## WHEN JAPANESE USE THE INTERNET

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) reports that Japan's wireless Internet is booming. The number of people subscribing for the first time to wireless access services tripled from 7.5 to 22 million in the eight-month period from March to October 2000. New mobile phone subscribers now exceed new fixed-line subscribers by 50 percent. Researchers are watching the situation closely, and one organization, The Mobile Contents Forum, has conducted two surveys of wireless users, one in September 1999 and the latest in late October 2000 (several questions shown below). Overall, the number of respondents who had never used a wireless Net access service fell from 53.5 percent in 1999 to 34.8 percent in 2000. Matters of cost were of greatest concern, and services like mobile email functionality mattered more than features like sound quality. Handset design was also a concern, especially the input method and the small screens. Will users be willing to pay for 3G services like MP3 download? Just because something can be done doesn't mean customers will be willing to buy it.
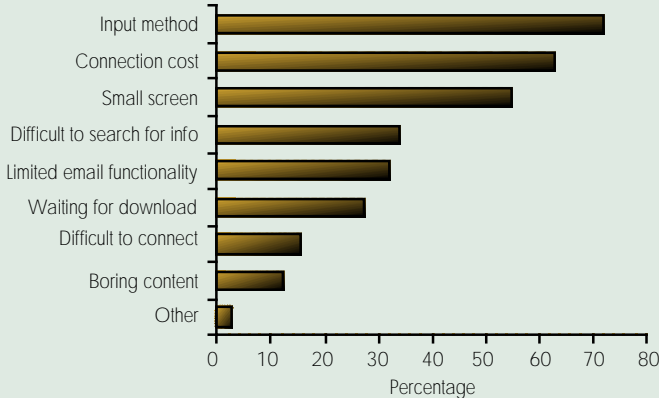
DESIRABLE FUNCTIONS FOR WIRELESS HANDSETS
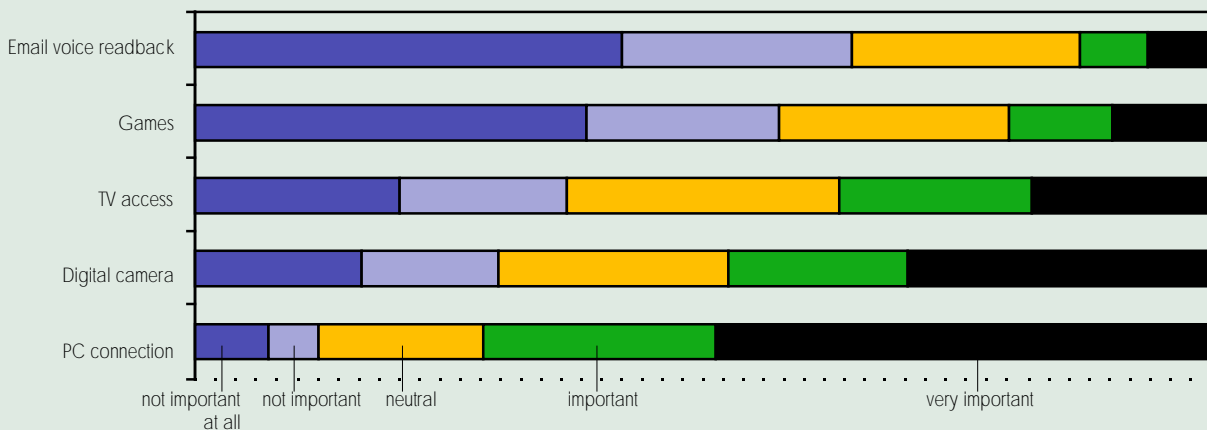
(Source: The Mobile Contents Forum; 1,089 valid responses out of 10,000.)

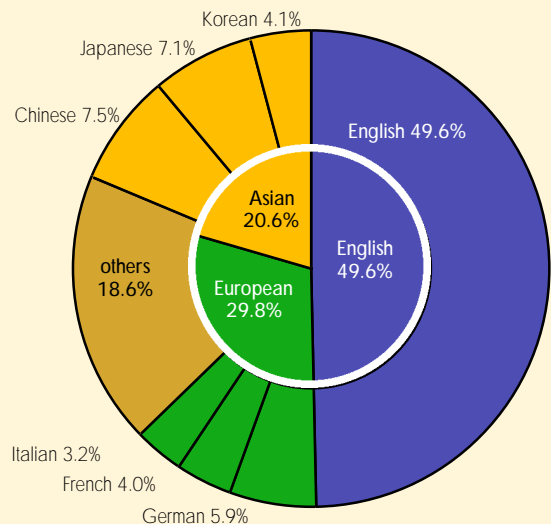### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA WHEN YOU BUY A CELLPHONE?
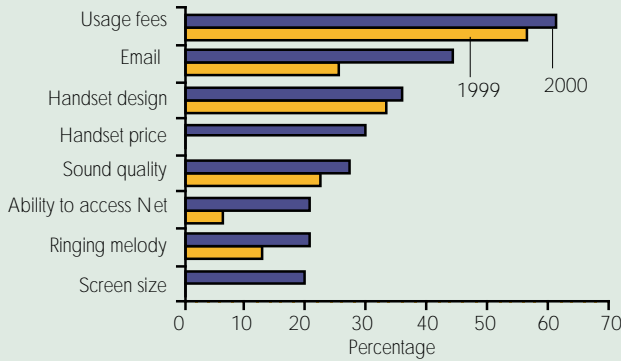
WHAT BOTHERS YOU ABOUT MOBILE NET ACCESS?

Compiled by Chiaki Kitada (chiaki@japaninc.com)

LANGUAGE ON THE NET

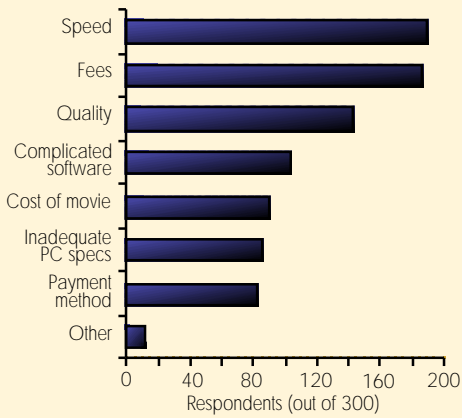Last year, we told you Japanese was the second-most common language on the Net. Not any more, according to online market researcher Global Research, which reports that now Chinese is No. 2, at 7.5 percent of users regardless of national origin. English is still No. 1, but three of the top five languages used on the Net are Asian. Looks like a market opportunity to us.

(Source: Global Research, September 2000. www.glreach.com)
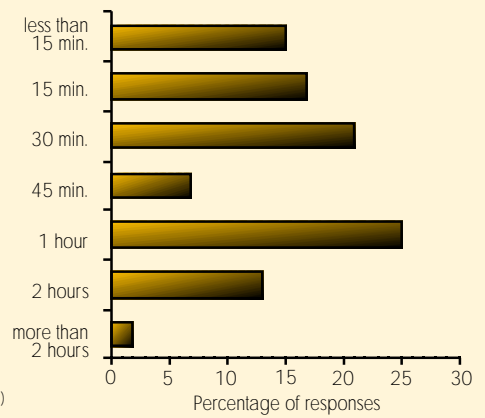
SURVEYING STREAMING SUBJECTS

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS TO VIEWING MOVIES VIA THE WEB?

Chart — horizontal bar chart, X-axis "Respondents (out of 300)" from 0 to 200:
- Speed
- Fees
- Quality
- Complicated software
- Cost of movie
- Inadequate PC specs
- Payment method
- Other

A survey conducted by Internet.com and Infoplant shows 60 percent of Japanese Web users are interested in viewing movies via the Net, but generally not ones longer than two hours. Interestingly, more respondents would watch a one-hour Net flick than a 15-minute one. Needs to be some kind of story.

(Source: japan.internet.com and Infoplant www.info-plant.com: 300 respondents; November 2000.)

WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE LENGTH FOR A WEB MOVIE?

Chart — horizontal bar chart, X-axis "Percentage of responses" from 0 to 30:
- less than 15 min.
- 15 min.
- 30 min.
- 45 min.
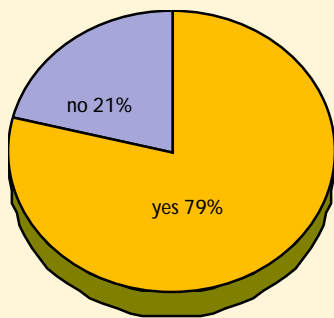- 1 hour
- 2 hours
- more than 2 hours

RECEIVING RECEIVED OPINION

Seventy-nine percent of Web users surveyed last November by the Sanwa Research Institute, Internet.com, and Infoplant think the Net will boost the public's ability to express opinions to elected officials. Eighty-nine percent support Net voting for the position of prime minister – maybe *that's* what's needed to reverse voter antipathy. Partly due to last December's unsuccessful revolt in the LDP led by Koichi Kato, 42 percent said they plan to become more active voters, while the majority, 58 percent, admitted they just don't care. Kato failed partly because he relied too much on expressions of email support from the public, while failing to build party consensus. "This is a warning sign for Japanese society where everybody is obsessed with IT," said Kyocera honorary chairman Kazuo Inamori, also chair of the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce. With thinking like that, maybe the Net won't matter to Japan's politicians, after all.

(Source: japan.internet.com, Infoplant www.info-plant.com, Sanwa Research Institute: 300 respondents: November 2000.)

WILL THE INTERNET OPEN UP NEW WAYS TO FORM PUBLIC OPINION?

Pie chart:
- no 21%
- yes 79%

HOW CAN THE NET BE USED IN POLITICS?

Stacked horizontal bar chart, X-axis "Number of respondents" from 0 to 250, categories: very interested, interested, not interested:
- Public BBS debate
- Diet member and expert BBS debates
- Real-time public opinion survey
- Public opinion survey analysis (privacy protected)