

NTT DOCOMO Mobile Society Research Institute, GSMA publish study on children and mobile phones

NTT DOCOMO's independent Mobile Society Research Institute (MSRI) and the GSM Association (GSMA), with support from KT Freetel (KTF), have published the first study to compare mobile phone use by children at different stages in their development. The study covers five countries - Japan, Korea, China, India and Mexico.

More than 6,000 children between the ages of 9 and 18 and their parents were surveyed on a range of questions regarding their use, attitudes and feelings toward mobile phones.

While the main factor affecting children's mobile phone ownership is their age (for each additional year in age, an additional 4% of children own a mobile phone), the network effect of friends starting to use mobile phones was also found to be a key trigger for take up of phones by children across all the countries surveyed.

Gender, parental age, parental income and ownership of video games and computers were also found to have an effect on ownership of phones across all the surveyed countries.

- Gender - 4% more girls owned a mobile phone than boys, and 9% more girls who did not own a mobile phone wanted to.
- Parental age - the older the parents, the older the children are when they first start to own mobile phones.
- Computers and video games - children owning personal computers and video games are more likely to own mobile phones and start using them at an earlier age.
- Parental Income – the higher their parents' income the more likely children are to own a mobile phone.

Contrary to theories that mobile phones can be an unwelcome distraction for children, the study found no effective correlation between children's ownership and usage of mobile phones and the time they spent on other activities.

The study also examined children's attitudes toward mobile phones and the ways in which mobiles may influence them. It found that girls, more than boys, view their phones as essential tools in their lives and that children who use mobile e-mail/SMS more frequently tend to show higher levels of trust in new media such as the Internet and slightly reduced trust in traditional media including TV and newspapers.

NTT DOCOMO (MSRI) and the GSMA will provide more details about the study at the forthcoming Mobile World Congress, which takes place in Barcelona from February 16-19.

Notes to editors

- This first international comparative study was compiled by researchers at MSRI and builds on local surveys undertaken by mobile phone operators KTF in Korea, NTT DOCOMO in Japan and academics and researchers in China, Mexico and India.
- Since 2004, NTT DOCOMO's Mobile Society Research Institute (MSRI) has been studying the impact of mobile phones on society. The research institute operates independently of NTT DOCOMO, conducting research into both contemporary and potential future influences of mobile communications and disclosing its findings to the public through reports, publications and symposia