

Huawei says switches held fast during Haj

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China's Huawei Technologies is boasting that its softswitch system helped Saudi Telecom sail through the crush of calls during the recent Haj.

Huawei said Thursday that cell-phone traffic in Saudi Arabia soared to 20 times above normal as more than 3 million Muslim pilgrims gathered in Mecca on Jan. 9 alone. Peak calling attempts reached 300,000 in one hour as the pilgrims called home or kept in touch with other participants in the holy march.

"Since the mobile users made calls at the same time period, it caused obvious peak traffic," Huawei said in a news release. "Millions of mobile users moved to the same direction at the same time according to the pilgrimage rite, so a large amount of location update and handover were generated."

Huawei said each of its GSM Mobile Softswitch Systems has the capacity to handle 1 million phone subscribers, making it the largest such switching system in the world. Switching refers to the interface between the cell tower and the phone grid.

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