

Google: Mobile Phones Are The Future Of The Internet

By Stephen Wellman, Feb 20, 2007

The future of the Web is smaller than you think. And also much bigger, according to Google Vice President Vinton Cerf. Cerf, speaking in India this week, predicted that mobile phones, not PCs, are the future of the Web.

Cerf said that while the number of netizens has rocketed from 50 million in 1997 to 1.1 billion today, it still only reaches one sixth of the earth's population. Compare that to the world's 2.5 billion cell phone users. India alone adds seven million new cell phone users every month.

Cell phones continue to outpace PCs in terms of growth in emerging markets and there is little reason to think that this will stop.

That's why the way to the remaining 5.5 billion people without the Internet is through cell phones. Mobile phones are cheaper than PCs and they are more ubiquitous. And thanks to the continued growth of 3G, mobile broadband will likely be a better bet for high-speed access in most of these markets than wireline broadband.

Last week at 3GSM, the wireless industry kept talking about emerging markets. This is one of the reasons the industry is so excited about the falling prices of smartphones. The more inexpensive, software-enabled phones there are on the market the easier it will be to get people in emerging markets online.