

## Cell Phone Use Eases Up

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 31, 2012



Cell-phone subscription rates are booming, with Russians often owning several SIM cards.

Russian mobile phone subscriptions reached 227.55 million at the end of the second quarter, equal to 159.3 percent of the population, compared with 225.84 million at the end of the first quarter, according to data from market research group AC&M.

The total number of valid SIM cards was up 4.8 million year on year. The number exceeds 100 percent because many people own several SIM cards. Russia's population was 142 million in 2009, according to the State Statistics Service.

In Ukraine, the number of SIM cards rose to 54.9 million from 54 million at the end of March, and was equal to 120.4 percent of the population — up from 118.5 percent, AC&M said Monday.

AC&M this year discontinued publishing cellular subscriber reports on a monthly basis and switched to quarterly reports.

MTS was the leading service provider, with 105.30 million subscriptions as of June 30, up

from 105.19 million subscriptions as of March 31. Of the total, MTS had 69.59 million SIM cards in Russia, up from 69.38 million. The remaining subscribers were in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The runner-up, VimpelCom, increased the number of subscriptions to 101.39 million from 101.23 million. Of these, Russian subscriptions rose to 55.74 million from 55.62 million. MegaFon, which came third, had 63.68 million SIM cards, up from 63.08 million. The number of its Russian subscriptions rose to 62.06 million from 61.63 million. Tele2 Russia's subscriber base totaled 21.63 million, while Rostelecom had 12.94 million SIM cards, Cellular Communications MOTIV had 2.27 million subscriptions, SMARTS Group's subscriptions amounted to 1.93 million and Sky Link's subscriber base stood at 1.29 million.

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