

Operators Support Firefox OS

Written by Marco Attard
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Mozilla shows off the first commercial build of Firefox OS at MWC 2013 as 17 international carriers (including Telefónica, Deutsche Telekom and Telecom Italia) pledge support for the smartphone OS contender.



The OS also has manufacturer support-- Alcatel, LGE and ZTE will launch the "first wave" of Firefox OS devices in a number of developing and emerging markets (including Spain, Hungary, Poland, Montenegro and Serbia) from H2 2013, followed by offerings from China's Huawei.

Based on open web standards, Firefox OS promises an end to the "walled gardens" of iOS, Windows Phone or (to an extent) Android. It turns smartphones into what essentially is a browser, with each feature turned into an HTML5-based app.

"Firefox OS brings the freedom and unbounded innovation of the open Web to mobile users everywhere," Mozilla CEO Gary Kovacs says. "With the support of our vibrant community and dedicated partners, our goal is to level the playing field and usher in an explosion of content and services that will meet the diverse needs of the next 2 billion people online."

Such flexibility is most attractive to carriers, since it allows easy tweaking and localisation according to customer needs. However analysts and press checking out the OS at MWC 2013

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are less impressed. Ovum analyst Tony Cripps describes the first demo handsets as "still some way from being market ready" and "slow and buggy," while others cast doubts on Mozilla's chances of success against the competition.

Firefox OS is just one of a number of web-based mobile platforms set to fight over the scraps from the iOS and Android table this year. Intel and Samsung should launch Tizen, Jolla has Sailfish, and mobile Linux should make an appearance with Canonical's Ubuntu.

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