Small Run of ZTE Firefox Devices Sells Out Quickly in US, UK

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ZTE reportedly sold through just under 2000 of its new Firefox OS handsets in a matter of days here in the U.S. and in the U.K.

According to a report **[1]** from ZDNET, ZTE had burned through its inventory by the end of the weekend, selling 990 smartphones in the U.K. and 985 units in the U.S. The units were sold exclusively online through eBay.

ZTE was offering the device, which is called the ZTE Open, for $80. This iteration came unlocked, as none of the carriers in the United States and United Kingdom have announced support for the devices.

Wally Swain, senior vice president of research for Yankee Group, said in notes that "technology nuts, competitors and collectors could account for a significant number of the sales."

Still, Swain says that without subsidy or operator support even these low numbers are a bit of a surprise, especially since the speed with which the phone sold out suggests the presence of pent up demand.

"We wondered how a $80 smartphone with an unknown operating system and a less well known (in the US) brand name would do," Sawin said. "If ZTE can repeat the trick with a larger supply of devices, then it will be a strong indicator that price has an important impact on consumer choice, even in so-called rich markets."

Swain says the the Firefox OS phones should do well in emerging markets where first-time smartphone buyers are expected to be highly price sensitive.

"Unfortunately, we need ZTE to put more phones on sale in the U.S., U.K. and Western Europe and we need some indication from lead operator customers such as Telefónica to give some indication how things are going in the launch markets."

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