

Google Preps Display-Equipped AI Speaker?

Written by Marco Attard
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Google plans to rival the likes of Amazon and Alibaba further with a smart speaker equipped with display, Nikkei Asian Review reports-- a product "likely to be similar" to the Amazon Echo Show with a planned holiday release.



"Google targets to ship some 3 million units for the first batch of the new model of smart speaker that comes with a screen," an industry source tells Nikkei. "It's an aggressive plan."

The search giant turned CE maker launched the Smart Display platform earlier this year. A number of companies already have Echo Show-style products based on the system, including Lenovo, JBL, LG and Sony, but so far Google is still sticking with the Home line of regular smart speakers. Like these speakers, the model with the display should accept voice commands via Google Assistant, but would also be able to show YouTube videos, calendars and maps.

According to Canalys, the smart speaker market is currently dominated by Google and Amazon, with Google accounting for 36% of Q1 2018 shipments and Amazon taking 28%. However the two companies face an increasingly intense market, as Alibaba, Xiaomi, Apple and others enter the arena. Even so, the market is growing, and Canalys expects 2018 sales to exceed 100 million.

Nikkei adds smart speakers are just part of the Google hardware strategy-- last year the search giant boosted its hardware business with the acquisition of a 2000-strong design team from HTC, and it has forged close ties with the Taiwanese tech industry. Nikkei says iPhone assembler Pegatron will be making the display-equipped speaker, and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) is the company making the tensor processing units (TPUs) powering Google datacentres.

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