

## **S.Korea has more mobile phones than people: agency**

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Gadget-mad South Korea now has more mobile phones than people, with a growing number of users carrying multiple handsets for business purposes, telecoms authorities said Wednesday.

The Korea Communications Commission said there were 50 million mobile service subscribers in the country as of this month, more than the population of 48.8 million.

"You may say there are 1.2 million people carrying two phones, but excluding children and those with no phones, the number of multiple-phone owners could be far higher," Choi Seong-Ho, the commission's communication service policy director, told AFP.

Now mobile phones are not simply a tool to make calls and send text messages but an essential part of everyday life encompassing business, shopping and Internet searches, he said.

[South Korea](#) launched its first [mobile phone](#) service in 1984 and the number of subscribers grew exponentially through the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The agency also said there are 3.67 million smartphone users in the country, 7.4 percent of the total.

Statistics Korea estimates the 2009 population at 49.30 million -- still fewer than the number of mobile phones.

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