

# Consumers 'Dumb' to Mobile Phone Usability Could Hamper Mobile Commerce

Submitted by: Speed Communications

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Majority of Consumers Admit They Can't Work Out How to Access or Use Mobile Services

16 November, 2004, Cambridge - While Christmas 2004 is expected to see record mobile phone sales, new handsets supporting advanced mobile services may not yield the additional revenues that mobile operators have set their hopes on. 85 per cent of consumers admit to being 'too dumb' to access or use mobile services due to increasing device complexity, finding mobile phones more complex to use than 2 years ago. Nearly three quarters feel that handsets have become too difficult to navigate around.

These are the key findings of research undertaken by Wacom Components, which looked at consumer views on mobile phone usability, in particular when accessing mobile services. 200 mobile phone users were surveyed over a two week period during October 2004 in the run-up to Christmas.

The research revealed that although 78 per cent of consumers now own handsets through which they can access data centric mobile services such as games, ring tones and information services only a third of consumers are using them. 76 per cent of respondents were not using them as they were too complex to access and operate, with only 10 per cent citing cost factors for lack of use and only 6 per cent lack of interest in the type of mobile services that are currently on offer.

"Ultimately the success or failure of new mobile services will be down to simplicity," said Justin Staines, sales and marketing director, Wacom Components. "The average consumer in Western Europe is predicted to make approximately 28 transactions a year via the mobile phone by 2009 and the mobile industry is expected to cash in to the tune of an astonishing \$40bn\*. But if consumers cannot simply access and use applications to perform these transactions, this could be just a pipe dream. As the number of applications multiplies and device functionality increases, it is critical the handset manufacturers start taking device usability seriously. If they fail to heed these warnings consumers will remain dumb to accessing mobile services and the industry will miss out on this vital revenue."

If handset manufacturers were to simplify mobile phone usability, 55 per cent of consumers felt that they would be encouraged to use more mobile services and nearly a third would increase their usage with further reductions in pricing and special offers.

Although the design and form factor are still important considerations for consumers when selecting handsets, the research also revealed that ease of use is increasing in importance with nearly a quarter of consumers seeing this as the most significant consideration when purchasing a new device. Device functionality and the number of applications a handset supports were singled out by nearly half of the respondents as the biggest influencer.

Wacom Components is a Symbian Platinum Partner and is working closely with Symbian on the development of small form factor sizes for all Symbian platforms including Series 60. Wacom Components' conducted this

consumer study as part of its ongoing research and development for its Penabled technology. This is a pen-based system that unlocks the potential of new potential mobile applications and provides a more flexible and natural interface designed to make complex electronic devices simple to use.

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Note to Editors

\* Juniper Research White Paper: 'Mobile Commerce (M-Commerce) & Micropayment Strategies', October 2004.

About Wacom Components

WACOM Components Europe Ltd, a subsidiary of WACOM Europe GmbH, is focused on the design and delivery of Wacom's world-leading Penabled™ interface technology to mobile device manufacturers. Based in Cambridge, UK, Wacom Components provides a complete OEM pen interface solution for mobile digital devices such as Smartphones, PDAs and the Microsoft Tablet PC.

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[www.wacom-components.co.uk](http://www.wacom-components.co.uk)

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