

Mobile broadband use to leap by 2015: Ericsson

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A man test mobiles at the Sony Ericsson stand at the 3GSM World Congress in 2007 in Barcelona. The number of people using mobile broadband to access the Internet is expected to soar from around 400 million today to some 3.5 billion by 2015, Swedish telecommunications equipment giant Ericsson said on Wednesday.

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Global mobile broadband use in the next five years would leap to the same level as the use of second-generation mobile phone services (voice and text messaging) today.

About 3.5 billion people worldwide use such services today, while only about 400 million have access to third generation (3G) mobile broadband services through their phones or laptops, Ericsson told AFP.

By 2020, the total number of mobile phone subscriptions worldwide will have jumped to six billion, the company predicted.

Thanks to the rapid expansion of mobile broadband services, the volume of wireless data traffic reached the same level as voice traffic worldwide last year, and is expected to go beyond mobile telephony by the end of this year.

"We have just seen the beginning of the massive data growth, driven by smart phones and other mobile devices," Ericsson chief executive Hans Vestberg said in a statement issued in connection with the company's capital markets day.

"It's important for us to follow this development," he added.

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