Written by Marco Attard
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As reports speculated over the last week, Nokia and Microsoft announce what they're calling a "broad strategic partnership" taking on Google and Apple in the smartphone war.



The partnership involves Nokia putting Symbian development aside in favour of using Windows Phone 7-- concentrating on hardware design instead.

Both companies will share technology-- Nokia phones will adopt Bing and adCenter, Nokia Maps will become part of Microsoft's mapping services, while Nokia's Ovi app store will integrate with Microsoft marketplace (with Microsoft providing developer tools to app makers). This is what the 2 companies are calling "the 3rd ecosystem".

Meanwhile, Nokia will try to retain and transition its Symbian user base, while Meego will go open-source.

In a market where both companies are underdogs, Business Insider predicts the Nokia-Microsoft alliance could take up to 34% market share-- if both work fast. Either way, the smartphone wars just got more interesting.

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