

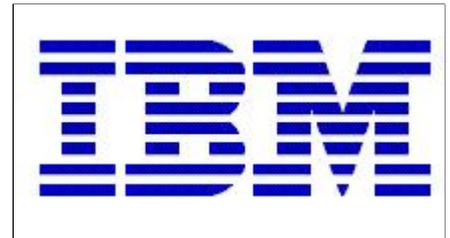
IBM investing \$100 million in mobile research

by [Lance Whitney](#)

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IBM thinks it can improve the state of mobile communications, and it's investing millions of dollars toward that effort.

Big Blue announced on Tuesday that it will spend \$100 million over the next five years on a major research project to advance mobile technology for both consumers and businesses. With an increasing dependence on cell phones and portable devices worldwide, IBM's goal is to make mobile communications more efficient and easier to use.



"Mobile devices are gradually becoming ubiquitous and helping us transcend many boundaries--geographical, economic, and social, among others," says Dr. Guruduth Banavar, global leader of the mobile communications focus for IBM Research and director of IBM Research-India. "With high penetration, simple user interface, and significant cost advantage for end users, mobile telephony holds the future of communication and exchange of information for the enterprise."

The company plans to focus its research on three key areas: mobile enterprise enablement; emerging market mobility; and enterprise to end-user mobile experience.

Mobile enterprise enablement

With more business users relying on their cell phones, companies need a way to manage and easily deploy information to those devices. IBM's new technology dubbed "BlueStar" is striving to automate the use of mobile phones and applications within a large enterprise. A recent pilot test of BlueStar helped an insurance company more easily send claims to the right agents on their cell phones by using GPS tracking and calendaring tools. The system then processed information about those claims, which was transmitted securely back to the agents.

Emerging market mobility

According to information that IBM obtained from [Internet World Stats](#), 83 percent of the world still does not have regular Internet access through a computer. IBM Research has set up a pilot in southern Indian to help consumers and small business owners find and share Internet information via their cell phones. People in the program speak into their phones to grab content, so Web-enabled smartphones are not even needed.

Enterprise to end-user mobile experience

Here IBM wants to build a better relationship between the mobile user and the back end. By analyzing consumer and business habits, the mobile Web would get better at providing personalized content.

"Mobility and the associated analytics will change virtually every enterprise business process," said Paul Bloom, chief technologist, IBM Telecom Research. "It will change the relationship between enterprises and their customers, their employees and their partners, enabling them to do business in more intelligent, efficient ways."

IBM says this technology will allow people to monitor energy use at home and at work, pay more conveniently for online purchases, and keep in closer touch with personal and professional networks. Access to personal information via a mobile device could also help doctors, emergency workers, and health care providers more effectively treat their patients.

IBM Research employs 3,000 scientists across eight major labs throughout the world.



Lance Whitney wears a few different technology hats--journalist, Web developer, and software trainer. He's a contributing editor for Microsoft TechNet Magazine and writes for other computer publications and Web sites. You can follow Lance on Twitter at [@lancewhit](#). Lance is a member of the CNET Blog Network, and he is not an employee of CNET.

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