

## Technology

# Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ and Galaxy Note 5 unveiled

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The Galaxy S6 Edge+ shares the curved glass screen of its smaller sibling

## **Samsung has announced two new large high-end Android handsets: the Galaxy S6 Edge+ and the Galaxy Note 5.**

Both phones have 5.7in (14.5cm) screens and are going on sale earlier in the year than their previous generations.

The launches follow five successive falls in Samsung Electronics' quarterly profits.

Analysts say the popularity of mid-range phones from Chinese rivals, and Apple's shift to bigger iPhones, have dented demand for Samsung's devices.

However, the firm remains the world leader in terms of overall smartphone shipments.

The announcements were made at a press conference in New York.

**Manufacturer**

**April-June smartphone shipments**

**Year-on-year change**

Samsung	73.2 million	-2.3%
Apple	47.5 million	+34.9%
Huawei	29.9 million	+48.1%
Xiaomi	17.9 million	+29.4%
Lenovo (incl Motorola)	16.2 million	+11.6%

Source: IDC Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker

The company also revealed that its smart wallet service, Samsung Pay - which allows the phones to trigger payment card transactions - would go live in South Korea on 20 August.

That service will be extended to the US on 28 September and then to the UK and Spain at an unspecified date.

## No Note for Europe

Like previous versions of the Note, the new version comes with a stylus - which Samsung says makes it suitable for productivity tasks. But the phone now has metal edges and a glass back to give it a more "premium" feel.



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Samsung has opted not to launch the stylus-controlled Galaxy Note 5 in Europe - at least for now

In a change of strategy, the South Korean firm has no plans at present to release the Note 5 in Europe - a decision it says is purely for marketing reasons.

One company-watcher said that could be a mistake.

"The Note would have been a good fit for Europe's enterprise market, and if Samsung expects the S6 Edge+ to attract the same business users I don't believe it will succeed," commented Francisco Jeronimo from market research firm IDC.

Unlike last year, there is no "edge" edition of the Note.



Samsung held a launch event in New York rather than wait for Germany's Iifa tech show in September

Instead, the Galaxy S6 Edge+ is targeted at those who want a "phablet"-sized handset with curved sides.

The "plus" in its name refers to the fact that its screen is both 0.6in (1.5cm) larger than the earlier edition and more scratch-resistant.

It now has an extra gigabyte of memory, taking it up to 4GB of RAM to aid multi-tasking, but uses the same in-house Exynos processor as before.

This marks a change from the S5 Plus, which was the same size but contained a faster processor than the original S5.



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The Galaxy Note 5 can be used with a case that doubles as a physical Qwerty keyboard to aid typing

The two new phones also introduce a couple of new features:

- A button in their camera apps activates a "live broadcast" mode, which streams 1080p high definition video to YouTube and sends invitations to selected acquaintances.
- They support the ultra-high quality audio (UHQA) format. A new hardware component means there should be "less sound distortion" when files saved in the codec are played. Users can also use bundled software to "upscale" existing MP3s.

## Ahead of Apple

The decision to host a standalone press conference for the handsets marks a change of strategy for Samsung.

All the previous versions of the Note were unveiled at Germany's annual IFA tech show, which is still three weeks away. The S5 Plus was announced last October in a low-key press release.

One of the benefits of announcing the new models together at this point is that it should give Samsung about a month's lead on Apple - reports suggest the US firm will update its own **smartphones on 9 September**.



Both phones can record video in the 4K ultra-high definition resolution

Samsung acknowledged its schedule had been influenced by its rival's diary.

"Of course, we're not alone in the market and we take the whole [sector] into consideration to find the best opportunity," Jean-Daniel Ayme, vice president of Samsung Electronic's European telecom operations told the BBC.

"It's fair to say that we're in a market which has competition, and we welcome that - it's a maturing market all around the world and we thrive in developing new opportunities, new devices that will grow the business."

One tech industry analyst addressed the point more directly.

"Mid-August is an unusual time for a launch - it's a quiet month when half of Europe is on holiday," said Ian Fogg from IHS Technology.



Samsung's home nation of South Korea will be the first to get its smart wallet service

"One reason Samsung may have done this was to get the announcements out ahead of all the other smartphone makers - both those at IFA and Apple afterwards.

"The other rationale is that it needs to get these new models into the market quickly because it's under competitive pressure, and has accelerated its launch plans."

Samsung's launch, however, has coincided with Xiaomi's surprise unveiling of a new phablet - the Redmi Note 2 - earlier in the day at a Beijing event.

Mr Fogg added that he too believed the decision not to launch the Note 5 in Europe was "surprising and "disappointing".



Xiaomi's Redmi Note 2 is several times cheaper than Samsung's Galaxy Note 5

"One of Samsung's challenges is that although both products will not be available globally, the announcement will be communicated globally," he said.

"One of the risks is that consumers will learn of both products, not be able to buy one of them in certain geographies and then defer their purchase."

The new phones go on sale on 21 August.

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