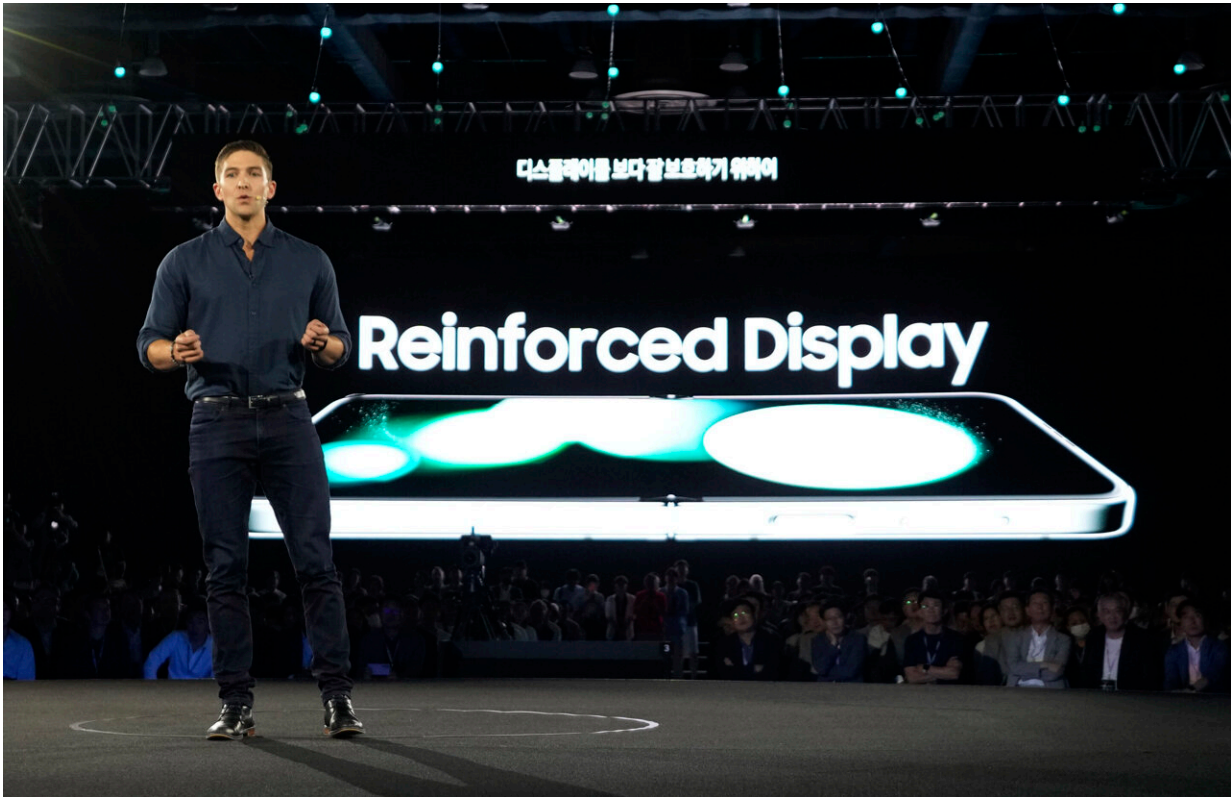




Stephanie Choi, EVP and head of Samsung's marketing mobile experience business, speaks during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon



TM Roh, president and head of Samsung's mobile experience business, speaks during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon



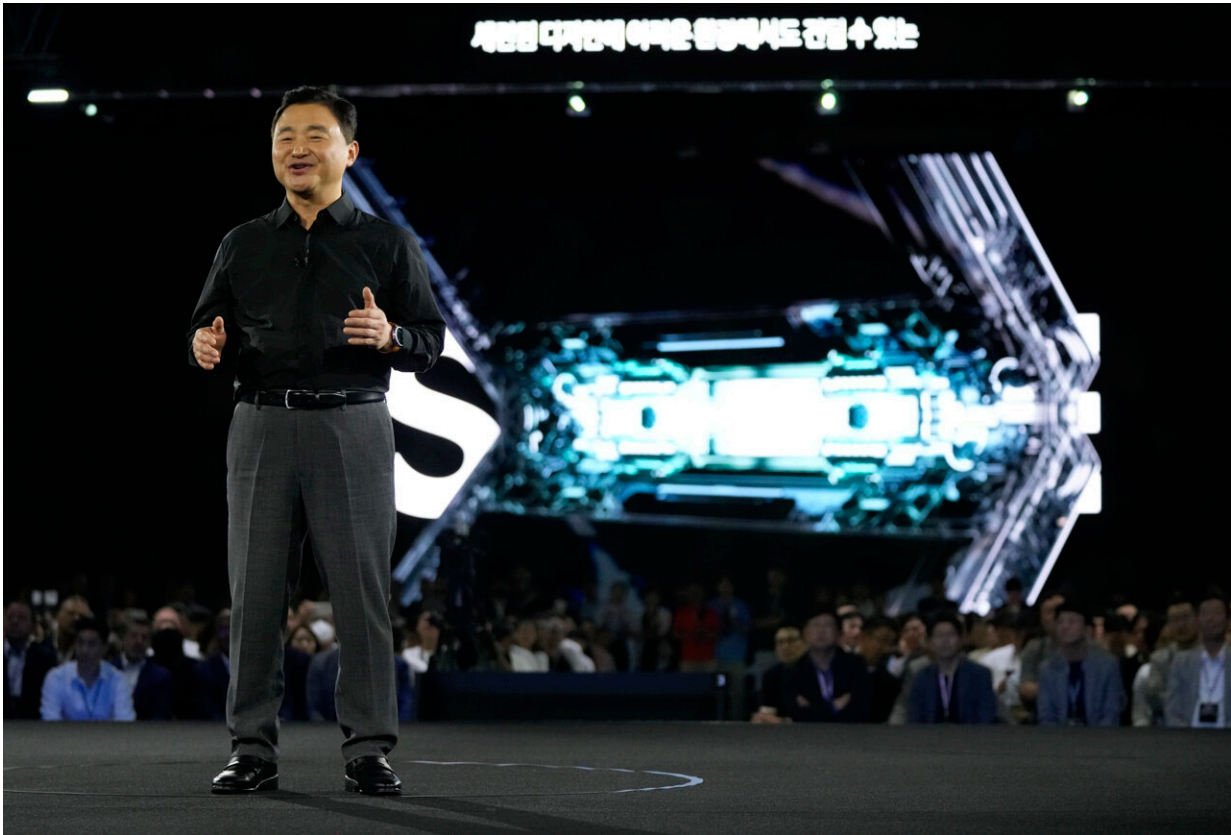
Nils Dahl, Samsung's product and technology planning, speaks during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon





SUGA, center, a member of South Korean K-pop band BTS, gestures during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon





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TM Roh, president and head of Samsung's mobile experience business, waves during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon





An employee walks past a logo of the Samsung Electronics Co. shown at its office in Seoul, South Korea. Samsung Electronics on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices. Credit: AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, File

The shipments may exceed 100 million units by 2027, Counterpoint said in a report released Wednesday, although that projection was based on a presumption that Apple would eventually release a foldable iPhone, sometime around 2025. Apple, which closely competes with Samsung for the top spot in global smartphone shipments, has yet to confirm any plans for foldable devices.

Samsung on Thursday said its operating profit for the April-June quarter

fell 95% from the same period last year to 670 billion won (\$526 million), mainly due to a slow recovery in the global semiconductor market.

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