

Japan develops mobile phone with human touch

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Japan's Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR) researcher Takashi Minato displays a human-shaped mobile phone in Tokyo. The human-shaped mobile phone has a skin-like outer layer that enables users to feel closer to those on the other end.

Japanese researchers said Thursday they have developed a human-shaped mobile phone with a skin-like outer layer that enables users to feel closer to those on the other end.

"The [mobile phone](#) may feel like the person you are talking to," the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR) said in a press release, describing the gadget as a "revolutionary telecom medium".

The project is a collaboration between Osaka University, the mobile telephone operator [NTT DoCoMo](#) and other institutes.

They hope to put it into commercial production within five years by adding image and [voice recognition](#) functions.

The prototype, slightly bigger than the size of a palm, features an outer coating that feels like human skin, ATR officials said.

A speaker is installed in the head of the doll-like gadget and a light-emitting diode in its chest turns blue when the phone is in use and red when it is in standby mode.

The body resembles a human being but its design is so blurred that it could be taken as either male or female and young or old, the press release said.

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