

Messaging still top earner

MESSAGING WILL still be the top money-earner and non-voice use for mobiles in 2011, analyst house JupiterResearch predicts.

Mobile content and services usage is predicted to pick up over the next five years, with revenues across Europe rising from EUR 2 billion in 2006 to EUR 9 billion in 2011. But messaging will remain the dominant source of non-voice revenue. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of premium mobile services revenues will come from messaging in 2011, with MMS, e-mail and instant messaging more than offsetting the decline in SMS text messages.

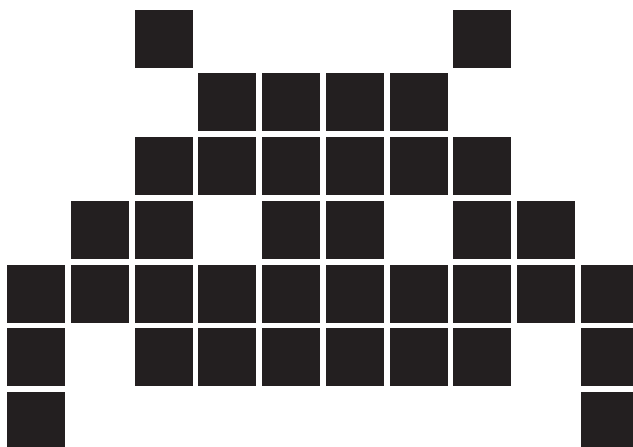
Handset "infotainment" – such as news and sports clips – will outperform older forms of mobile personalization, including ringtones, earning three times as much revenue, JupiterResearch predicts. •



GSM moves to another level

ENHANCED DATA RATE for GSM Evolution (EDGE) technology is on its way to reaching another performance level. "Evolved" EDGE offers an alternative to 3G technologies in places where mobile broadband service is not currently available. US technology research firm ABI Research projects that "Evolved" EDGE will generate USD 25 billion in network upgrades and mobile devices between 2008 and 2011.

The growing interest in "Evolved" is being driven by the technology's GSM/EDGE heritage, as well as by its promise of improved coverage and data rates on a handset that offers the power efficiency of a conventional GSM product. Using the same spectrum as GSM and EDGE networks, "Evolved" boosts the conventional EDGE user data rate from about 220 Kbps to approximately 1 Mbps. According to ABI Research, the biggest drawback with the new technology is its availability. Hardware vendors must have time to develop compatible network products and handsets, which means a widespread rollout remains at least two to three years away. ABI predicts 504 million "Evolved" subscribers by the end of 2011. •



3G gamers want simple gaming

PUZZLES AND card games are the most popular mobile-phone games for users filling in time waiting for a bus or sitting on the train, research by M:Metrics and I-Play shows. They found that users prefer retro games from their youth to the kind of immersive games offered by consoles. Owners of 3G handsets are playing around twice as many games as non-3G owners. •

Mobile TV for the masses

US CONSUMERS ARE prepared to pay enough for TV to their mobile phones to justify the expense to carriers of building a new broadcast network that guarantees quality service, a white paper from industry group Mobile DTV Alliance reports. The winning formula for mobile TV in the US is high-quality video and service, and flat rates of about USD 20 a month for unlimited viewing. To meet these standards, the alliance advocates building a separate broadcast network. It believes carriers could attract 25 percent of subscribers based on commercial trials in Italy, Finland and the United Kingdom. In those countries, 50 percent of wireless subscribers were willing to pay for mobile TV, once they were holding phones in their hands with live, high-quality broadcast services available. •

Mobile money transfer on trial

A MOBILE-BASED system for international financial transfers, which will help operators tap into the massive USD 230 billion global market for migrant worker remittances, is being trialed.

Eighteen operators are working with MasterCard to set up a global payments hub to provide authorization and settlement for remittances of all sizes. Funds are sent from one SIM card to another via the MasterCard global transactions network. Remittances are received as soon as they are sent, with both parties receiving confirmation messages via SMS.

Led by the GSM Association, the scheme aims to make the mobile phone a channel for financial transactions to service the two-thirds of the world's population who do not have bank accounts. •

Mobile advertising in Europe

YAHOO HAS LAUNCHED a mobile advertising platform across 19 countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas, helping advertisers reach consumers on their mobile phones.

Several major advertisers have signed up to be part of the initial mobile launch, including brands such as Nissan, Pepsi, and Intel. The ads will appear on the Yahoo Mobile Web homepage. Consumers can click on the ads to learn more or call the advertiser directly.

The Yahoo Mobile Web service is available on most mobile phones across major mobile operators. The company has also presented a mobile web homepage that makes it faster and easier for consumers to search for content that interests them most. •

Mobile operators urged to prepare for WiMAX threat

THE IMPACT of WiMAX on the mobile telephony industry could be profound, according to market research firm In-Stat. Carriers need to put together their WiMAX strategies now.

For mobile operators, WiMAX may potentially become a big competitor, a great ally, or a minor factor. Nevertheless, it's clear that a strategy for WiMAX is the biggest decision cellular carriers have had to make since planning for 3G deployment. In a study, In-Stat writes that mobile voice WiMAX isn't likely to be used much before 2009, but that fixed-line WiMAX is here and mobile WiMAX will be arriving in the next few years.

The study notes that there are many "profiles" in different regions of the world, meaning that WiMAX devices will almost certainly operate differently in different regions, unless device manufacturers are willing to accept the extra expense of making a universal WiMAX device that supports all profiles.

When WiMAX competes with mobile telephony, cellular operators will be forced to lower their prices for wireless data services over existing mobile infrastructures.

Even if WiMAX fails after that point, it is unlikely that cellular carriers will ever again be able to charge the amount they currently do for wireless data services, In-Stat predicts. •

China mobile sales surge

MOBILE PHONES SALES in China increased 40 percent year-on-year to 120 million units in 2006 and will likely surge a further 25 percent to 150 million units in 2007, reports the China Mobile Communications Association. In 2006, China produced 450 million mobile phones, of which 350 million were exported. China's Ministry of Information says foreign mobile phone vendors produced by far the largest share, while Chinese mobile phone makers sold just 50 million units in domestic and overseas markets. Last year the number of mobile users in China reached 461 million, up 68 million from 2005. •



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