

Round Up: 4G Smartphones, Tablets

Andrew Berg

This year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas turned out to be the year of 4G. While no one seems to have a specific definition for "4G," the carriers, regardless of their wireless flavor of choice, are ready and willing to market around the term.

Verizon Wireless (LTE), AT&T (HSPA+, LTE), T-Mobile (HSPA+) and Sprint (WiMAX) all unveiled 4G devices at or prior to CES. With Mobile World Congress (MWC) ready to kick-off next week in Barcelona, Spain, and subsequently a new round of device announcements, it's time to assess what 4G smartphones and tablets are already available before adding to the list. Without further ado, here's a snapshot of where we're at thus far.

AT&T

AT&T is giving the 4G label to both its existing HSPA+ network, as well as its forthcoming LTE network. The carrier surprised at CES with not only the announcement that it was aggressively accelerating its LTE deployment but also launching an incredibly unique new 4G-capable smartphone, the Motorola Atrix. After losing its iPhone exclusivity, AT&T probably thought it could use a snappy new Android upon which to hang its hat. AT&T plans to deliver more than 20 4G devices in 2011, including two 4G smartphones in the first quarter.

Samsung Infuse 4: AT&T is calling the Infuse its thinnest smartphone at 9mm. The Infuse comes running Android 2.2 on a 1.2 GHz Hummingbird processor. The Infuse's touchscreen is a 4.5-inch Super AMOLED Plus monster. The phone also features an 8-megapixel camera, HD video capture and playback, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. The Infuse will be available sometime during the second quarter of 2011.

Motorola Atrix: The Atrix smartphone runs on Android 2.2 and comes packing a 1 GHz dual-core processor, 1 GB of RAM, high-res qHD display, 5-megapixel camera, HD Video capture and playback and Qik video chat. But perhaps the Atrix's most unique feature is its ability to dock with a laptop or PC. This device is slated for launch in the first quarter of 2011.

HTC Inspire 4G: A 1 GHz 2.2. Android smartphone with a 4.3-inch super LCD display, next-gen HTC Sense with cloud services, an 8-megapixel camera and HD video recorder. AT&T will start selling the HTC Inspire 4G on Feb. 13. HTC Inspire 4G will be \$99.99 in stores and online.

Tablets: AT&T said it will launch two LTE-capable tablets in the summer of 2011 but gave no specifics on those devices.

Verizon Wireless

Verizon masterfully followed up its LTE announcement at CES with the unveiling of a number of new smartphones and tablets that are compatible with said network. We'll know more about Verizon's launch timing on these devices once the carrier is done hyping the iPhone 4, which isn't LTE-capable.

HTC ThunderBolt 4G: A Verizon exclusive, the HTC Thunderbolt comes with a new version of HTC's Sense UI (2.0) and boasts a 1 GHz Snapdragon processor. The Thunderbolt features a 4.3-inch WVGA display, 8-megapixel camera and HD video recording, as well as DLNA capability.

LG Revolution: The big question here is whether the Revolution, or at least some close cousin to the Revolution, will offer 3D video capabilities. What is known is the Revolution runs Android 2.2, has a 4.3-inch touch screen, front and rear-facing cameras and mobile hot spot capability for up to 8 devices.

DROID Bionic 4G – The Droid Bionic is a dual-core 1 GHz beast and there are a lot of Verizon Android users who can't wait for the iPhone hubbub to be over so they can get their hands on this one. The Bionic features front and rear-facing cameras, 4.3-inch screen, HDMI connectivity, and 512 DDR2 RAM.

Samsung 4G LTE Smartphone – Probably a next-gen Galaxy S device, the Samsung 4G LTE smartphone runs Android 2.2 and features a 4.3-inch Super AMOLED Plus touch screen display. Additional specs include a 1 GHz application processor, HTML5 Web browser, rear-facing 8-megapixel camera with LED flash and front-facing 1.3-megapixel camera to support video chat capabilities, as well as Samsung Social Hub and Media Hub.

Verizon's 4G Tablets

Motorola XOOM: The Xoom is a 10.1-inch tablet that will be upgradable to LTE. Perhaps its biggest boon is that it comes running Android Honeycomb, Google's recently released version of the its mobile OS that is optimized to run on tablets. The Xoom features 1080p video out, support for Flash, front-facing 2-megapixel camera and 5-megapixel camera to capture video in 720P HD. Also offers mobile hot spot functionality for up to five devices.

4G LTE-enabled Samsung Galaxy Tab – This 7-inch Android tablet hasn't changed too much from its 3G predecessor. Verizon's LTE-capable Galaxy Tab features Android 2.2, a 1.2 GHz Cortex A8 Hummingbird processor, rear-facing 5-megapixel camera and front-facing 1.3-megapixel camera.

T-Mobile USA

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Who can blame T-Mobile for hanging 4G around the neck of its HSPA+ network? T-Mobile was the last of the carriers on this list to complete its 3G footprint and was fading fast just a couple years ago. Since then, T-Mobile has done a 180 on the back of Android, savvy advertising and modern infrastructure that made upgrading to HSPA+ a little easier than it was for AT&T. Judging by T-Mobile's tough talk at CES and promises of a robust line of devices over the next year, this a carrier that's in an interesting position to challenge the big guys.

myTouch 4G: Manufactured by HTC, the myTouch 4G is HSPA+ compatible and comes running Android 2.2. Additional specs include a 3.8-inch touchscreen, front and rear-facing camera, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, tethering and hot spot functionality. It's available now for \$99.99 with a two-year contract.

G2 4G: The G2 is the successor to the G1, which was the original Android phone that launched with T-Mobile. It goes for \$99.99 on contract and packs some pretty good specs when you consider it's also HSPA+ compatible. The G2 features Android 2.2, a 5-megapixel camera, Snapdragon processor from Qualcomm, 3.7-inch touchscreen, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and expandable memory up to 32 GB, with 4 GB internal memory.

The Galaxy S 4G: T-Mobile says the Galaxy S 4G is capable of theoretical speeds of 21 Mbps on the carrier's HSPA+ network and will be available sometime this month. The Galaxy S 4G features a 4-inch Super AMOLED touchscreen and comes running Android 2.2. Additional specs for the phone include a 1 GHz Cortex A8 Hummingbird processor, 5-megapixel camera, pre-installed 16GB microSD memory card, 1650 mAh lithium ion battery, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and 720p video capture.

Tablets

LG G-Slate: The G-Slate garnered considerable attention when it was unveiled at CES, but T-Mobile offered few details on the product then. Now we know at least some of the details. The G-Slate runs Android 3.0 (Honeycomb) and features a 8.9-inch HD 3D-capable multi-touch display. Users will be able to view and record 3D content with G-Slate. According to a press release, 3D will viewable on the G-Slate with the aid of glasses. Additional specs include a 5-megapixel camera with LED flash, Wi-Fi, 1080p HDMI out, NVIDIA TEgra 2 dual-core processor, support for Flash, gyroscope, accelerometer and 32 GB of internal memory.

Dell Streak 7: Available with a two-year contract for \$199 or \$449 with pay-as-you-go, the Dell Streak 7 is HSPA+ compatible. The Streak 7 features Android 2.2, a 7-inch multitouch display with full Adobe Flash support, 1.3-megapixel front-facing camera for video chat, 16 GB of internal storage, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and built-in GPS.

Sprint

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Sprint and Clearwire started the 4G game with WiMAX and now they've got some competition. Prior to CES, Sprint offered two WiMAX-capable devices. Now, it offers three. The carrier announced the HTC Evo Shift 4G, which is essentially the HTC Evo 4G with a slider keyboard. While Sprint's first-to-market strategy with WiMAX has done alright, the carrier better have something more than a rabbit up its sleeve when illusionist David Blaine and CEO Dan Hesse take the stage at a press event in New York City later today (Feb. 7).

HTC Evo Shift 4G: The new HTC EVO Shift 4G, the successor to the HTC Evo 4G, features a sliding qwerty keyboard and comes compatible with Sprint's WiMAX network. The Evo Shift comes running Android 2.2 and boasts a 5-megapixel camera, 720p HD camcorder, microSD memory expandable up to 32GB and a 3.6-inch capacitive touchscreen display with pinch-to-zoom capability.

HTC Evo 4G: The HTC Evo 4G costs \$199.99 with a two-year service agreement. The Evo 4G features Android 2.1, a 4.3-inch touchscreen, simultaneous voice and data capability in 4G or Wi-Fi coverage areas, 1 GHz Snapdragon processor, an 8-megapixel auto-focus camera with HD-capable video camcorder and a forward-facing 1.3-megapixel camera.

Samsung Epic 4G: The Samsung Epic 4G is available for \$249.99 with a two-year contract.

The Epic 4G boasts such high-end specs as 720p video capture, HDMI out, 1 GHz Hummingbird processor, 5-megapixel camera with LED flash, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and mobile hot spot functionality. The Epic will come running Android 2.1 but will be upgradable to 2.2.

Until Next Week...

This list will undoubtedly grow longer by next week as carriers and OEMs look to make a splash in Barcelona. What's already available in the way of smartphones and tablets for these next-generation networks is an achievement, as most analysts predicted a device portfolio of mainly straight data (e.g. USB sticks and Mi-Fi units) until the second half of 2011. Be sure to check back for updates on who adds what, as Wireless Week will be following all the action coming out of MWC next week.

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