



Inside This Issue:

This Week's Stories

Apple App Store Developers Raked In \$20 Billion In 2016, Up 40% Year Over Year

With \$91 Billion In Online Sales, Retailers Had A Record-Setting Holiday

Products & Services

Google Calendar Goals Update Helps You Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

Amazon Fire TV With Alexa Is Getting Built Into TVs, No Box Or Stick Required

Emerging Technology

The Best PCs, Gadgets, And Wearables Of CES 2017

Windows 10 Creators Update Expected To Arrive In April

Mergers & Acquisitions

Intel Acquires Cloud Storage Startup Bitcasa

Verizon Executive Says Company Unsure About Yahoo Deal

Industry Reports

How Samsung Weathered The Galaxy Note 7 Recall

T-Mobile Is Slashing Unlimited Plan Pricing By Ending Surcharges

This Week's Stories

Apple App Store Developers Raked In \$20 Billion In 2016, Up 40% Year Over Year

January 6, 2017

Apple app developers earned \$20B in 2016 Apple app developers earned \$20B in 2016

Apple reported Thursday that developers raked in \$20 billion on its App Store in 2016, a 40 percent jump since 2015.

That suggests Apple reaped at least \$8 billion in revenue from its App Store, an analyst said.

"2016 was an amazingly great year for the App Store," Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide marketing, told CNBC. "We continue to advance what is available for developers to create. And our catalog of apps grew 20 percent to 2.2 million."

Schiller said the biggest drivers for the App Store included games such as "Pokémon Go," which was the most downloaded app in 2016; "Super Mario," which was the most downloaded app on Christmas and New Year's days; and subscription-based apps, such as Netflix, Hulu and Time Warner's HBO Go.

The tech giant said its biggest day of sales on the App Store was on Jan. 1, 2017, when customers spent a record \$240 million. The top grossing markets included the U.S, U.K., Japan and China, which saw 90 percent year-over-year growth.

Investors pay close attention to the performance of the App Store, as Apple now emphasizes its role as a services company. The broad smartphone market is maturing, and the tech giant is highlighting recurring revenue streams that do not depend on new device sales.

Some research suggests that the best days of growth in the apps market may have come and gone. Schiller disputed that, pointing to his store's recent performance.

"I will let the success of the App Store speak for itself," he said. "The App Store is bigger than ever and growing faster than ever. There is a lot of success ahead for developers."

Based on Apple's traditional cut of 30 cents for every dollar that moves through the store, the revenue generated by the app sales totaled about \$8 billion to \$9 billion for Apple last year, according to Jan Dawson, chief analyst at Jackdaw Research.

Digital stores represent big battlegrounds between Apple and rival Google.

According to App Annie, which provides market data for the app economy, Google Play's worldwide downloads were 115 percent higher than Apple's App Store downloads in the third quarter, which is the latest data available.

However, Apple maintained its advantage in revenue. In the third quarter, App Store revenue was 100 percent higher than Google Play's.

cnbc.com

With \$91 Billion In Online Sales, Retailers Had A Record-Setting Holiday

January 5, 2017

Brave the pre-holiday mall crush or kick back on the couch and order your gifts online?

Americans are increasingly selecting the latter option. Between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, online sales hit \$91.7 billion, up 11% from \$82.5 billion a year ago, according to a report by Adobe Insights.

The 2016 holiday season also broke a major ecommerce record: Cyber Monday became the biggest online shopping day in U.S. history, generating \$3.45 billion in online sales, up 12% from 2015. Black Friday wasn't far behind, with sales jumping nearly 22% year-over-year to \$3.34 billion.

To compile the report, Adobe collected aggregated and anonymous data from 24.6 billion visits to retail websites. This includes 80% of all online transactions from the top 100 U.S. retailers.

The data highlights a sustained and seismic shift in how Americans shop. It's not just that consumers are migrating online -- they're also more comfortable using a variety of devices to browse, compare prices, and place their orders.

"Retailers saw more people visiting their websites but not purchasing on the days leading up to events like Black Friday," says Becky Tasker, a managing analyst on Adobe Digital Insights, which indicates shoppers were using their smartphones as a "planning tool," scanning for deals before the event and then making the purchase, either via mobile, desktop, or in-person, the day of the sale.

Mobile and tablets accounted for 50% of web visits during the 2016 holiday season, driving 31% of purchases and generating \$28.43 billion in revenue (up 23% from last year).

These figures serve as a reminder on the importance of building an "integrated strategy" for your business, says Tasker. The easier you make it for consumers to browse, plan, and purchase items across a variety of devices, the more you stand to gain from the national shift to online shopping.

fortune.com

Products & Services

Google Calendar Goals Update Helps You Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

January 5, 2017

When Google Calendar introduced Goals last year, people were excited to use the feature. After all, using Google's prodigious AI to help you figure out when, exactly, you could fit in a run, or learn a new skill, or call your parents is something that a lot of people desperately need. Goals helped bridge the gap between what we wanted to do and what we thought we could do; but could never seem to find the time for.

And while I personally love the feature, the one thing that really bugged me was that I couldn't see how I was progressing towards a goal. Well that, and the fact that I still had to go into my Calendar and mark things as done; but that's more my laziness than anything else (maybe I should make a Goal to check off Goals).

"Mobile and tablets accounted for 50% of web visits during the 2016 holiday season, driving 31% of purchases and generating \$28.43 billion in revenue (up 23% from last year)."

Today, Google has announced an update to Calendar Goals that addresses both issues. Goals now works with Google Fit and Apple Health to automatically check off goals when you complete fitness activities. Did you make a Goal to run more in the New Year (I'm on Day 5 of a "run every day" streak)? Go and hit the road. When Apple Health or Google Fit logs the run (via whatever device you have hooked up to your phone), it will update the appropriate Goal as complete. Even better - say you've set up a goal to run every day at 5 PM; but don't actually get your shoes on till 6, Goals will make note of when your fitness tracker says you complete the goal and tailor its algorithm to suggest better times in the future when you're more likely to complete your task.

Google Calendar will automatically prompt you when you create a new fitness goal, asking if you'd like to connect to Google Fit or Apple Health. For existing goals, open a scheduled task from your calendar and click the Edit icon. The option to connect the goal to Google Fit or Apple Health will be at the bottom of the task.

The update will also bring a tracker to Goals so that you can see how well you're progressing towards completing them. Select a goal on your calendar, completed or uncompleted, and there will be a row of circular trackers at the bottom showing you how well you are doing this week and how you did in previous weeks.

While we might not yet be at the level of Iron Man's "Girl Friday" AI, a future where our digital assistants keep us on track and help us make time for the things that are most important, completely without our input, isn't far off. Now we just need a cool holographic interface and 2017 could finally catapult us into that shining science fiction future that we all imagined the 2000s would be.

forbes.com

Amazon Fire TV With Alexa Is Getting Built Into TVs, No Box Or Stick Required

January 3, 2017

Watch out Roku TV: Amazon's Fire TV system will soon operate inside TVs from Element, Seiki and Westinghouse, complete with thousands of streaming apps and an included Alexa voice remote.

Smart TVs have been around for years, but many people still stream their Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and other videos using an external device like a Roku, Apple TV or Amazon Fire TV. Those devices offer more apps, more frequent updates and a better streaming experience than many built-in smart TV systems.

In the last couple of years, platforms like Roku and Google's Android TV have been built directly into some televisions, so you don't need to connect an external streamer at all. Now Amazon is doing the same thing with its Fire TV platform.

Coming later this year are 4K TVs from Westinghouse, Seiki and Element with Amazon Fire TV built-in, the television makers announced today at CES 2017. They'll provide access to the thousands of apps, games and Alexa skills found on external Fire TV gadgets like the Fire TV Stick. And just like those devices, the TVs will include a remote with a microphone that can be used to access the Alexa voice assistant, including content search and control of smart home devices.

Similar to the Roku TVs from TCL and other makers we like so much, these "Amazon Fire TV Edition" sets promise improved ease of use, too. There's no need to switch inputs to watch Netflix, for example, and both streaming as well as standard TV watching can be accessed from a single remote.

.....
"[The TV's will] provide access to the thousands of apps, games and Alexa skills found on external Fire TV gadgets like the Fire TV Stick."

Here are their specifications:

- Available in 43-inch, 50-inch, 55-inch and 65-inch sizes
- 4K resolution
- Alexa voice remote included
- 3GB memory, 16GB internal storage
- Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and Ethernet connectivity

For more on the Fire TV system's capabilities, check out our review of the Amazon Fire TV stick with Alexa Voice Remote.

The TVs will go on sale later this year at Amazon.com and major retailers. Pricing was not announced.

[cnet.com](#)

Emerging Technology

The Best PCs, Gadgets, And Wearables Of CES 2017

January 6, 2017

"Most of the big names in computing, gaming, fitness tech, smart home, and more show off some of their newest products that will come out later in the year."

The annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas tries to get consumers (and the media) excited for the new year with a treasure trove of new devices. Most of the big names in computing, gaming, fitness tech, smart home, and more show off some of their newest products that will come out later in the year. And until they hit shelves (if they hit the shelves), CES is the only way to get a glimpse of them.

While the show's vastness results in a lot of seemingly useless hardware and even some vaporware—Ars UK has intel on the smart hairbrush, LG wants to make sure no one ever has to open a fridge manually again—there are always a few products that stick out and manage to get us genuinely excited for the year ahead.

You can find all our coverage from the ground here if you want to wade through both the crazy and cool, but these are our picks for the best technology coming out of CES 2017.

Best laptop or convertible: Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Yoga

Traditionally when buying a laptop, one has to compromise. You'll find a system that has almost everything you want, but there's always something missing. We wrote about some of the basic features that we're going to insist on for laptops in 2017, and one machine shown at CES stood out as doing all the things we want. With Thunderbolt 3, NVMe storage, Precision Touchpads, biometric authentication, touch screens, and so much more, we're ready to lay hands on the Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Yoga.

The Yoga nails the basics. It also includes the 360-degree hinge that's invaluable on a plane or in a kitchen, a stylus that docks within the unit for safekeeping, built-in LTE connectivity, 802.11ad/WiGig, and (unusual these days) wired gigabit Ethernet. That's a compelling start, but it's the range of options that takes the Yoga to the next level: you can add an OLED screen, Iris Plus graphics, both a fingerprint reader and an IR camera supporting facial recognition, and NFC. The result is a machine that sets a new standard for connectivity and capabilities, showcasing some of the latest technology—and doing so without compromises.

Best desktop or all-in-one: Intel Kaby Lake NUCs

We've seen some interesting-looking all-in-one desktops at the show this year, including Dell's XPS 27 and HP's Pavilion Edge All-in-One with Micro-Edge Display. But in terms of sheer versatility and appeal, we've got to give the moniker of best to Intel's new NUC mini desktops.

We've been fans of these PCs for years. Like the older NUCs, the new ones put decent Ultrabook-level performance suitable for productivity tasks and light gaming into a little box that will fit just about anywhere. The new models get an attractive makeover, the latest Kaby Lake CPUs and GPUs, HDMI 2.0 and HDMI-CEC support that will be sure to interest home theater enthusiasts, and a Thunderbolt 3 port that will allow for fast external storage, external GPUs, and all kinds of other possibilities.

Best PC peripheral: Asus ROG Swift PG27UQ 27-inch gaming monitor

Simply being first to something in the tech world isn't necessarily a guarantee for quality or excellence. But when someone can lay claim to launching the consumer market's first monitor to combine 4K resolution, 144Hz refresh, HDR-10 compatibility, and Nvidia G-Sync support, they're bound to get our attention.

Just finding three of those four in a PC monitor is tough these days. (The best we've seen, up until now, is Dell's UP3017Q, which makes its 4K resolution at a 120Hz refresh without G-Sync.) Adding the wider color gamut and luminance differential of HDR to that package is a nice, brightly rendered cherry on top. You'll need quite the powerful computer to render such crisp, colorful, and smooth content, of course, but if you're already spending so much on a gaming powerhouse, what's another pricey monitor to you?

Best gaming hardware: HTC Vive's TPCast

While the HTC Vive's room-scale VR experience is unquestionably amazing, it's also unquestionably annoying to deal with a thick, three-piece wire that tethers you to a nearby PC tower, tugging on the back of the headset and creating a tripping hazard while you walk around. That's why we're excited about the TPCast, which promises to make the Vive a truly wireless experience by streaming video and audio to the headset from a PC over the air (though there is still a wire running to a pocketable battery pack).

There have been other untethered VR experiences, of course, but so far they tend to rely on underpowered mobile technology and have trouble with full head-tracking through space. TPCast promises the best of both worlds—high-end VR graphics and tracking without the annoying tether. If you can afford the \$250 cost and can tolerate the reported two-hour battery life, this could greatly increase the quality of your virtual life.

Best wearable: Notch 3D motion sensors

Even the best fitness tracker available now can't map your entire body. Notch offers a solution to this problem with its six-pack of 3D motion sensors that can map even the smallest movement you make. Each triangular sensor snaps into elastic bands that are worn on different parts of the body including biceps, thighs, chest, and more. Once equipped, each sensor utilizes accelerometers, gyroscopes, and compasses to track and map your movement to a smartphone app.

Notch's \$379 sensor pack comes with the SDK and native Notch app, so developers can take it apart and make their own apps and services using the sensors. The company already works with a few professional sports outlets and healthcare providers, and it hopes to work with even gaming and VR companies in the future. Fitness and sports companies could easily use Notch to track total body movement and use that during training, and healthcare professionals including physical therapists could use Notch to help patients who need to improve range of motion. Anyone can buy a set of

Notch sensors and play around with them, but it'll be exciting to see how big companies and startups alike use Notch to expand what we know of how to use wearable technology.

Best fitness gadget: Misfit Vapor

Vapor represents the biggest leap forward for Misfit since its conception, and it's a big leap. The company that started out with a simple disk fitness tracker now has a full line of minimalist wearables, and the Vapor is its most comprehensive yet. It's the first Misfit device to feature a full-color AMOLED display and touch bezel, an onboard heart rate monitor and GPS tracker, storage for music, and the company's own makeshift wearable OS. Instead of slowly releasing a number of products peppered with all these features, Misfit went the direct route and stuffed all of it into the \$199 Vapor while keeping its design in tune with the rest of the Misfit family.

The Vapor's numerous hardware features tick nearly every box you'd want an all-purpose fitness wearable to have, but what will be the most interesting to test will be the onboard software. In the short time we had with it already, it looks like a promising system that provides just enough functionality to make the Vapor a useful smart accessory in addition to a comprehensive fitness tracker.

Best smart home or IoT device: Sevenhugs Smart Remote

If you have even a handful of smart home devices in your home, your smartphone could get bogged down by the individual companion apps needed to control each of them. Sevenhugs' Smart Remote tries to fix this by letting you control any smart home device you have from its touchscreen. It uses motion sensors placed in the room along with a built-in accelerometer, gyroscope, and compass to detect where you're pointing the remote and which smart devices are in that line of fire. If two devices are close together, say a smart light bulb and a smart television, the Smart Remote's display will give you the option to choose which one you want to command.

Logitech's Harmony Remote is the only other universal smart remote to be as truly universal as Sevenhugs' device. But we like the convenience of Sevenhugs' remote since you don't have to choose which device you want to control first—simply point the remote in one direction and wait for its display to do the hard work.

Biggest surprise: Razer's Project Valerie concept laptop

We don't know if this thing is ever actually going to be released, but a 17-inch gaming laptop with three 4K display panels built into it is pretty surprising. Someone seems genuinely ready to take a different approach to mobile computing. With Project Valerie, additional display panels slide out to the left and right of the main screen and then are held in place by hinges that tilt both screens ever so slightly in your direction.

Its GeForce GTX 1080 GPU wouldn't be able to drive all three of those 4K screens at native resolution, and Razer only sometimes actually brings these concept designs to market. But concept designs often at least inform the development of actual shipping projects, so in any case we're excited to see what Project Valerie eventually turns into.

arstechnica.com

Windows 10 Creators Update Expected To Arrive In April

January 2, 2017

Microsoft is tentatively planning to release its next major Windows 10 update in April. MSPoweruser reports that the software giant is planning to finalize the feature set of the Creators Update by the

end of the month, before starting to crush bugs and ready the update for general availability. Microsoft had originally planned to release the Creators Update in March, but an April timing is still close to the company's target.

Windows 10 Creators Update will include a number of new features, but the biggest will be the introduction of the Windows Holographic user interface for Windows 10 VR headsets. HP, Dell, Lenovo, Asus, and Acer are all planning to release VR headsets that work with Windows 10, with some priced as low as \$299. The Creators Update will also include a 3D version of Microsoft Paint, Action Center changes, and a new people bar in the taskbar. Microsoft is also planning to add a blue light reduction feature like F.lux, and a recently leaked Windows 10 build shows that the company will start testing this publicly very shortly.

theverge.com

Mergers and Acquisitions

Intel Acquires Cloud Storage Startup Bitcasa

January 5, 2017

Cloud storage startup Bitcasa today posted a "goodbye" message on its homepage without saying exactly what's happening to it. In fact, Bitcasa has been acquired by Intel, VentureBeat has learned.

The acquisition is closed, according to a source familiar with the matter. Terms of the deal weren't immediately known.

"Bitcasa and its platform have become a part of something much, much bigger," Bitcasa chief executive Brian Taptich wrote in the message on its website.

After this article was published, an Intel spokesperson told VentureBeat in an email that "Intel did not acquire Bitcasa."

Bitcasa was founded in 2011 by former MasterCard and Mozy employees and was based most recently in San Mateo, California. Over the years, as it dealt with competition from bigger companies like Box, Dropbox, Google, and Microsoft, it stopped emphasizing "infinite" cloud storage for consumers and focused more on winning business from companies and individual developers, by offering white-label cloud storage services and application programming interfaces (APIs). The startup killed its Drive cloud storage service last year; its desktop and mobile apps are no longer available.

It's not clear what the chipmaker will do with Bitcasa's team and technology. Previously Bitcasa provided backend storage services for Intel developers, according to Bitcasa's website. Bitcasa engineers have started working in Intel's New Technology Group (including the New Devices Group), which works on future initiatives, the source said. "We remain optimistic that, before long (and though you may not realize it), Bitcasa's technology will yet contribute significantly to fulfilling this mission," Taptich wrote.

Bitcasa has raised at least \$20 million in funding. It last announced funding in 2013. Investors include Andreessen Horowitz, CrunchFund, First Round Capital, Horizons Ventures, Pelion Venture Partners, and Samsung Ventures. In 2015 storage giant SanDisk announced a deal with the startup. Other partners included Amazon Web Services (which provided storage for Bitcasa), Huawei, Samsung, and Tata.

venturebeat.com

Verizon Executive Says Company Unsure About Yahoo Deal

January 5, 2017

A senior Verizon Communications Inc. executive said on Thursday that the company was unsure about its planned acquisition of Yahoo Inc.'s Internet business.

Yahoo came under renewed scrutiny by federal investigators and lawmakers last month after disclosing the largest known data breach in history, prompting Verizon to demand better terms for its planned purchase.

"I can't sit here today and say with confidence one way or another because we still don't know," Marni Walden, president of product innovation and new businesses at Verizon, said at the Citi 2017 Internet, Media & Telecommunications Conference in Las Vegas.

Walden added that the merits of the deal still made sense and that there were certain aspects of the investigation that had yet to be completed.

She did not provide a time-frame for the completion of the deal.

"We think it will take weeks at least, we don't have a desire to have it drag on forever, that's not our intent," Walden said.

However, AOL Chief Executive Tim Armstrong told CNBC that he expected the Verizon-Yahoo deal would likely go through. AOL was acquired by Verizon in 2015 for \$4.4 billion.

Yahoo's shares were up 3.09 percent at \$41.30, while Verizon's shares were relatively unchanged in late afternoon trading.

reuters.com

Industry Reports

How Samsung Weathered The Galaxy Note 7 Recall

January 6, 2017

A strong earnings forecast from Samsung Electronics Co. on Friday offered a fresh reminder of the company's central place in the global technology supply chain.

Even with the recall of its premium Galaxy Note 7 smartphone in early October last year that cost it at least \$5 billion, Samsung projected profits for the last three months of 2016 that would be the highest in more than three years.

The boost in profits didn't come from its own lineup of premium smartphones, but rather from competitors like Apple Inc., Dell Inc., HP Inc. and Sony Corp., whose smartphones, laptops and televisions rely on components manufactured by the South Korean technology giant.

Samsung's ability to shake off the recall of 2.5 million Note 7 smartphones last year shows how even when the South Korean conglomerate loses, it can still win. Samsung's Friday forecast of 9.2 trillion Korean won (US\$7.76 billion) in fourth-quarter operating profit also illustrates a shift in where tech industry profits originate.

As recently as 2014, Samsung's mobile phones were the cash cow. But with consumers no longer snapping up new phones every year, the world's biggest maker of memory chips and smartphones by

"The boost in profits didn't come from its own lineup of premium smartphones, but rather from competitors like Apple Inc., Dell Inc., HP Inc. and Sony Corp., whose smartphones, laptops and televisions rely on components manufactured by the South Korean technology giant."

shipments is finding that there is plenty of profit to be made in the parts of devices not visible to most consumers.

Global smartphone shipments have slowed sharply, falling to an annual growth rate of less than 1% last year, according to a recent estimate by research firm IDC, from 10.4% in 2015 and 47% as recently as 2012.

Even as smartphones were selling strong, Suwon, South Korea-based Samsung continued to pour tens of billions of dollars into investments in semiconductors and display panels to make phones run faster, hold more storage and offer crisper images. Recent advancements have made Samsung's components more powerful than those of its competitors, making Samsung an essential parts supplier for many of its rivals.

This friend-and-foe dynamic means Samsung can profit, for instance, even when a consumer ditches a Galaxy phone for a competitor's product.

"If Apple does well, Samsung benefits from that," said Sanjeev Rana, a senior analyst at CLSA, a brokerage, in Seoul.

The smartphone slowdown, however, has left some firms vulnerable. For instance, LG Electronics Inc. said Friday that it expects to report its largest quarterly loss in seven years since the company shifted its accounting standard during the last three months of 2016. Analysts say the huge hit was most likely driven by its mobile division, which is projected to have bigger losses than its record loss in the previous quarter. On Friday, LG estimated that it would lose 35.3 billion Korean won in the fourth quarter of 2016.

Samsung's recall of overheating Galaxy Note 7 phones last year attracted global scrutiny and has hurt its brand image. But Mr. Rana of CLSA said the Note 7 likely wouldn't have sold more than 15 million units globally—a fraction of the more than 300 million handsets that Samsung sells every year. In fact, Samsung's latest flagship phone, the Galaxy S7, showed surprising resilience in the Note 7's absence, enjoying brisk sales during the fourth quarter, nearly a year after it was first released.

The loss of the Note 7 did dent profits. While the fourth-quarter projections were "quite a surprising number" to the upside, said CW Chung, a Seoul-based analyst at Nomura, success with the Galaxy Note 7 would have further boosted Samsung's quarter, he said.

In line with its transition from a smartphone-driven company to a dominant player in electronic components, Samsung has also been intensifying its efforts to expand its capacity as a chip and display-panel manufacturer.

Last November, Samsung announced that it would invest more than \$1 billion in its Austin, Texas, semiconductor factory to beef up its production of processor chips for smartphones and other devices.

Samsung is also investing close to \$10 billion to expand its production of organic light-emitting diode, or OLED, displays that are thinner than traditional liquid-crystal displays.

Despite the company's woes with the Galaxy Note 7, investors pushed Samsung shares this week to record highs. On Friday, the company's shares finished 1.8% higher, giving it a market capitalization of more than \$240 billion—about one-third of Apple's market value.

wsj.com

T-Mobile Is Slashing Unlimited Plan Pricing By Ending Surcharges

January 5, 2017

"Marking his 13th Uncarrier promotion on Thursday at CES in Las Vegas, T-Mobile CEO John Léger also promised that for customers who sign up for the current unlimited plan, the company will never raise the price."

T-Mobile announced its latest "Uncarrier" promotion on Thursday at CES, slashing the prices of its wireless unlimited plan by eliminating surcharges and taxes as additional fees.

Consumers who sign up for the plan, which starts at \$70 for one line rising to \$160 for four lines, will only pay that top line price. T-Mobile will stop adding on the various mysterious surcharges for which the wireless industry is known. Actual government taxes will be included in the top line price, instead of being tacked on and raising the total cost to consumers.

T-Mobile estimates that consumers pay \$17 billion a year in taxes and fees above the advertised prices for wireless service across all carriers. Some are industry-imposed fees that carry labels to make them sound like required taxes, such as the "Federal Universal Service Charge."

The carrier also said it would be ending the availability of its lower-priced limited data plans for new customers starting this month as the company promised when the unlimited plan was introduced in August. Customers who want to pay less than \$70 a month could be offered a prepaid plan from T-Mobile's MetroPCS subsidiary.

Competitor Sprint also offers an inexpensive unlimited plan, while AT&T offers unlimited plans only to customers of its DirecTV service. Verizon has no similar offering. Both the Sprint and T-Mobile unlimited plans reduce the quality of streaming video and can slow download speeds if a customer uses a large amount of data in one month.

Marking his 13th Uncarrier promotion on Thursday at CES in Las Vegas, T-Mobile CEO John Léger also promised that for customers who sign up for the current unlimited plan, the company will never raise the price.

Since Léger kicked off the first Uncarrier deal and did away with two-year contracts back in 2013, T-Mobile has soared. The carrier has added more new phone customers than the rest of the industry combined while its stock price has nearly quadrupled.

Some of the more recent Uncarrier deals have been more limited or more complicated, like the introduction of the cheaper unlimited plans last August. But the latest deal is more straightforward, cutting the price of service by about 5% to 10% by doing away with the fees and including taxes within the top line price. T-Mobile also said it would start refunding \$10 per month for any unlimited plan line that used less than 2 gigabytes of data in a month.

fortune.com



120 Madison Street, 15th Floor
Syracuse, New York 13202
www.ksrinc.com
(315) 470-1350
1-888-8KSRI NC