

Oppo's foldable smartphone is another futuristic wraparound display device

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- Oppo's foldable prototype. Here's the front.
- Here it is open.
- And this is the back. It's the same form factor as the Huawei Mate X.
- Here's the phone halfway open. Let's zoom in on that hinge...
- Wow, this looks like a bike chain topped with a double-pivot hinge. How on Earth does this work?
- The bike chain peeks out from behind the display.

Mobile World Congress is happening this week, and so far it has definitely been the foldable smartphone show. Samsung and Huawei have so far wowed the world with their folding smartphone demos, offering a tantalizing future in which a smartphone can open up into a tablet. Next up in the foldable smartphone wars is Oppo, with the company's vice president, Brian Shen, showing off this unnamed prototype foldable on Weibo, a Chinese social media site.

Oppo's foldable looks a lot like the Huawei Mate X, with a wraparound exterior display and a vertical bar for cameras, buttons, and ports. It might be a bit of a shock just *how*

similar both devices look, but they are no closer than any two of the thousands of anonymous slab phones that are out there. Both devices look impressive, but Huawei has pushed its display further out to the edges of the device, resulting in thinner bezels and a more modern look. The two companies have also taken a different approach to the critical hinge design on their respective foldables. Huawei is using a “stretchable” hinge that gets longer when it opens, which should help make the screen tighter and flatter when opened. Meanwhile, Oppo’s hinge looks like a bike chain topped with a double pivot hinge system. We don’t actually know how Oppo’s hinge works or if it closes totally flat, but it certainly looks complicated. Every foldable smartphone vendor is at a different stage of development and/or unveiling. Samsung demoed the Galaxy Fold on stage, but the company isn’t letting anyone touch the device at Mobile World Congress. There are some early prototypes on display in glass boxes at MWC, but Android Police reports that some of these devices feature dimples and creases in the display, so there are still some bugs to work out. Samsung is the only company with a firm release date, though: April 26th.

Huawei’s foldable, the Mate X, is expected to come out in the middle of the year, but it doesn’t have a set release date yet. The company has taken the important step of actually letting select journalists use the Mate X themselves, and sites like The Verge and CNET came away impressed. Oppo is definitely behind the competition—this device is just a prototype and was only shown off in pictures on social media. There’s no name for the device, and for now the company is only considering mass producing it.

Oppo is no stranger to crazy and innovative smartphone designs, having previously produced devices like the Oppo Find X, which has a motorized, pop-up camera. Oppo is also closely related to OnePlus. The two companies are subsidiaries of BBK, and they frequently share manufacturing resources and produce

near-identical-looking devices. With the Galaxy Fold being priced at \$1,980 and the Huawei Mate X clocking in at \$2,600, things are looking expensive. Hopefully the more competition we get in the foldable space, the quicker prices will go down.

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