

Mobiles surge in Asia, to overtake PCs: Google

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Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng takes a photo of minister for the environment Yaacob Ibrahim using a mobile phone at an election rally in Singapore on May 2011. Asia-Pacific is leading a surge in the use of mobile devices as they play a more central role in people's lives and are on track to replace conventional computers, a top Google executive said Wednesday.

Asia-Pacific is leading a surge in the use of mobile devices as they play a more central role in people's lives and are on track to replace conventional computers, a top Google executive said Wednesday.

Aliza Knox, managing director of commerce for Google [Asia Pacific](#), said smartphones and tablets were now becoming the primary means to access the Internet in the region, adding that the US firm was making preparations to respond to that.

"Asia has an insatiable appetite for mobile," she told a forum at the CommunicAsia telecom fair in Singapore.

Four regional economies -- Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and [South Korea](#) -- already have higher [smartphone](#) use rates than the United States, Knox said.

She added that 74 percent of searches in Singapore are now done on [mobile gadgets](#) while in Indonesia 78 percent of Internet users go online with a tablet or smartphone.

In Japan, a person has an average 45 apps on his or her mobile phone, with South Koreans coming next at 42 -- compared with 23 in the United States, according to Knox.

By 2015, one in two people in the world using the Internet will be in Asia, and in the region a person's first experience online will likely be on a mobile.

"Asia is ahead, Asia is taking this up faster than other places," she said.

Knox also cited [global research](#) showing "most people" keep at least one mobile device within three feet and check them an average 40 times a day.

One in four take it to the bathroom and two in three sleep them beside the bed.

"We're engaging with media so much more because these devices are with us at all times, they are the centre of our lives," she said.

[Mobile devices](#) are also increasingly being used to watch videos and play games, with many electronics giants such as Sony and Nintendo having

to respond as they see sales of their consoles slow.

Knox urged companies to be ready for the surge in mobile usage in Asia, noting that [Google](#) hired 600 people in the region this year and invested \$700 million to establish new data centres.

"We see unprecedented mobile growth, phenomenal demand for products and media, strong network support and a myriad of services becoming available -- a new role for the mobile device at the centre of people's lives," she said.

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