

The Wall Street Journal reports Google will tighten control on Android OS-- providing a number of mobile vendors with early access to the latest Android builds and Nexus branding.



This should result in the launch of a number of Nexus-branded smartphones later this year, all carrying Android 5.0 (code-named Jelly Bean).

Google already sells Galaxy Nexus smartphones (running Android 4.0) on the Google Play online store. The WSJ suggests Google will expand retail operations further, selling Nexus phones from multiple vendors on the online and "potentially through some retailers."

Current Android partners include Motorola, Samsung, Sony, HTC and Asus. The WSJ says Asus is also working on a co-branded Nexus tablet with Google.

The approach should reduce Android OS fragmentation, since the main vendors will be selling a flagship Android handset running the same version of the OS.

The Android market is incredibly fragmented-- according to developer OpenSignalMaps, Android 2.3 is the dominant Android version (55.4% share) among 61389 OSM app users. Android 2.2 follows (20.5%) with other, mostly older versions. Android 4.0 (aka Ice Cream Sandwich) only has 8.5% share since its November 2011 launch.

Android Strategy Set for Change

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