S.Korea Wants People in 'Smart' Clothes

August 16 2006

(AP) -- Technology-savvy South Korea isn't happy making only MP3 players and the memory chips that go inside many of the more popular models. It also wants people wearing South Korean "smart" clothes with built-in digital music players.

The government is backing efforts to launch the digitized apparel by the end of the year, hoping to win a top position for the country as an exporter of such clothing.

"The research and development of smart clothing can't be left up to the market only, because of its high risk. The government has taken the role of offsetting this risk," Hwang Kyu-yearn, an official at the Commerce and Industry Ministry, said Wednesday, declining to elaborate on the government's support to the industry.

The clothing would let people enjoy the gamut of an MP3 player's functions while avoiding the hassles of carrying the units separately. Some devices would have to be unplugged from the clothes for washing.

Since 2004, smart-apparel development has involved a range of research institutes, universities and conglomerates with the active support of the South Korean government. The government even has estimated that the global market for digital clothing could be $7 billion by 2014. South Korea wants more than 20 percent of it.

© 2006 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: S.Korea Wants People in 'Smart' Clothes (2006, August 16) retrieved 2 May 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2006-08-skorea-people-smart.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.