

Mobile phone sales soar: study

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A man uses a Nokia handset in Singapore. Global mobile phone sales soared by 17% in the first quarter, driven by smartphone models, according to the Gartner tech industry research group.

Global mobile phone sales soared by 17 percent in the first quarter, driven by smartphone models, the Gartner tech industry research house said on Wednesday.

For the three months to March, some 314 million mobile phones were sold, of which 54.3 million were smartphone models which allow users to access the Internet on the move, Gartner said.

Finland's Nokia kept hold of first place in the overall global mobile phone market although its share slipped to 35 percent from 36.2 percent a year earlier.

South Korea's Samsung was second, increasing its [market share](#) to 20.6 percent from 19.1 percent, followed by local rival LG which fell to 8.6 percent from 9.9 percent.

Japanese-Swedish combine Sony-Ericsson was in fifth place followed by Motorola of the United States.

Gartner said that in the first quarter sales of smartphones showed the biggest jump since 2006, with RIM of Canada's BlackBerry gaining 45.9 percent from the figure 12 months earlier.

Sales of Apple's [iPhone](#) soared 112.2 percent to 8.3 million units but its market share remained modest at 2.7 percent overall.

In the [smartphone](#) sector, Nokia held onto first place with a 44.3 percent market share, down 4.5 percentage points, followed by RIM, Apple and then [Google](#) with its Android operating system which has made huge inroads in the United States to edge out Apple there.

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