

Google unveils cheaper Pixel smartphone, teases 5G

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Google on Monday unveiled a new, more affordable Pixel smartphone and said it would launch models tailored for super-fast 5G networks later this year.

The Pixel 4a boasts core features popular that made its top-of-the-line predecessor popular, like a sophisticated camera system.

But its starting price of \$349 is about half that of the flagship Pixel 4 model.

The new phone will be available in the United States starting August 20.

While still a bit player in the smartphone hardware market, Alphabet-owned Google found success with the release last year of the Pixel 3a, which bucked the trend of sky-high prices for top-tier handsets.

"Last year, Pixel 3a gave people a chance to get the helpful features of Pixel at a more affordable price," said Google product management vice president Brian Rakowski.

"This year, Pixel 4a and the first 5G-enabled Pixels, Pixel 4a (5G) and Pixel 5 coming this fall, will continue to bring the features people love packaged in sleek new hardware at more affordable prices."

The coming Pixel 4a synched to 5G networks still being built will start at \$499, and be available in Australia, Britain Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Taiwan, and the US, according to Rakowski.

The global smartphone market "plummeted" in the second quarter of this year, with Apple the only top vendor to grow, according to market tracker Canalys.

Apple shipped 45.1 million iPhones globally, a growth of 25 percent compared to the same period a year earlier, Canalys reported.

The smartphone market worldwide fell 14 percent to 285 million units in a second consecutive quarter of decline amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to Canalys.

"So far, consumer purchasing power in major markets has remained relatively stable," Canalys senior analyst Ben Stanton said in a release.

"The real test will be in the coming months, as stimulus money is tapered off, and furlough schemes withdrawn."

China's Huawei overtook Samsung to become the number-one [smartphone](#) seller worldwide in the second quarter on the back of strong domestic demand, Canalys said.

Canalys said the embattled firm, which is facing US sanctions and falling overseas sales, shipped 55.8 million devices—for the first time topping Samsung, which shipped 53.7 million units.

The findings marked the first quarter in nine years that a company other than Samsung or Apple has led the market, Canals said.

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