

And the First Ubuntu Phone Makers Are...

Written by Marco Attard
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Canonical reveals the first two companies to make and sell the first Ubuntu-powered smartphones sometime during 2014-- Spanish mobile device maker bq and Chinese vendor Meizu.



"The mobile industry has long been looking for a viable alternative to those that reign today," Canonical founder Mark Shuttleworth says. "Ubuntu puts the control back into the hands of our partners and presents an exciting platform for consumers, delivering an experience which departs from the tired app icon grid of Android and iOS and provides a fluid, content-rich experience for all."

bq is actually the second biggest unlocked smartphone seller in Spain, with 2013 sales of around 1.5 million devices. Meanwhile Meizu is a fairly big presence in a number of territories, with 600 retail outlets and a presence in China, Hong Kong, Israel, Russia and Ukraine.

Neither company gives details of actual devices, but Canonical promises "mid- to high-end hardware" with "unprecedented customisation opportunities." As for apps Canonical currently has the support of The Weather Channel, GrooveShark and Evernote, and hopes to have at least 50 top apps on the platform by end 2014.

The company also talks of "strong support" from global carriers, 16 of which (including Vodafone, EE, T-Mobile USA, Three Group, Deutsche Telekom, Verizon, Telstra and Portugal Telecom) make part of the Ubuntu Carrier Advisory Group.

Expect more news on Canonical's mobile ambitions come Mobile World Congress 2014.

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