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Apple still dominates growing global smartwatch sector

The company now controls 55% of the worldwide smartwatch market.



Steven Musil

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It seems Apple has the world's wrists in the palm of its hand.
Sarah Tew/CNET

The global smartwatch market continues to grow, and Apple continues to dominate it. The company shipped 7.6 million Apple Watches in the first quarter, to give it a 55% market share, a slight increase over the year-ago period, according to data released Wednesday by market analyst Strategy Analytics

Summary

Overall, manufacturers shipped 14 million smartwatches during the quarter, an increase of 20% year-over-year. Shipments increased during the quarter despite the coronavirus -- and may've even benefited slightly from pandemic.

"Despite considerable headwinds from the COVID-19 scare, global demand for smartwatches continued to grow," Neil Mawston, executive director at Strategy Analytics, said in a statement. "Smartwatches are selling well through online retail channels, while many consumers have been using smartwatches to monitor their health and fitness during virus lockdown."

Apple grew its market share to its highest level in two years, Mawston said, adding that "Apple Watch owns half the worldwide smartwatch market and remains the clear industry leader."

Some of Apple's growth appears to be at the expense of Samsung, the world's second-biggest smartwatch maker, which shipped 1.9 million units but saw its market share in the quarter shrink from 14.9% to 13.9%. No. 3 Garmin expanded its market share, which grew from 7% to 8% on 1.1 million units shipped.

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Smartwatch shipments are expected to slow sharply in the second quarter because of the outbreak but rebound in the second half of the year, Strategy Analytics said.

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