LG Readies Updated WebOS Smart TV Platform to Meet Android TV Head-On

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LG said it has a new version of its WebOS software that it plans to bake in to all its smart TVs starting next year, according to the Wall Street Journal [1].

The Korean company's talk of smart TV software comes just as Google finished showing off its new Android TV platform. Google announced its big-screen version of Android will be on Sony and Sharp smart TVs by 2015.

As the smart TV market is set to grow, Sony's market share is dwindling. Strategy Analytics estimated [2] Sony's fourth quarter 2013 share to be around 17.6 percent, down from 20.9 percent in the same quarter of 2012. LG controls 13 percent of the market, climbing five percent in share over the same quarter the year prior. Meanwhile, Samsung (29.6 percent) and Vizio (24.4 percent) owned the two top spots during the quarter.

Scoring an Android Wear partnership could help reverse Sony's smart TV market share slide, or it could be that Google is putting part of its Android TV hopes on a lame horse in the smart TV race.

But with LG climbing in share and focused on its homegrown smart TV OS, there's a significant chunk of the market that Android TV won't infiltrate, at least for now.

LG bought WebOS from HP in February 2013 [3]. LG scored the source code, an HP team of engineers who work with WebOS and patents HP acquired when it bought the operating system from Palm.

LG said the new version of WebOS could find its way into other connected devices. The company has already shipped 1.1 million WebOS TVs. It plans to assign a different name to each new version of WebOS. The current version is called Afro.

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