

Trends from 2009 Mobile World Congress

 By [Angus Robinson](#)

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MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS, BARCELONA, SPAIN: Every year, the Mobile World Congress (previously 3GSM) has its 'hot topics' that are all the buzz - which are usually about a year ahead of the market in terms of adoption. This year is no different.

The highlights calendar would look something like this:

- 2005: 3G and mobile content and portals
- 2006: mobile games and mobile video
- 2007: mobile television and mobile advertising
- 2008: mobile internet
- 2009: [long term evolution \(LTE\)](#), location-based services (LBS), social networking and application stores



Kevin Spacey talks about mobile film at Mobile World Congress 2009, Barcelona, Spain.

Taking a quick look at some of 2009's trends

- **Handsets:** there are always big announcements by the handset manufacturers. This year, the screens are bigger with many more touchscreens; interfaces are slicker and more iPhone-like; speed connectivity is higher; and memory capabilities are larger.

It has also been the year of new operating systems, with Android making a strong showing.

- **Mobile internet devices and netbooks:** from both an exhibitor and attendee perspective, smaller computing devices are being seen everywhere. Netbooks from Dell, HP, Acer and Asus are popular with the business travelers - with the large laptops of old seemingly being sent to the hand-me-down pile.

Intel has a range of tiny mobile internet devices (MIDs) that is a category even smaller than Netbooks which are not really workable as laptops, and too big to be a smartphone. Not really sure if they meet a real need just yet.

- **Location-based services:** there are many GPS-based location-based services that are being presented at this year's congress. The linkup between Garmin and Asus to launch the Nuvi Phone is a clear indication of this, as is Nokia's purchase of Navteq.

Additionally, the combination of location-aware devices and the social networking phenomena is everywhere. Application developers are using this opportunity to create smart, useful services to deliver on the concept of contextual relevance. Mobile social networks are anticipated to attract over 600 million users in 2012 from 2008 levels of 15 million.

- **Application stores:** as [covered yesterday](#), there are application stores everywhere. It is still early days, but the opportunities for developers to monetise their innovation are immense.
- **Long term evolution (LTE):** the step up from WiMax and HSDPA/HDUPA is also getting a fair amount of coverage. LTE offers very high-speed mobile broadband, with numbers between 20 - 42MBS being mooted. Look forward to MTN making some noise in this space during 2009.
- **Mobile advertising:** following on from previous years, mobile advertising is still considered a vital component of

monetising many of the mobile services and applications. The key thought has been to ensure that the right ads are delivered to the right person at the right time - and they have the ability to interact and engage with those adverts in a meaningful manner that provides value to both the ad recipient and advertiser.

The scale of the Mobile World Congress is immense, so these are just a few of the takeouts from my perspective. There are probably a couple more that haven't yet caught my eye.

Look out for Angus's wrap-up tomorrow, Friday, 20 February 2009, and follow him on Twitter - [@angusrobinson](#) - for on-the-go microblogging.

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ABOUT ANGUS ROBINSON

Angus Robinson is the founder and CEO of Brandsh Media (www.brandsh.com), a mobile and social media company that includes mobile agency Brandsh and media business Mbbmedia. Founded in early 2007, Brandsh works with clients such as Standard Bank, MNet, the JSE and the Bond Exchange of SA to develop and implement innovative mobile and social media campaigns. Angus is active in the mobile industry as a member of the WASPA Management Committee until early 2009 and as a founder member of the Mobile Marketing Association's South Africa Local Council, as well as participating in numerous industry conferences and being a guest lecturer at the University of Johannesburg and the AAA School of Advertising. Follow Angus on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/angusrobinson>.

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