

Google amplifies voice commands for Android phones

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Google's Nexus One smartphone.

(AP) -- Just because mobile phones are becoming more like small computers doesn't mean you should have to do a lot of typing on them.

That's the thinking behind the latest update to [Google](#) Inc.'s popular Android software for mobile phones.

The latest version of Android 2.2, released Thursday, includes 10 new [voice commands](#) that can be used to operate phones without using a keypad.

Although Google says about 200,000 Android-powered phones are being

sold each day, not all of them are equipped with the 2.2 operating system, also known as Froyo. Google's Nexus One phone already runs on Froyo, but users will need to download free updates through its Android Market. Motorola Inc.'s Droid 2, which went on sale this week, already has the necessary updates. The features are expected to be added to HTC Corp.'s Evo and Incredible phones when they get Froyo in the coming months.

Google's new "Voice Actions" tool" enables people to dictate their text messages and e-mails. The voice recognition technology automatically translates the spoken words into text.

Phone calls can be made simply by speaking the name of a person or business. The feature can also find and play songs with [spoken commands](#).

Although spoken words were turned into written words almost flawlessly in a Thursday demonstration for reporters, many applications relying on voice recognition technology misinterpret what's being said in less quiet settings. Google says its tests showed Voice Actions was highly accurate.

Android already has been processing spoken requests for Internet searches and directions. The feature has caught on quickly: Google says about 25 percent of its search traffic on Android phones is triggered by the spoken word.

The additional bells and whistles already have helped Android phones gain usage in recent months, though overall there are far more iPhones from Apple Inc. and BlackBerrys from Research in Motion Ltd. already on the market.

Besides adding more voice controls to Android, Google also is making it easier to transfer information from a computer screen to a phone.

Google is making that happen by offering a free tool that users can add to Google's Chrome Web browser for personal computers. This tool makes it possible to send the link to a story or mapping directions from a personal computer to a designated phone within seconds.

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