

Telecommunications industry survey predicts early dawn

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The mobile phone – once just seen as a convenient device for talking on the move – is likely to take the place of a whole range of other devices within the next two years, according to a survey of telecommunications experts gathered in Korea. The survey, conducted by world-leading 3G handset manufacturer, [LG Electronics](#), at Busan ITU Telecom Asia 2004, indicates that the convergence of a host of devices and availability of a range of applications on [mobile](#) handsets could have a major impact on the separate markets for digital cameras and video cameras.

Of 228 respondents from the IT industry and IT media, 95 per cent said that it was either very likely or somewhat likely (73% and 22% respectively) that consumers will eventually choose a single converged 3G device (combining phone, camera, video camera, MP3 and others) over multiple devices. Of these, 72% expect to see the transition within the next two years and 24% within 3-5 years.

Skott Lee of LGE said: "It is clear that IT industry opinion sees the mobile handset as the ubiquitous and most appealingly versatile device of the future. It makes sense that a single converged device will offer functions and convenience which make it far preferable to carrying around a bag full of separate devices."

While today's 3G mobile phones are already offering multiple functions, respondents to the survey at ITU Telecom Asia 2004 were also asked what new functions they would most like to see integrated into their handsets. Some 52% said that the integration of "digital keys" to open

car, home or office would be the most desirable; 26% opted for a personal security device such as a panic alarm or electric shock function. Respondents selected from a list of possible new functions which included image scanning and a calorie calculator.

Of the functions available in the new generation of converged 3G mobile phones, respondents said that video telephony (41%), TV/Video on demand (23%) and video or photo mailing (20%) were the most important. On a lighter note, respondents were asked who they would be least likely to contact using a videophone feature – 28% said it would be their spouse and 17% their boss. Clients and customers were the most favoured parties for face-to-face phone calls

LGE's Mr. Lee said: "We are already marketing phones to suit specific consumer needs – from lifestyle needs, to healthcare issues, and even to handsets which help Muslim customers check the direction of Mecca. We are also focusing on linking the mobile handset to control digital appliances in the home. It's clear that the mobile phone is going to play an increasing role in virtually every element of our lives."

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