



What drives mobile growth in Asia?

The four key emerging mobile functionalities that are driving growth in Asia include mobile payment, mobile gaming, mobile healthcare and mobile music

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SINGAPORE: Functionality and affordability are the two leading factors driving mobile adoption in Asia, according to a study titled 'Asia Mobile Telecommunication Innovations.'

The study was jointly released today by Mobile Marketing Association, a global organization in promoting the development and sustainability of mobile marketing, and Solidiance, Asia's marketing and innovation strategy consulting firm.

Affordability has been driven not only by the availability of affordable handsets for low income consumers, but also by lower service prices resulting from highly competitive market places. China, India and Indonesia are the top three markets offering the most affordable handsets in Asia, said a press release citing the study.

With regards to functionality, the market for smartphones has been growing across Asia Pacific.

"The increase of function-rich smartphones in the market with larger screen size, better web browsing capabilities and longer battery life, combined with 'all you can eat' data packages is driving the growth of mobile Internet making it a ready channel to connect with customers," said Rohit Dadwal, managing director, Asia Pacific, Mobile Marketing Association.

The four key emerging mobile functionalities that are driving growth in Asia include mobile payment, mobile gaming, mobile healthcare and mobile music.

Damien Duhamel, managing director, Solidiance, said that currently, Singapore and Hong Kong were the most mature electronic payment markets in Asia. "With a focus on services/product innovation, mobile operators and value-added services providers are aggressively working on payment options through mobile platforms - which will be the most lucrative segment in the medium term across Asia," Duhamel added.

Revenues from mobile gaming for the Asia Pacific region have also significantly increased over the past few years. The delivery of advertising within mobile applications (games) creates a new revenue stream for publishers, distributors and service providers.

More importantly, the revenue may be used to partially or completely subsidize the price of mobile games/services that the application provides, the study said.

Mobile healthcare is another fast-growing segment in Asia Pacific. A recent study estimated that the Asian mobile healthcare business is currently growing at 80 per cent year on year. In 2010, this business is estimated to be worth just under \$1 billion with 70 per cent of users in more advanced economies. Applications include remote patient monitoring, mobile nursing, mobile medical records access, access to free mobile healthcare information etc.

The Asian mobile music market is also seeing rapid growth. Mobile operators in Korea have been the fastest to innovate and capture this market leading to soaring mobile music sales, according to the study.

On the mobile value-added services side, the Asia Pacific region has seen consistent growth in SMS usage. The Philippines remains the SMS capital of the world with the average user sending 400 SMS messages per month.

Early this year, it was estimated that over 2 billion cellphone subscriptions were active in the Asia Pacific region, which is half the global count, the study added.

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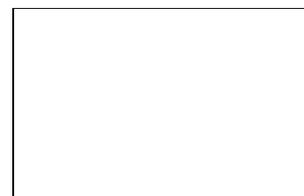
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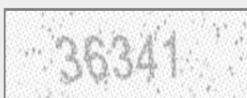
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