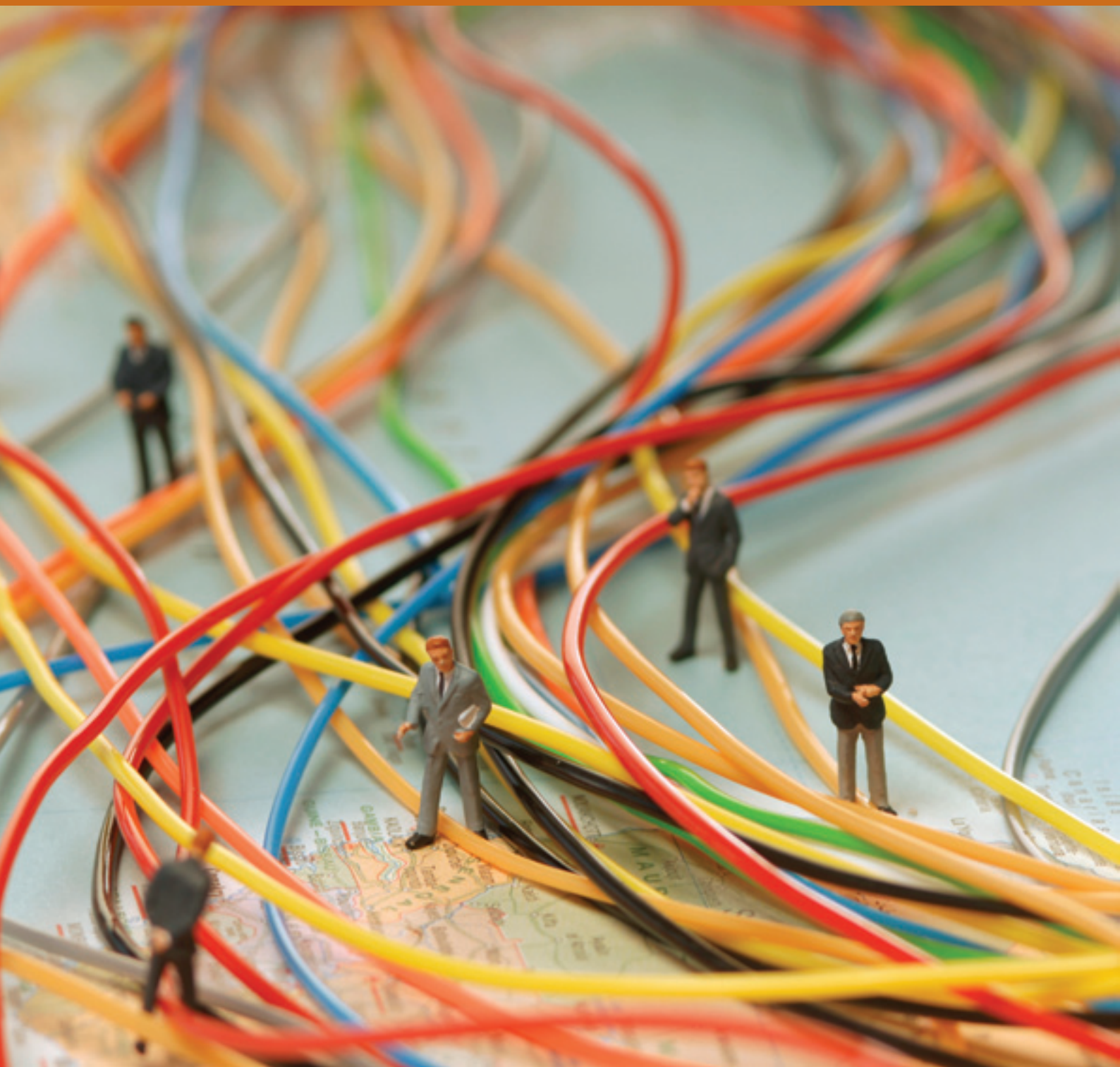


Connecting to Earth

Three billion people now have a mobile phone and this global connectivity brings huge opportunities for environmental empowerment. Vice President and Head of Environmental Affairs at Nokia, Kirsi Sormunen explains.



Not long ago, the thought of mobile phones being owned by hundreds of millions of people seemed like a utopia. Yet the milestone of 100 million mobile phone subscribers was reached in the mid-1990s, half a billion in 2000, 3 billion in 2007, and we're now heading towards 4 billion. Mobile technology has had a fundamental impact on the lives of many people, especially in developing countries. The network infrastructure is easier and less costly to build than traditional fixed telephony and has helped bridge the digital divide by providing a communications tool to people living in rural areas. According to a study by the London Business School in 2005, an increase of 10 mobile phones per 100 people in emerging markets translates to an impressive 0.6% growth in GDP.

There is also some good evidence that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and mobile technology in particular can help to combat climate change. New working methods such as video conferencing and working from home decrease the need for commuting which helps lower CO₂ emissions. Mobile phones are no longer just a phone, but multi-purpose devices that can include features such as an alarm clock, radio, video, camera, MP3 player and navigation system. Combining several products into one and replacing physical products with bytes, for example, being able to download music or other services is both material- as well as energy efficient. Furthermore, the technology enables greater energy efficiency by making homes, offices and transportation more energy efficient. There are a number of industry-wide initiatives underway that look at increasing the potential of ICT to reduce energy consumption. One of these is a report by the Global e-Sustainability Initiative and the Climate Group on the role of ICT in climate change, due out this year.

Nokia is fortunate to operate in an industry whose ecological footprint is fairly low. That being said, our leadership position calls for responsibility. Nokia is one of the most valuable brands in the world with more than one billion people now using our phones. We have a wide global outreach through our operations and production chain. Our aim is to be a leading company in environmental performance and offer products and solutions which enable sustainable choices. Our environmental work is based on life-cycle thinking covering the whole product life span and is incorporated into every aspect of our business. Incorporating environmental features can be a driver for innovation, an example of which is a recently launched mobile phone whose cover is partly made of bio-plastics. It comes with a charger whose stand-by energy use is minimized and is delivered in a small, compact package.

As our business focus is increasingly shifting towards software and services, we are looking into different ways of how mobile technology can further be used to contribute to sustainable development. This begins from very simple measures such as including a reminder in all our phones to unplug the charger once the battery is full. If all Nokia phone users would remember to do this, it would provide enough energy to power about 150,000 houses in Europe. An increasing number of mobile phones sold are also Internet capable which offers many new opportunities. You can already download an environmental catalogue to one of our latest devices which includes eco-tips, and you will soon be able to offset the CO₂ emissions of a flight you take with your mobile device. A downloadable learning tool on environmental issues is available in China, and WWF is running a "Stop Climate Change" campaign using mobile advertising banners. Both of these applications have been very popular among

mobile phone users. A similar initiative is the online community connect2earth which IUCN and WWF launched in March with Nokia support which offers another way of increasing environmental awareness with mobile phones.

We have all lived way beyond the ecological capacity of our planet for many years and are facing major environmental challenges related to biodiversity, water scarcity and global warming. The actions of individual governments, organizations and people are all needed to address these challenges. Ultimately, however, it comes down to the decisions and choices we make as leaders and individuals. Together we can all be a part of the solution and make a real difference. Mobile technology can play an important role in enabling and advocating sustainable choices. ■

www.nokia.com/environment

connect2earth

In March IUCN and WWF launched the green online community for youth—connect2earth—a website where young people can have their say on environmental issues. With the support of Nokia, connect2earth uses the latest technology to allow people to upload text as well as videos and photos created with their mobile phones or cameras. Users are able to rate and comment on other people's submissions. Each month they vote on a winner who receives the latest Nokia mobile phone. At the end of the competition in August, a grand-prize winner will be selected by a jury of prominent conservationists from around the world from a shortlist based on overall user ratings. The winner will travel to Barcelona to present his or her ideas to conservationists, world leaders, and prominent industry figures at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October.

www.connect2earth.org