

Apple iPhone 5 connector to make accessories obsolete

Apple will annoy millions of iPhone owners by including a new, smaller connector in the next version of its iconic device, rendering current accessories potentially obsolete, two sources have confirmed.



Some iPhone accessories, such as Bang & Olufsen's BeoSound 8, cost hundreds of pounds

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The iPhone 5, **Apple's** next generation iPhone expected to go on sale around October, will come with a 19-pin connector port at the bottom instead of the proprietary 30-pin port "to make room for the earphone moving to the bottom", the sources said.

It would mean the new phone would not connect with the myriad of accessories such as speakers and power chargers that form part of the ecosystem around iPods, iPads and iPhones, without an adaptor.

The redesign may annoy owners, but accessories manufacturers are preparing for a sales boom, according to analysts.

"It represents an opportunity for accessory vendors," said Pete Cunningham, London-based analyst at technology research firm Canalsys.

"The iPhone connector has been a standard for a long time now and I would expect the same to be true for a new connector, should Apple change it as expected."

Tech blogs have long **speculated on the demise of the 30-pin connector**, which at 21mm wide takes up a lot of space, especially as the latest technologies such as microUSB offer more power in less space. They say that a smaller connector would give Apple more scope for new product designs or a bigger battery, or simply to make ever smaller products.

Unconfirmed pictures of the "iPhone 5" have also emerged that show a much smaller aperture.

Some vendors in China have already begun offering cases for the new phone, complete with earphone socket on the bottom and a "guarantee" the dimensions are correct.

But many industry watchers expect that Apple will offer a solution for those who have invested heavily in expensive speaker docks or other more expensive iPhone accessories.

"Apple needs to find a solution not to disappoint their current clients who want to upgrade to the new iPhone but are tied to an expensive accessory that have bought," said Francisco Jeronimo, an analyst at technology research firm IDC.

"I believe Apple will come up with some sort of adaptor so the new iPhone can be used with previous connectors."

The overall smartphone accessories market was recently predicted by ABI Research to be worth \$20bn for 2012, with the iPhone thought to account for the lion's share.

"Many companies are interested in developing accessories for Apple because Apple users are more open and willing to buy accessories," Said CK Lu, Taipei-based analyst at research firm Gartner.

It seems certain that Apple's new connector will not conform to the microUSB standard that has become ubiquitous in smartphones from rival manufacturers. It is **committed to allowing iPhone owners to charge** their devices via microUSB, however, suggesting the iPhone 5 could be shipped with an adaptor.

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