

South Koreans to get Apple's iPhone this week

November 22 2009, By KELLY OLSEN , AP Business Writer



Apple's Vice President of iPod and iPhone Product Marketing, Greg Joswiak speaks during an event to officially launch the Apple iPhone for the first time on Mainland China in Beijing, China, Friday, Oct. 30, 2009. The mobile device which has been available for years through unofficial channels in China will finally be accessible to millions of user in one of the world's largest mobile phone market. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

(AP) -- Apple Inc's iPhone is coming to South Korea this week, a local carrier announced Sunday, bringing the iconic communications device to one of the world's most sophisticated mobile phone markets.

KT Corp. began accepting orders for the [iPhone](#) both online and in stores Sunday and service will start Nov. 28 as part of an official launch, said Alice Park, a spokeswoman for the country's second-largest mobile carrier.

The announcement ends a long wait in South Korea, which has lagged behind other countries in [Asia](#) in introducing the sleek smartphone that has grabbed headlines around the world and solidified Apple's status as a purveyor of cutting-edge consumer electronics.

The South Korean market is dominated by domestic manufacturers [Samsung Electronics](#) Co. and [LG Electronics](#) Inc., which are also big players overseas. Speculation has focused on how South Korean consumers, known for favoring the local makers, will react to the iPhone's introduction.

Steve Park, Apple's spokesman in Seoul, confirmed KT's announcement, but declined further comment and would offer no sales projections.

The iPhone made its formal debut in China late last month via local partner [China Unicom](#) Ltd. It went on sale in Japan last year and is also available in India and Australia, as well as other countries in the region.

Worldwide the iPhone is available in 86 countries and territories and will be soon in four more, according to Apple's Web site. Despite KT's announcement, the site still did not mention South Korea.

"We are thrilled to bring iPhone to South Korea," Kim Woo-sik, CEO of KT's personal customer group, said in a press release. "Our customers will enjoy the power and benefits of using the revolutionary iPhone on KT's [3G network](#)."

The iPhone's introduction was delayed by regulatory hurdles, the last of which was overcome on Wednesday when the Korea Communications Commission approved the granting of a business license to Apple to offer so-called location based services.

Location-based services include functions such as maps and direction

finders that are included on the iPhone. South Korean law requires companies that provide such applications to obtain government permission.

SK Telecom Co., South Korea's largest mobile carrier, has also been in discussions with Apple about offering the iPhone. Spokeswoman Lauren Kim said Sunday that SK Telecom had not made any decision regarding the iPhone.

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