

Asian mobile-phone demand seen surging

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Mobile-phone use in major Asian countries is expected to reach 1.05 billion by 2010, according to a study by a research group.

Information-technology researchers IDC reported that in 2005, the number of subscribers in 10 key markets in the Asia-Pacific region excluding Japan reached 628.5 million, while revenue amounted to \$81.4 billion.

"Innovative prepaid offerings were a significant driver boosting mobile penetration in both emerging as well as mature markets. At the same time, the region's fastest growing market is India, where pent up demand for mobile services coupled with expansion in network coverage, led to a phenomenal 58 percent surge in subscribers. More good news awaits; as despite such performance, mobile penetration in India still lagged far behind the region's and stood at a low 7 percent, signifying further growth potential for the coming years," said Alayne Wong, research manager of mobile communications research at IDC Asia/Pacific.

The group expects mobile penetration in the region to reach 37 percent by 2010, up from 23 percent in 2005. Meanwhile, third-generation mobile phones are expected to surge in demand, particularly with the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The 10 countries surveyed were Australia, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Philippines, China, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

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