

# Accessorizing cells phones a growing trend

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No longer does accessorizing a cell phone mean leather cases or cartoon covers. Now, individual artists and companies alike are profiting from an environment in which individuals make personal statements by adding flashy wallpaper, animated screen savers, pop-song ring tones and even antenna charms to their handsets.

The charms represent the latest addition to personalized cell phones. Jeweled accessories made into hearts, bears and tiaras with a stretchable ring on the back have been a craze in Asia for the last two years and only now are hitting the U.S. market.

Tiffany Weidman, a resident of Forney, Texas, first ran across Trinkies on the Internet last April and began selling them on eBay. She said customers can slip on a "glam princess" look for today or choose a "hippie chick" ring for tomorrow.

"I'm not really a girly-girl, but as far as accessories go, I think they're cute," Weidman told United Press International. "That's why I started selling them."

Since then, Weidman began her own Web site, selling the charms for \$5 each, and has been seeing sales double each month since April.

She said pink crowns are the most popular and she will soon begin designing her own charms, too. In September she will add slot machines, smiley faces, martini glasses and Eiffel Towers to her offerings.

Cell-phone accessories also are becoming more electronic, with the addition of cameras, ring tones and animated screen savers becoming more popular and cheaper.

Jamster!, a leading provider of mobile content, is capitalizing on this latest trend of making personal statements via cell phones. The company offers more than 1,000 options in popular music ring tones, wallpaper, graphics and games to customers who pay \$5.99 for various downloading plans.

"These accessories are a new vehicle for attracting new customers," Brian O'Shaughnessy, a Jamster! spokesman, told UPI. "There are two functional aspects, one is that more Americans are becoming aware of personalization and second is the combination of mobility and entertainment."

Most consumers recognize Jamster! by the company's television commercials for ring tones, animated screensavers and wallpaper that feature pop artists and creations such as Crazy Frog -- the same ring tone used in "Crazy Frog Axel F" that took the No.1 spot on the British pop-music charts.

"Artists are also using this environment and their entertainment to attract new fans," O'Shaughnessy said. "A number of them understand the power of this medium."

One example is the hip-hop tour, "Scream Tour IV: The Heartthrobs," which Jamster! is co-sponsoring. The company provides its customers with unique mobile content, especially from artists from the tour, which includes Bow Wow, Omarion, Marques Houston and 3on3.

"We've only scratched the surface," O'Shaughnessy said. "People are going to buy and use more of these (accessories) once they become more

available, but most of it is in Japan and the (United Kingdom). This is really going to explode."

As broadband becomes cheaper in the United States, accessorizing cell phones most likely will be taken to a new level, as enhanced cell-phone technologies continue to come out of Asia and the United Kingdom.

These include the ability to download more advanced games and cameras, .pdf files and MP3 quality music, as well as applications such as "Digital Stadium," by CratMax in Tokyo, on DoCoMo 3G cell phones that will display cartoon versions of select live professional baseball games.

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