

Google I/O: More Android, Everywhere

Written by Marco Attard
26 June 2014

Google confirms its ambitions to put Android in just anything at this year's I/O conference-- not only smartphones and laptops, but also TVs (Android TV), wearables (Android Wear) and even cars (Android Auto).



The keynote opened with a preview of the next generation of Android, version 5.0 or "L" (probably stands for "lollipop"). The updated smartphone OS gets an animated look the company calls "Material Design", as well as performance improvements, battery-saving measures, enhanced notifications and 64-bit support.

Google says Android users clock at over 1 billion.

Confirmed at the conference was the new Google take on TV space-- [Android TV](#) . First leaked last April, Android TV turns TVs into, well, an Android device. It shares the same API as mobile devices, runs apps from the Google Play store and features "Cast" capabilities just like the Chromecast dongle allowing users to mirror content from mobile devices to their TVs.

Google says Android TV will appear in Sony and Philips TVs, as well as streaming boxes from Razer and Asus.

A perhaps more surprising announcement is Android Auto-- essentially the Google take on [Apple's CarPlay](#)

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. Like CarPlay it is less an actual OS and more a means of connecting Android devices to infotainment systems, with an auto-optimised context-aware UI, Google Maps-powered navigation and voice controls.

The search giant names 40 auto makers as partners, including the likes of Audi, Kia, Opel, Honda and Hyundai, and the first Android Auto-compatible cars should hit the market on end 2014.



Also making an appearance is the Android stab at wearables, [Android Wear](#). Seen running on an LG G smartwatch, it features voice and touch controls, contextually aware information via Google Now and supports both round and square screen configurations.

The LG announced the G smartwatch will be available from July 2014. Meanwhile Samsung revealed an Android Wear device, the Gear Live, and Motorola's round Moto 360 also made a showing.

Moving back to smartphones Google revealed a low-cost yet high-quality smartphone initiative dubbed Android One. Seen at the conference is a 4.5-inch handset aimed at the Indian market featuring a 4.5-inch display, dual-SIM, FM radio, stock Android and a \$100 price tag.

Chromebooks also got some love (the Google-powered laptops will be able to run Android apps soon enough), while on the enterprise side Google launched an Android for Work program.

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Amusingly-- or not, depending on your view on such things-- the 2.5-hour long keynote was disrupted twice by protestors, both from San Francisco activist groups Eviction Free San Francisco and the Anti Eviction Mapping Project. "You need to develop a conscience, Google," yelled the first protestor, a school teacher facing eviction from her home in a Mission District building owned by Google lawyer Jack Halprin.

The second protestor declared conference attendees need to "wake the fuck up" and "[are] all working for a totalitarian company that builds robots that kill people," a reference to Google's December 2013 acquisition of robot maker Boston Dynamics.

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