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First mobile videophone introduced

May 18, 1999
Web posted at: 3:56 p.m. EDT (1956 GMT)

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(CNN) -- Videophones are nothing new. They are telephones with built-in cameras that can transmit choppy video images making phone conversations something of a dress-up affair.

But now, a Japanese company has unveiled what it says is the world's first mobile videophone. The VisualPhone VP-210 is the brainchild of Kyocera Corporation.

The mobile videophone is the same size as any normal mobile phone, but it comes equipped with a small built-in camera and a two-inch color LCD screen.

Along with the audio signal, the VP-210 transmits and receives images in real time at a rate of about two frames per second.

The VisualPhone also works as a camera. It will store up to 20 JPEG images. The VP-210 can also send or receive e-mail messages containing images to personal computers or other devices through the Internet via e-mail services.

Hajime Kimura, a Kyocera marketing executive, says the device can be used in many different ways. "Users can use this phone not only to talk visually to their counterparts, but also they will be able to use it for business purposes. For example, if a constructor brings this phone to a site under construction, he can show what the site is like to the people at headquarters using this phone. So, they can do business checking the situation at real time."

Kyocera plans to put the new phone on the market towards the end of July, retailing at a cost of 40,000 yen (\$325)

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