



## 3-3-0

## “Public Service” Overview

## Background to the theme

Mobile phones are increasing in popularity among children and elderly people, and their importance as a form of personal information terminal, which offer more people the possibility of using them than do personal computers, is well established.

As this importance continues, public bodies and government authorities increasingly recognize mobile phones as a valid method of distributing information, for the concepts of e-government and electronic local authorities. Government information and disaster information via terrestrial digital broadcasting, which is also called one-segment broadcasting is under consideration since it began in April 2006, increasing the significance of mobile phones.

On the other hand, the low uptake in utilization of electronic applications and paperwork available through e-government and electronic local authority services is considered a significant problem, and the electronic application system for passports was withdrawn on August 31st, 2006. The introduction of electronic applications, however, offers governments the opportunity to lower administrative costs over the long term, and it seems desirable that measures are considered to increase the convenience and benefit of utilizing such systems to consumers. In the light of this, there is a move to promote electronic applications through mobile phones, since they are already established as a means of information communication.

## Attributes of the theme and specific topics

Within the area of services offered by government, it seems that the use of information services has struggled to grow, but the influence of New IT Reform Strategy means that services facilitating electronic applications and paperwork via mobile phones are about to become mainstream. Consideration is also underway of the creation of mobile communities systems such as local SNS networks.

In terms of disaster and crime prevention, since mobile phones now include television and radio functions, they can now be used as a method of collecting information during a disaster situation. One-segment broadcasting also offers the potential for more effective and accurate information distribution.

In the fields of medical and social welfare, mobile phones are already used regularly as a means of collecting and distributing information relating to emergency care during evenings and weekends. They are also already used widely by people with dis-

abilities, in a range of support roles for their daily lives.

In the education field, various cutting-edge educational functions are becoming available, such as the input and output of multi-media movies and images. On the other hand, while general educational and learning contents are increasing, the use of such contents has not grown significantly.

## Future predictions

2006 may have lacked any significant changes in this area, but several developments took place which are considered to indicate future changes. The first of these was the introduction of one-segment broadcasting, as mentioned above. One-segment broadcasting offers the opportunity to effectively communicate local information at a low cost, through data broadcast, telecommunication interlocking system and automatic activation system. The spread of compatible handsets has only just begun, but once the handsets become more common, it is thought that the communication of local information and government information will reach an entirely new format.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued the Manual regarding the Online Use of Electronic Local Government in July 2006, relating to the use of electronic applications and paperwork. Responding to the New IT Reform Strategy, which set a target for the take-up of electronic applications and paperwork to reach 50% by 2010 among local and central government authorities, the Ministry has issued the policy to promote electronic applications and paperwork that does not require strict personal checks through mobile phones. Some services of electronic applications and paperwork through mobile phones introduced by local authorities has been welcomed and much used; such situation might come to influence not only government services compatible with mobile phones, but the whole idea of e-government and electronic local authorities.

Furthermore, the increasing introduction of child-friendly mobile phone handsets was another particular feature of 2006. The inclusion of GPS in these phones is designed to prevent crime such as kidnapping, and internet access restrictions are in place to ensure that children are not permitted to access dating and other sites that may result in them being involved in criminal activity. Such child-friendly mobile phones with helpful features would give greater peace of mind to parents when they let their children have mobile phones. This move will also influence the variety of situations in which mobile phones are used, as well as

promoting communication between parents and children, and as the use of mobile phones in school settings becomes more normal, they are expected to bring about changes in education methods.

3-3-1	Public Administrative Services	Key Words
It is already possible to make more than 95% of applications and paperwork submissions to national and local government authorities online, but the actual take-up rate remains around 10%. With the aim to increase this and go over 50% by 2010, the introduction of new services available through mobile phones are getting into full swing. This section introduces specific examples of services being introduced, such as mobile payments, and the use of mobile phones in the creation of local communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mobile payments ■ Disaster ■ Digital divide ■ Local community ■ Citizens</li> </ul>
3-3-2	Disaster and Crime Prevention	Key Words
Mobile phones are already used in many places to communicate information during disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. One-segment broadcasting has brought about the potential for even greater use of mobile phones during disaster situations. From the perspective of protecting children, a range of crime prevention services are available, and since April 2007, mobile phones feature a GPS function that notifies emergency services with the user's location if an emergency call is made.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disaster ■ Earthquakes ■ Disaster message board services ■ Congestion ■ Crime prevention ■ Crime</li> </ul>
3-3-3	Medical and Welfare	Key Words
Mobile phones are still not used particularly regularly in the fields of medicine or pharmacy, but many consumers want to use or do use them in order to access emergency information such as finding out which doctors or emergency departments are available at night or during holiday periods. Mobile phone functions and services are also increasingly used to provide health management and diagnostic information in remote areas, as well as to support the lifestyles of elderly people and people with disabilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ People with disabilities ■ Elderly people ■ Social care</li> </ul>
3-3-4	Education	Key Words
Many schools still prohibit mobile phones, but at the practical research level, the use of information technology for the classroom is gathering significant interest. At last year's Japan Society for Educational Technology Annual National Conference, the theme of “Educational Use of Mobile Technology” was debated as one of the conference themes, and mobile phones are increasingly being used in extra-curricular education, giving examples that can be utilized for future developments.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ School ■ Portable music terminals</li> </ul>