

IT & TELECOM

DHAKA, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2010, E-MAIL: it.telecom@thedailystar.net

Telecoms need to put growth on track: study

AHSEN JAVED

In 2010, the number of mobile phone subscriptions is expected to reach five billion globally. The outlook for telecommunications providers is dynamic, but far from certain.

Growing competition from non-traditional providers, rapidly rising demand for network bandwidth and consumer expectations for new technologies have emerged as key issues that will shape the future of the sector.

Against this backdrop, Oracle has released the findings of its Opportunity Calling: The Future of Mobile Communications report.

During the survey it was found that the Asia Pacific market contains unrealised potential for telecommunications providers.

This article summarises the findings of the survey and concludes with some recommendations on how telecommunication companies can use them to plan ahead for growth and generate new revenue opportunities.

RELIABILITY AND PRICE

Despite the smartphone revolution, this study shows that consumers everywhere still value reliability and price over technological innovation. Less than half the respondents said they look for state-of-the-art handsets. By comparison, 85 percent rated reliability and 81 percent rated price as top priorities.

However, 77 percent said price would be their main motivator to change service providers. Further, although 82 percent of customers said their provider was currently doing a good job, more (83 percent) said they might consider switching to non-traditional providers such as Google, Sony, Apple or Facebook if these offered similar pricing and service quality.

By comparison, consumers in the Asia Pacific market seem slightly more conservative. Fewer (73 percent compared to 77 percent) said they would switch to another provider because of better pricing and less (78 percent compared to 83 percent) would consider a non-telecom company as their provider.

NEW MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS

Within five years, more users are likely to connect to the internet using their handsets than from desktop PCs, a trend that is driving demand for more innovative features.

According to the report, 54 percent of mobile phone users expect their phones to replace their

GPS systems and iPod or MP3 player within five years. Fifty two percent thinks phones are likely to supersede digital cameras. Twenty seven percent wants to use them as their PC and video recorder, 22 percent as an e-reader and 16 percent as a television.

The younger demographic (1833 years) are three times as likely to use their phone as an entertainment device and twice as likely to use their phone as a personal computer than those aged 4664 years.

In terms of general usage, 94 percent of Asia Pacific customers use their phone as a communications device and 29 percent as a mini computer. Notably, 38 percent use it for entertainment, which is well ahead of uptake in the United States (20 percent), Europe (33 percent) and the Middle East (32 percent). In the Asia Pacific, 81 percent of consumers have used their phone to send a text

Reliability and price are top priority in choosing phones. Consumers would like to use their mobile phones as a credit card

message, 47 percent to read or send email, and 18 percent to update their status on a social media sites.

Respondents to the survey anticipated that by 2015, their phones would incorporate new applications and features that would enable them to do everything from starting a car to being used as a credit card.

Although the majority (58 percent) indicated that they would like to use their phones instead of cash or cards for purchases, there is still some caution about the prospect. Thirty nine percent said they were not comfortable with the idea, but this was offset by the fact that 61 percent were.

Citizens in the Generation Y category (born between 1977 and 1992) were more at home with the concept of using their phones to make purchases, while slightly more than half (52 percent) of Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) were comfortable with the concept. In both gen-

eration groups, males were more comfortable with the idea than females.

Consumers want to have the ability to chat via video and scan barcodes to access online content. However, the survey reveals that while most want these features, only 17 percent and 10 percent respectively would be prepared to pay for them.

Their greatest interest was the ability to monitor and manage home electricity use. Sixty seven percent of the respondents said they want this feature and 22 percent would be willing to pay for it.

Five years from now, 49 percent of Asia Pacific consumers expect their phone to replace their digital camera, 34 percent their credit card and 30 percent their PC.

ADVERTISING REVENUE

Advertising direct to mobiles is a potential revenue generator. In the survey, 68 percent of respondents said they would be happy to receive advertising on their mobile phones in exchange for price discounts or added services.

This was particularly evident in the Asia Pacific market, where 13 percent of survey respondents said they would be interested in receiving free downloads in exchange for listening to or watching advertisements on their handsets, compared to just 7 percent globally.

Worldwide, there is real reluctance to receive localised commercial content based on user location because of privacy and security concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TELCOS

The report confirms that while technical innovation is essential to meeting the future demands of consumers, it will be critical to first ensure that the 'brass tacks' of service activation, delivery and billing are seamless, accurate and fast.

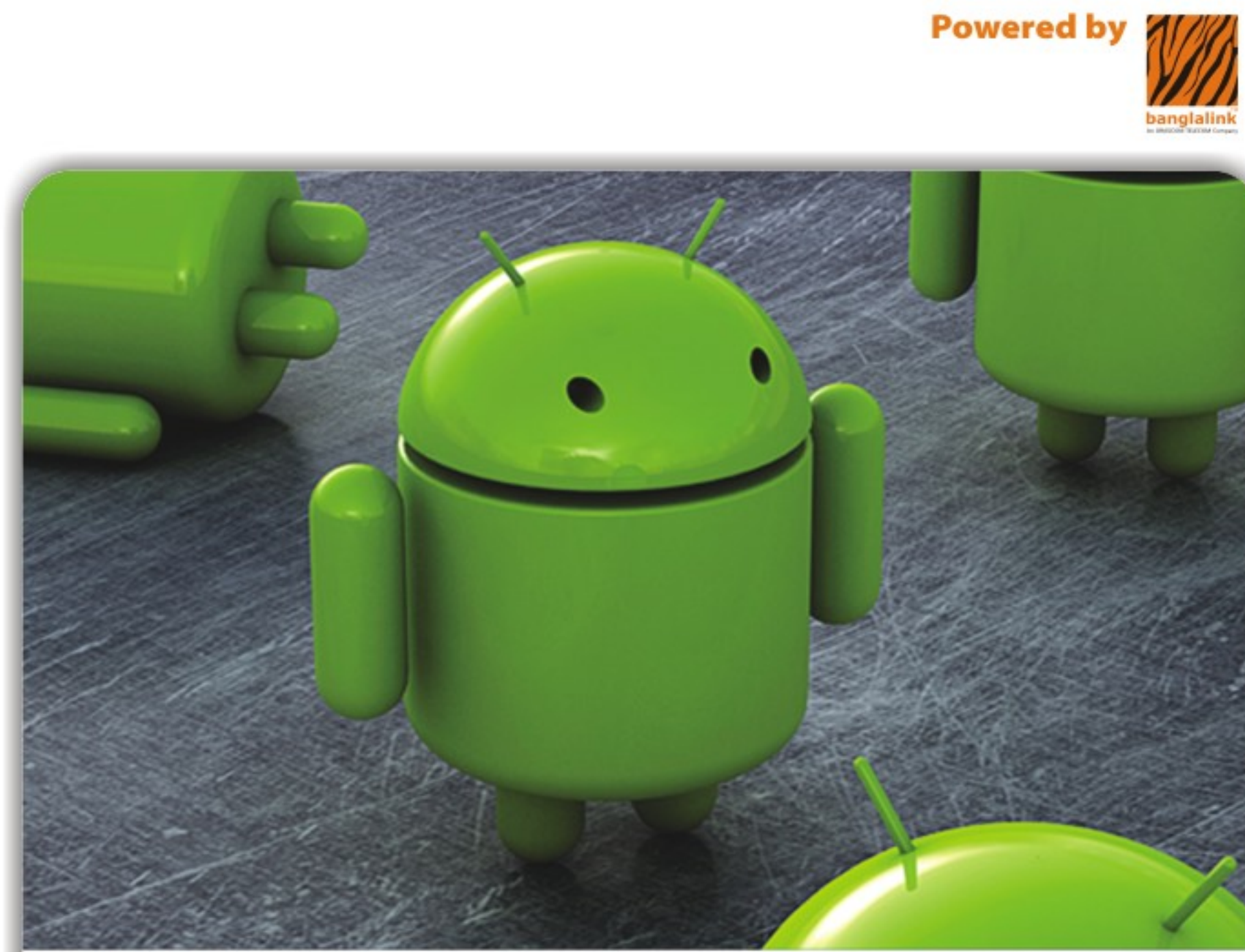
Telcos also need to build and analyse customer data to ensure customer needs are met quickly.

Finally, telcos need to plan for the future by working with their technology providers to ensure network and back-end systems are scalable, securely open to developers, and integrated across services.

The writer is the managing director of Oracle Pakistan and South Asia Growth Economies.

Over 3,000 mobile phone users around the world were surveyed on their use and perceptions of mobile phones, interest in new technologies, and expectations for the next generation of mobile communication. Twenty percent were from the Asia Pacific.

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Android now second biggest smartphone platform: Gartner

AFP, Washington

Google's Android mobile operating system surged past Apple's iPhone and Canada's BlackBerry in the third quarter to become the second biggest smartphone platform after Nokia's Symbian, research firm Gartner said Wednesday.

Gartner said Finland's Nokia sold 29.5 million smartphones during the third quarter of the year for a 36.6 percent share of the worldwide market, down from 44.6 percent a year ago.

Sales of Android-powered smartphones soared to 20.5 million units, giving the Android platform a 25.5 percent market share, up from just 3.5 percent a year ago, Gartner said.

Apple's iPhone was next on sales of 13.5 million units for a 16.7 percent market share, down from 17.1 percent a year ago.

Canada's Research In Motion, maker of the BlackBerry, was in fourth position with sales of 11.9 million units. Its market share dropped to 14.8 percent from 20.7 percent a year ago.

Microsoft's Windows Mobile saw sales of 2.2 million units giving it a 2.8 percent market share, down from 7.9 percent a year ago, Gartner said.

"Smartphone (operating system) providers have entered a period of accelerated platform evolution, stimulated by more regular product releases, new platform entrants and new device types," said Roberta Cozza, principal research analyst at Gartner.

"Any platform that fails to innovate quickly -- either through a vibrant multi-

player ecosystem or clear vision of a single controlling entity -- will lose developers, manufacturers, potential partners and ultimately users."

Gartner said worldwide mobile phone sales totaled 417 million units in the third quarter, up 35 percent from a year ago.

Smartphone sales grew 96 percent to 81 million units and accounted for 19.3 percent of overall mobile phone sales in the quarter.

Nokia remained the world's top handset manufacturer with sales of 117.5 million units in the third quarter but saw its worldwide market share slip to 28.2 percent from 36.7 percent a year ago.

South Korea's Samsung was next on sales of 71.7 million units but its market share also fell -- to 17.2 percent from 19.6 percent a year ago.

South Korea's LG sold 27.5 million handsets. Its market share dipped to 6.6 percent from 10.3 percent a year ago.

Apple leapfrogged RIM during the quarter with sales of 13.5 million units, giving it a 3.2 percent market share, up from 2.3 percent a year ago.

RIM sold 11.9 million units. Its market share edged up to 2.9 percent from 2.8 percent a year ago.

Gartner said Samsung was the top Android seller in the quarter with sales of 6.6 million Android phones.

The technology research company said it expects overall mobile device sales to grow 30 percent year-on-year in 2010 and for sales of tablet computers such as Apple's iPad to reach 54.8 million units in 2011.

BBC Janala receives Microsoft Education Award

IT.TELECOM DESK

BBC Janala, which is teaching millions of people to learn English in Bangladesh through mobile phones, has been awarded a prestigious Microsoft Education Award at this year's international Tech Awards in Silicon Valley, California.

The pioneering service impressed judges with its use of mobile technology to reach some of the poorest people in the country and offer a simple and affordable way to learn.

Launched 12 months ago by the BBC World Service Trust, BBC Janala provides daily three-minute audio lesson to the 84% of the country who want to improve their English language skills in order to get a better job and access the global economy.

Over 50 million mobile phones are in use in



Bangladesh. At a cost of just 50 paisa per minute, BBC Janala targets those living on less than £2 a day and has proved its popularity with over three and half million calls.

"For years people have been trying to work out how to bridge the digital divide and use PCs to teach people in the developing world. This was a challenge with a lack of available computers and connectivity to data networks.

But while we were trying to duplicate our solution the world got connected via mobile phones. BBC Janala's genius is it uses the existing cellular network to provide people with educational content rather than waiting for what we have in the developed world", said Stuart Gannes, from the Tech Awards jury and former director of Stanford University's Digital Vision Program.

The Janala also includes television drama and game show and lessons in leading national daily.



Cheapest touchscreen phone

IT.TELECOM DESK

Samsung has introduced its tiniest smartphone, Samsung C3300K Champ, in the country, said a press release.

The tiny Champ is a touch phone with social networking support, stereo speakers, cordless FM radio and a memory card, camera and Internet. And the price is as low as it gets.

With 2.4" resistive touchscreen the phone is graced with TouchWiz user interface.

The Phone's dimensions are only 96.3 x 53.8 x 12.9mm and weigh just 80g. The phone also sports dual speakers in the front, and surround sound in headset mode.

The Champ has display of 240x320 pixels resolution, it exhibits rounded corners, and a curvy back panel like the typical for all

Samsung handsets lately.

Underneath the display there are three physical buttons in a row the send and end key and a back button. Interestingly it has two speakers in the front above and below the screen to give the surround sound experience.

The tiny one allows easy access to popular social networking sites. It not only gives easy access but also allows sharing photos, status, messages with ease.

It comes with 1.3MP camera and stylus pen. The stylus helps to send text messages in hieroglyph handwriting which has become very popular across Asia

Its internal memory is 30MB while external memory is up to 8GB.

It is priced at TK 6,490.



TECHPHOTO

Quadcopter

Promoters of the AR. Drone quadcopter, the first quadcopter controlled by an iPod Touch, iPhone, or iPad, control the helicopter at Brookstone's Rockefeller Center store on November 10, 2010 in New York. The \$300.00 USD AR.Drone is a helicopter with four separate propellers made of carbon fiber and strong plastics.

PHOTO: AFP



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