Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast, 2013 – 2018: Up, Up and Up Some More

Market Study
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Abstract

Due to both the increasing number of mobile subscribers in the world and the subscribers' desire to stay constantly connected through their mobile device, the amount of data flowing over the world's mobile network is increasing exponentially. *i*GR estimates that in 2013, approximately 1.4 million terabytes of mobile data traffic flowed over the world's cellular data networks per month, and by 2018, *i*GR forecasts mobile data traffic will rise to 13.5 million terabytes per month.

*i*GR's mobile data traffic model first estimates the amount of bandwidth consumed by a given activity, such as checking email, streaming music or video, or checking social sites, on a per application or per use basis.

*i*GR has created subscriber usage profiles based on its primary and secondary research and has divided subscribers into four different usage categories: light, medium, heavy and extreme. In the mobile data traffic model, these categories are defined by the activities and applications that tend to be used by that type of subscriber, as well as by the duration of the activity, transmission time, and frequency of use, such as number of times per day, week or month. The mobile data forecast determines the amount of mobile data traffic in megabytes per month for each type of subscriber.

The final process in the mobile data traffic model is determining the number of light, medium, heavy and extreme subscribers in each region of the world. For example, North America, with its high LTE penetration would be expected to have a high number of medium and heavy data users. On the other hand, Latin America, with a high 2G penetration, has considerably more subscribers in the light data usage category.

This report forecasts the mobile data traffic from 2013 to 2018 at the global level, as well as for the following regions: North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Japan. At each level, *i*GR forecasts the number of light, medium, heavy and extreme subscribers, the number of mobile connections, the amount of data usage per type of subscriber per month, the amount of data usage per connection per month, and the total mobile traffic per month.

Key questions addressed:

- What are the drivers of mobile data traffic?
- What are some of the limiting factors on the amount of mobile data traffic?
- What is mobile data usage today in all regions of the world and at what rate is mobile data usage expected to grow over the forecast period?

- How does mobile data usage differ between light, medium, heavy and extreme subscribers?
- What types of subscribers dominate each regional market?
- How many mobile subscribers and mobile connections are there in each region?
- For each region, how much mobile data traffic is used by an average mobile connection?
- For each region, how much mobile data traffic is used by an average subscriber?

Who should read this report?

- Mobile operators
- Device OEMs
- Mobile infrastructure vendors
- Mobile backhaul services and solutions providers
- Content providers and distributors
- Financial analysts and investors.