



Mobile VoIP Phones Soon

VoIP will soon take to the road, liberated from laptops and installed conveniently into 3G mobile phones following the announcement by two major players last week.



Skype and its first mobile carrier partner, Hutchison Whampoa, announced at a press conference during the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona that they have struck a deal to enable Skype VoIP services on mobile smartphone handsets using the 3G network.

The Hutchison 3 Group in Australia has made no announcement as yet, but the parent company announced last week it expects to be the first to market with Skype-enabled mobile devices.

The company said it is already running trials in Sweden and plans to roll-out the service in Austria, Australia, Hong Kong, Sweden, the UK and Italy. Three plans to launch a commercial Australian service later this year.

The 3 Sweden trial is a Skype bundle with a 3G flat-rate subscription and 3G data card.

The challenge will be working out how to sell something that is a replacement product for your main income driver. Three said it has not yet determined exactly how to price the service. It may be based on a monthly subscription, or as bundled minutes, as it does with text messaging and e-mail.

"Skype on 3G smartphones, datacards and other devices is a service that our customers will be thrilled to use. With Skype they can talk for as long as they want with their friends around the world. It will be a great addition to our existing wide range of multi-media mobile broadband services. We believe Skype is yet another reason for people to choose 3 - customers demand a choice of innovative services and we are delighted to be working with Skype to deliver that, said Christian Salbaing, Managing Director of Europe Telecommunications at Hutchison 3. "We look forward to offering it to our subscribers in our key markets starting with Sweden and then in our other markets as soon as user trials are concluded."

"With Skype on mobile devices, people can keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues wherever they go. This takes Skype beyond the PC into the mobile world," said Niklas Zennström, Skype CEO and co-founder. "I believe this will accelerate the adoption and use of Skype to new levels."