

Touchscreen-equipped mobile handset shipments to exceed 230 million by 2012

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Touchscreen-equipped mobile handsets sales have been building steadily for over a year now, and a new report from IMS Research forecasts that growth will become even stronger. Although there were fewer than 30 million touchscreen phones sold in 2007, IMS Research expect that number to increase to over 230 million by 2012.

There are numerous signs that touchscreens are poised to significantly increase their presence in the mobile handset market. Recent reports and announcements from the three largest mobile phone manufacturers have highlighted a trend in the increased production of phones using touch technology. In July, LG revealed that it had sold 7 million touchscreen handsets. This announcement came just five quarters after LG launched its very first touchscreen mobile phone. Showing similar success, Samsung recently released the Instinct, a full touchscreen handset, through Sprint. Just one week after the launch, Sprint announced that the Instinct had already become the best selling EV-DO device in the carrier's history. Not to be outdone, Apple reported selling 1 million of the new 3G iPhone handsets in just the first three days of its release

According to IMS Research analyst and report author Femi Omoni, "The original iPhone was the catalyst that created this huge market interest in touchscreen phones. The fact that it was not only popular with consumers, but also helped drive data revenues proved how important touchscreen handsets can be. Now all of the network operators and handset manufacturers want a piece of the pie".

The impressive growth that IMS Research is predicting will not be driven solely by the smartphone segment either. According to the IMS Research report Touchscreens & Input Technologies for Mobile Handsets, touchscreens will increasingly penetrate the much larger feature phone segment. In fact, Nokia just announced that its initial foray into the touchscreen market will be targeted at the "volume market" because that segment of the population is the largest consumer of mobile phones.

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