



Retweet this: Softbank Mobile Corp. CEO Masayoshi Son speaks onstage Tuesday a media event for the launch of the carrier's new mobile phone lineup. Many of the new cell phones come equipped with applications custom-built for micro-blogging on Twitter. KYODO PHOTO

Softbank debuts handsets with Twitter applications

By KAZUAKI NAGATA

Staff writer

Softbank Mobile Corp. unveiled new cell phones Tuesday boasting applications for the micro-blogging service Twitter.

Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son, an avid user of Twitter, said the move is aimed at making it easier for more people to "tweet," or comment, via their cell phones.

The number of Twitter users in Japan has been growing rapidly, but not many people were using the medium through cell phones except for iPhone users, which Softbank offers, he said.

Son said he thought it would be useful to preinstall the applications on the firm's new products, adding that Softbank worked with U.S.-based Twitter Inc. to provide the official Twitter Widget.

"I think the day is coming when people will think if there is no Twitter (application), it's not a cell phone," he said during a news conference in Tokyo.

Twitter had 108 million users worldwide as of April.

Ever since he began using the service in December, Son said his life has changed because it connects him with many other users. As of Tuesday, he had more than 287,400 followers.

"The first thing I do in the morning is check Twitter," said Son, adding he also uses it while at work and before going to bed.

"At first, I started using it for my business," he said. "But I just can't help enjoying it so much."

The news conference was broadcast live via Ustream, a free online live video broadcast. Twitter CEO Evan Williams took part as a guest through Ustream from the U.S.

"We are excited about the official Twitter Widget coming out" on Softbank's handsets, Williams said.

During the news conference, a massive presentation screen showed live comments from Twitter users watching via Ustream.

Son has been making business decision remarks on Twitter. For instance, he tweeted recently that Softbank will start flat-rate unlimited mail and Web service for Softbank customers traveling overseas, responding to customer gripes that the fees abroad are too high.



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