

Corning Swipes at Sapphire with Phire

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Corning announces a type of glass the company claims is tougher than the latest Gorilla Glass iteration while featuring scratch resistance that "approaches" sapphire-- the so-called "Project Phire."



"We have developed a new product that will provide sapphire-like scratch resistance while maintaining the legendary toughness and break resistance of Gorilla Glass," Gorilla Glass Technologies James P. Clappin says at the company's annual investor meeting.

Sapphire was supposed to be the latest wonder material in mobile displays, yet it is not problem-free, being brittle and reportedly hard to work with. This explains why Corning's Gorilla Glass unit sticks with glass and related composites, even as investors demand the company starts using the new material.

Apple currently uses sapphire in iPhone 6 camera lens covers and Touch ID sensors, as well as some Apple Watch models. However plans for sapphire iPhone 6 displays went bust following the 2014 bankruptcy of manufacturer GT Advanced Technologies, just a year after a 2013 deal worth \$578 million.

Current smartphones featuring sapphire displays tend to be expensive heavy-duty or deluxe numbers, such as the tough Kyocera Brigadier or the \$10800 Vertu Signature Touch.

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