

Reuters: Chinese Giants Challenge Play Store

Written by Marco Attard
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According to Reuters, Xiaomi, Huawei, Oppo and Vivo are working on a platform allowing non-Chinese developers to simultaneously upload apps onto all their app stores, a move analysts describe as a challenge to the Google Play store.



Dubbed the Global Developer Service Alliance (GDSA), the platform makes it easier for game, music, movie and other app developers to market their apps in overseas markets. "People with knowledge of the matter" say the GDSA was meant for a March launch, although the recent coronavirus outbreak might affect the situation. Meanwhile a prototype website says the platform will initially cover nine regions, including India, Indonesia and Russia.

Google services are currently banned in China. According to analyst Sensor Towers global Play store revenues total around \$8.8 billion in 2019. The store sells not only apps, but also movies and books, with Google collecting a 30% commission.

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Interestingly, Oppo, Vivo and Xiaomi confirm the joining-development of the GDSA, if as a means to upload apps to their stores simultaneously. Xiaomi adds the alliance is not meant to be a challenge to Google and denies the involvement of Huawei, while Oppo and Vivo make no mention of Huawei. As for Huawei itself, it has no comment on the Reuters story as yet.

The four companies make 40.1% of Q4 2019 global smartphone market according to IDC. Oppo, Vivo and Xiaomi still have full access to Google services in international markets, but Huawei lost access for new services following the US ban on selling goods and services to the company in the name of national security. As a result, Huawei is set to move further away from Google by developing its own Harmony OS.

“By forming this alliance each company will be looking to leverage the others’ advantages in different regions, with Xiaomi’s strong user base in India, Vivo and Oppo in Southeast Asia, and Huawei in Europe,” Canalys tells Reuters. “Secondly, it’s to start to build some more negotiation power against Google.”

However, analysts suggest managing such an alliance might be difficult. After all, one cannot say which company is pulling more weight and investing more in the platform and, if history is any indication, such partnerships do not tend to work well.

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