

Skype battles to keep up in mobiles

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The pace which mobile VoIP services are being rolled out marks a major new development and competition front and makes even more curious Skype's reported view that it will take 3-4 years to see widespread use of Skype-enabled mobile phones.

DSL Reports says that 3G networks aren't capable of handling both data and voice to ensure call quality and the lack of WiFi availability is also an inhibitor that Skype says it can conquer, but which will take time.

The single biggest inhibitor remains carrier non co-operation. But as Google's open platform juggernaut forces the carriers to accept all applications, the huge cost savings for consumers moving to VoIP is, in my view, going to cause an explosion in VoIP usage.

Already, there are a number of early mobile VoIP providers, such as Mobivox, 8x8 and Truphone, and a spate of calling applications, the most recent being Raketu's new BlackBerry VoIP calling service, that save consumers around 47 cents a minute on standard landline calls from, for instance, the U.S. to Asia-Pacific.

The slew of announcements at last week's CES confirmed mobile VoIP is one of the hot tech sectors, and Skype is likely to see itself further left behind if it seriously thinks it has three to four years before the world is ready for mobile IP services.

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