# Samsung Galaxy S III sales pass 30 million

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Samsung said Monday it has sold more than 30 million flagship Galaxy S III smartphones in about five months, making it one of the fastest selling smartphones in the world.

Samsung Electronics Co., the world's biggest mobile phone maker, launched the smartphone at the end of May, months before competitors began shipping the latest versions of their top phones.

When Apple Inc. unveiled the iPhone 5 in September, Samsung launched an advertising campaign poking fun at the new iPhone.

The South Korean firm said the S III is selling at a much faster rate than its predecessor announced a year ago, the Galaxy S II. The S II took 14 months to hit 30 million sales. Sales of the Galaxy Note II, which fills a market niche between smartphones and tablets, surpassed 3 million in 37 days, Samsung said last week.

The runaway demand for high-end smartphones fueled record profits at Samsung in recent quarters while other consumer electronics firms were hit by the global economic downturn that dented demand for TVs and personal computers.

Samsung, which also makes TVs, home appliances, semiconductors and display panels, got almost 70 percent of its third-quarter operating profit from the division that makes mobile devices, cameras and computers.

Nomura Financial Investment in Seoul forecasts that Samsung will sell 67 million smartphones in the October-December quarter. That would be about 10 million units more than Samsung's smartphone sales in the previous quarter.

Samsung does not disclose its quarterly smartphone sales figures, but analysts and research firms say the company sold a record 56-58 million smartphones in July-September.

Nomura, which is more optimistic about Samsung's prospects than other forecasters, says Samsung's mobile communications business will post 5 percent growth in fourth quarter profit from the third quarter, thanks to the high-end phones — the S III and the Note II.

Research firm IDC ranks the South Korean firm as the world's top smartphone seller in the last three quarters. In the latest July-September period, Samsung sold 56.3 million smartphones versus Apple's 26.9 million, IDC said.

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