

Consumer-electronics maker's Connect SDK initially supports LG TVs, Roku, Chromecast and Amazon Fire TV



LG Electronics is releasing a free, open-source software development kit for Google Android and Apple iOS developers to let apps easily connect with – eventually – any Internet-connected TV or device on the market.

The Connect SDK, which LG execs tout as a “Rosetta Stone” for linking mobile apps to smart TVs and other devices, provides a common set of interfaces for a unified way for apps to connect to television screens. It’s akin to Apple’s AirPlay technology, but that’s confined to the **Apple TV** and iOS universe; LG’s promise is to connect any mobile app to any TV platform.

The initial release of Connect SDK supports 2014 LG webOS Smart TVs, LG Smart TVs from 2012 and 2013, **Roku**, Google Chromecast and Amazon Fire TV devices. Additional devices, including Apple TV boxes and Samsung Smart TVs, are in the plans.

LG's ulterior motive in releasing the Connect SDK is to get developers to hook their apps into its new webOS-based televisions. The company acquired webOS in 2013 from HP for undisclosed terms. That was after HP launched — **and then quickly killed** — a line of tablets and smartphones based on webOS, which it picked up after buying Palm for \$1.2 billion.

“You get great scale on iOS and Android, but the ability to get content to the big screen is a little wonky today,” Henry Levak, LG's product manager for Connect SDK. “We're starting to see users expecting their smartphones and tablets to work with smart TVs.”

The tool set includes application programming interfaces to send photos, videos and audio to TV platforms. Currently, applications with YouTube videos can beam them to all LG Smart TVs dating back to 2012, Roku 3, Google Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV, and most DIAL-enabled devices.

In addition, the Connect SDK lets developers build TV-optimized web applications and media viewers and use them across LG webOS Smart TVs and Google Chromecast, according to the consumer-electronics maker. The code also lets mobile apps discover and launch TV apps (initially for 2014 LG webOS Smart TVs and 2013 LG Smart TVs, as well as Roku devices).

“Connect SDK is breaking down barriers to enable apps and devices to work together harmoniously,” said Sam Chang, head of the LG Silicon Valley Lab. “The screen size, capabilities and social nature of smart TVs enable experiences that consumers will absolutely love.”

More info on Connect SDK, available for iOS, Android and Cordova/PhoneGap plugins, is at ConnectSDK.com. LG is making the code available under Apache License 2.0.