

# Samsung buys AI firm founded by Siri creators

SEOUL: Samsung said on Thursday it was buying a prominent US artificial intelligence (AI) start-up founded by the creators of Siri - the voice-based digital assistant used on the iPhones of arch-rival Apple.



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The South Korean giant said the acquisition of California-based Viv Labs would bolster voice-based services across the full range of its electronics products that include smartphones, TVs, refrigerators and washing machines. Samsung offered no details regarding the cost or financing of the deal.

Viv Labs was co-founded in 2012 by Dag Kittlaus, Adam Cheyer and Chris Brigham who had previously created, and then sold, Siri to Apple.

Rhee In-Jong, the chief technology officer at Samsung's mobile unit, said the acquisition would provide AI-based voice assistance services its customers can use across all Samsung devices and products.

"A lot of your phone's fun functionalities will be covered by voice and conversation," he said.

Viv Labs' founding team will work closely with Samsung's mobile unit, but continue to function independently "under its existing leadership", Samsung said in a statement.

Samsung - the world's biggest maker of smartphones - has been trying for years to bolster voice-based services for its handsets to compete against iPhone's Siri. The 'S Voice' software installed on its flagship handsets has never been warmly embraced by consumers.

Kittlaus said the scale of investment Samsung could bring to their research was "the fastest way to take this new world and bring it as quickly as we can to the floor."

*Source: AFP*

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