

Surface Phone to Follow Tablet?

Written by Marco Attard
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As the world waits for the launch of the Surface tablet, rumours emerge on Microsoft's future hardware ambitions-- the launch of a Surface-branded Windows Phone 8 smartphone.



The first round of speculation comes from the China Times, with a report claiming a Surface smartphone will be available from H1 2013. More rumours come via BGR, with a "trusted source" saying Microsoft plans to take on the high-end offerings Apple, Samsung... and its own vendor partners.

Does Microsoft want to anger the smartphone vendors, just like it did with tablet makers such as Acer? What about Nokia, who put its entire fortune behind Windows Phone?

The Verge also throws more fuel to the speculation fire, with "multiple insiders" saying Microsoft might consider a Surface phone as a "Plan B" of sorts (where "Plan A" is hardware partners bringing Windows Phone 8 to the market).

Readers with longer memories might remember the earlier smartphone attempt from Microsoft-- the Kin, a Windows Phone 7 smartphone aimed at younger customers. The Kin story had an ignoble conclusion, ending as a \$240 million write-off in Microsoft's Q4 2010 earnings report.

Following the Surface tablet reveal, Steve Ballmer describes Microsoft as a "devices-and-services" company. Is it far fetched for Microsoft to make a smartphone? Maybe not-- but it will surely step on a few toes should it actually do so.

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