Mobile Broadband Subscriptions Up to 2.3 Billion in 1Q

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Global mobile broadband subscriptions grew 35 percent annually to reach 2.3 billion in the first quarter, according to the latest edition of Ericsson's annual mobility report [1]. The rate of growth is down slightly from the 45 percent Ericsson observed last year.

Mobile subscriptions overall hit 6.8 billion, continuing a growth trend of seven percent annually and two percent quarterly. Ericsson forecast 9.2 billion mobile subscriptions by 2019, with more than 80 percent of them for mobile broadband.

Over that period of growth, LTE subscriptions will rise to 2.6 billion and WCDMA/HSPA subscriptions will rise to 4.5 billion. Ericsson projected a steady decline for GSM/EDGE subscriptions.

The move toward LTE and away from 2G coincides with Ericsson's projected inflation of mobile data traffic. The report forecasts a 10x increase for mobile data traffic and a 10x increase for smartphone traffic between 2013 and 2019.

Breaking down the traffic increases by region, the report saw North America experiencing a 7x increase while the Asia-Pacific region will clock growth at an astounding 12x rate, skyrocketing to nearly nine exabytes monthly.

Ericsson already sees video accounting for around 40 percent of the mobile data traffic and by 2019, the report says mobile video will account for more than 50 percent. Video's bigger slice of the pie comes on projected 13x traffic over mobile growth between 2013 and 2019.

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