



Telco Strategic Priorities for 2026



Ben Wood



Kester Mann



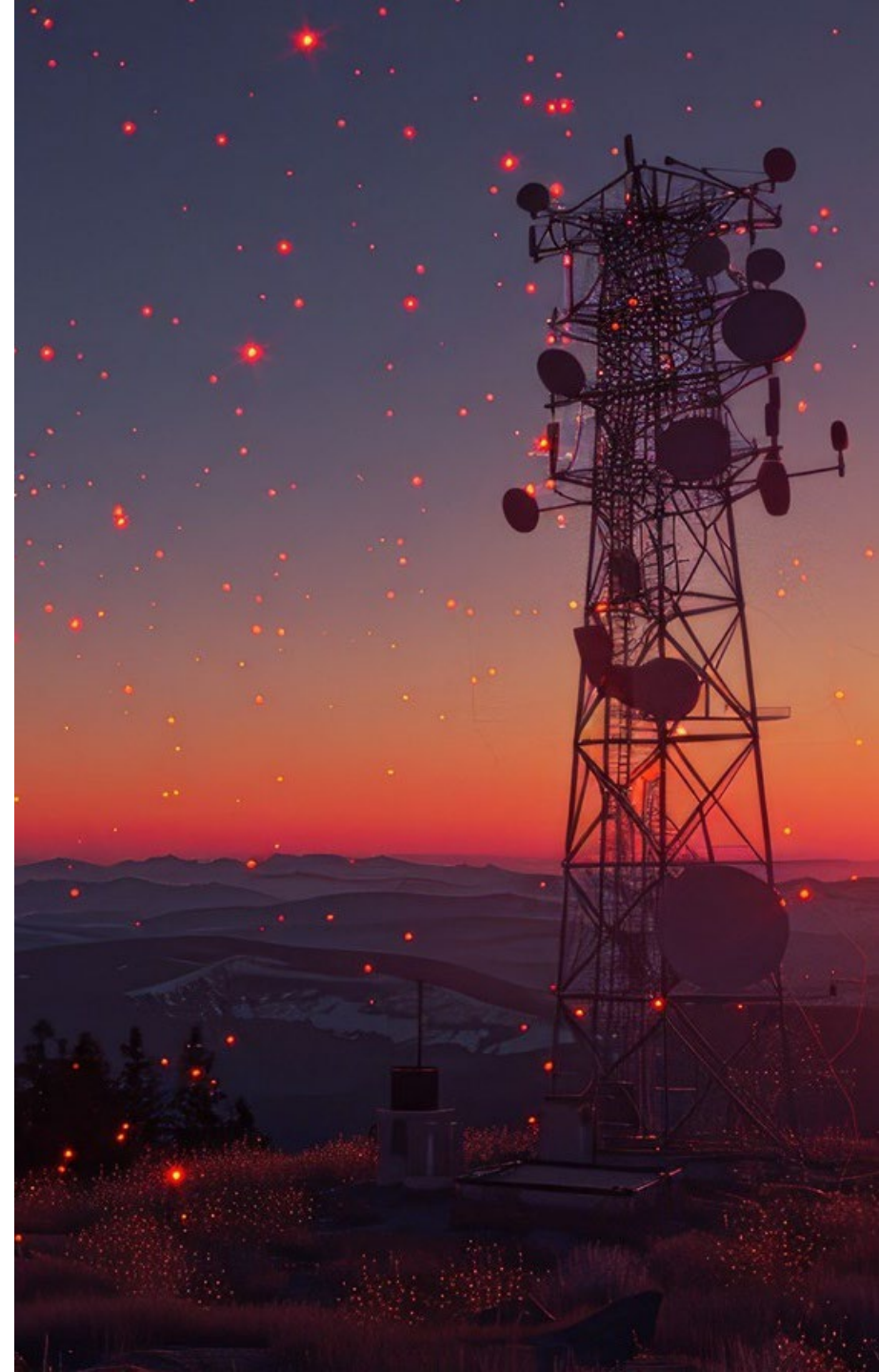
Ian Fogg



Hayden Shaw



Jessica Miller



Introduction



Ben Wood

Ben is an industry thought-leader in the **connected devices** landscape, spanning mobile phones, wearables, foldables, AI, virtual reality and the secondary market.



Kester Mann

Kester monitors consumer **telecom operator** trends and leads our annual UK survey, covering eSIM, tariffs, engagement with operators and convergence.



Ian Fogg

Ian focuses on **networks** and tracks roll-out of 5G, 5G-Advanced and 5G standalone as well as the road map for 6G harnessing AI.



Hayden Shaw

Hayden provides data and insight into **broadband and mobile** pricing and market share in consumer and business markets.



Jessica Miller

Jess is an expert in **smart home**, analysing device-makers' use of AI, subscription pricing models and hardware advancements to generate revenue.



Pricing



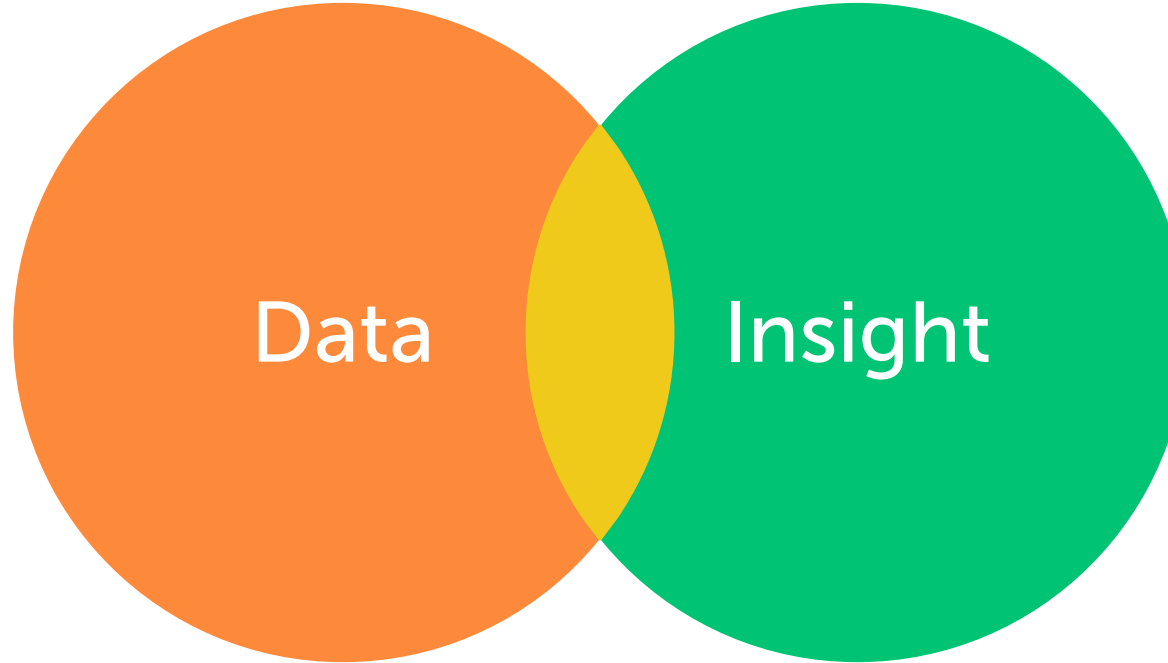
Reports



Surveys



Point-of-sale panels



Pulse



Forecasts



Call centre tools



Custom projects

CIRCULAR MARKETS LONDON.

**LEADING THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION ON
MOBILE DEVICE CIRCULARITY**

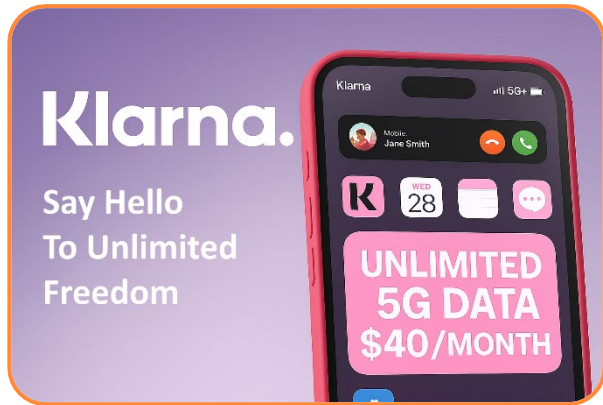
4 FEBRUARY 2026





Operators

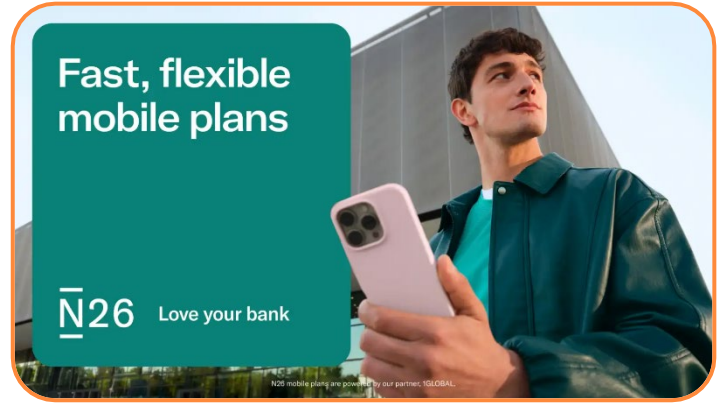
Fintech Pushes Into Mobile



Revolut

Revolut to launch Mobile Plans in a direct challenge to traditional network providers

Product & feature - 30 April 2025



nu

**Nubank launches NuCel,
new mobile phone service**

FINANCIAL TIMES

Monzo Bank Ltd + Add to myFT

Monzo plans UK mobile service as competition intensifies for big phone groups

Digital bank is exploring launching its own digital sim and offering monthly contracts

Fintech: Market Drivers



Opportunity to sell another digital product



Boost brand engagement and customer loyalty



Enablers can do much of the heavy-lifting

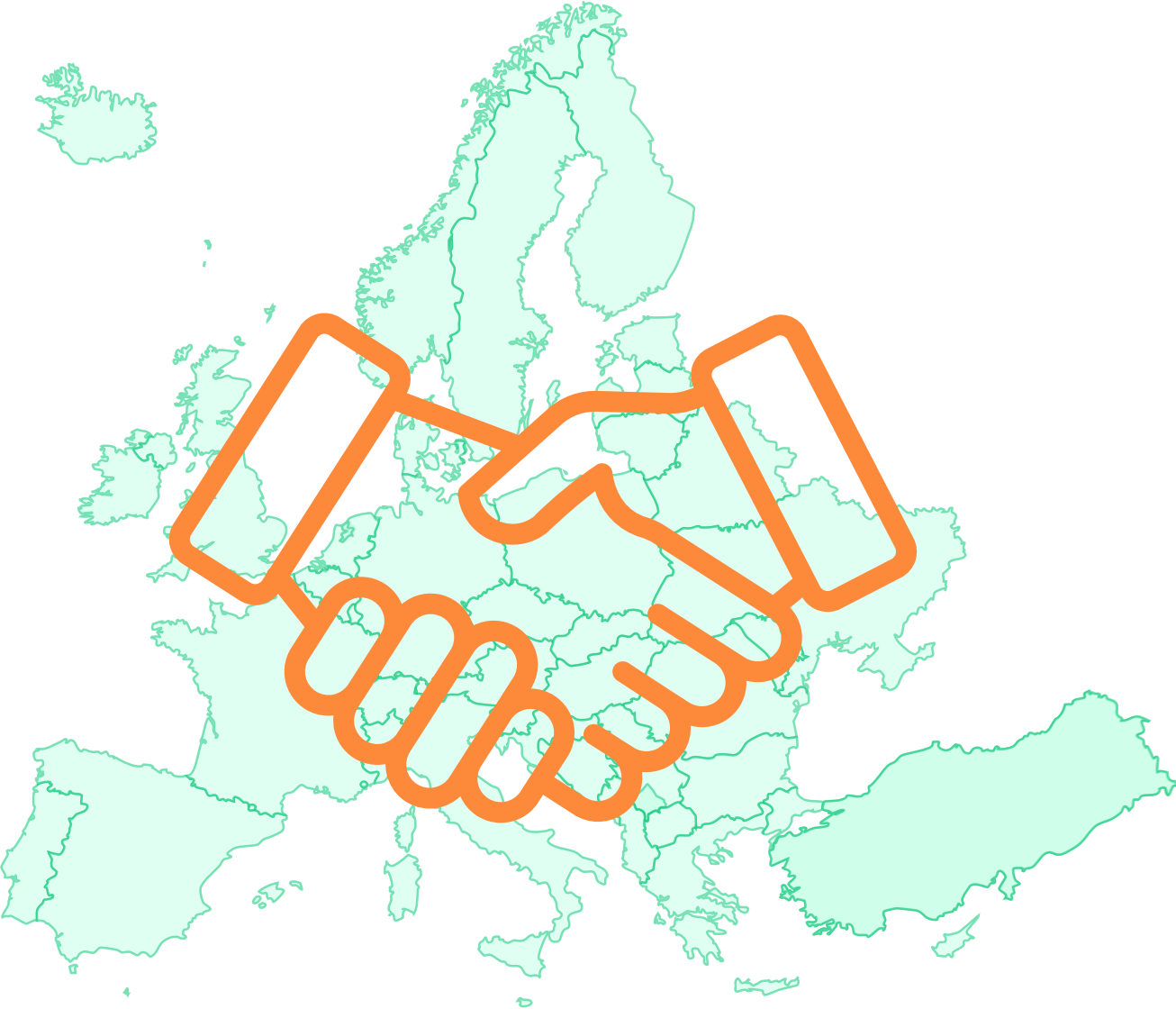


Rise of SIM-only plans, eSIM and online purchases

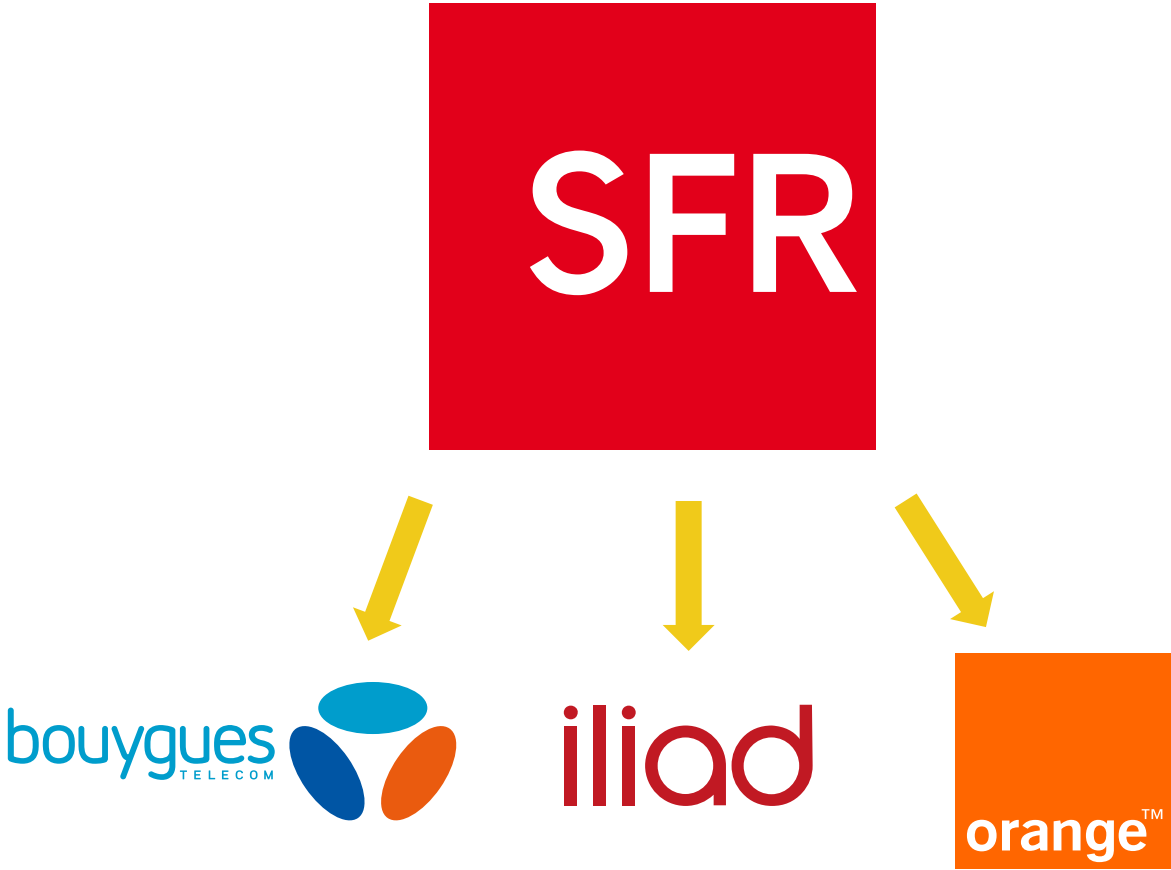


People are more comfortable signing-up to non-traditional telecom brands

Mergers and Acquisitions Are Back on the Agenda in Europe



France



Spain





iliad



Germany



Travel eSIM

Cheap Global eSIM Data
Roaming Packages

From £2.99
Stay connected in 200+ destinations

Where are you travelling to?

REVIEWS.io
★★★★★

Stay connected for Only \$1

Global coverage
Try before you fly

1 GB Data
1 day Validity
Buy for \$1.00

Travel without roaming charges

eSIM mobile data
Less than \$5/week

Where are you travelling to?

Affordable eSIM data for international travel

Get 5% off + up to 5% in Sally credits!

Summer deal:
✓ Get 5% off 10GB+ data plans.
✓ Plus, up to 5% back in Sally credits!

Where do you need mobile data?
Search for destination

Take a look at our promotion's [terms and conditions](#)

Stay **Connected** Worldwide
with **Ubigi Travel eSIM**

Enjoy affordable international data plans in 200+ destinations, no physical SIM card, no roaming fees.

Search data plans in 200+ destinations

Travel data in 200+ destinations

Prepaid plans from €3.99. Activate your eSIM in seconds and roam like you're at home.

Where do you need data for?

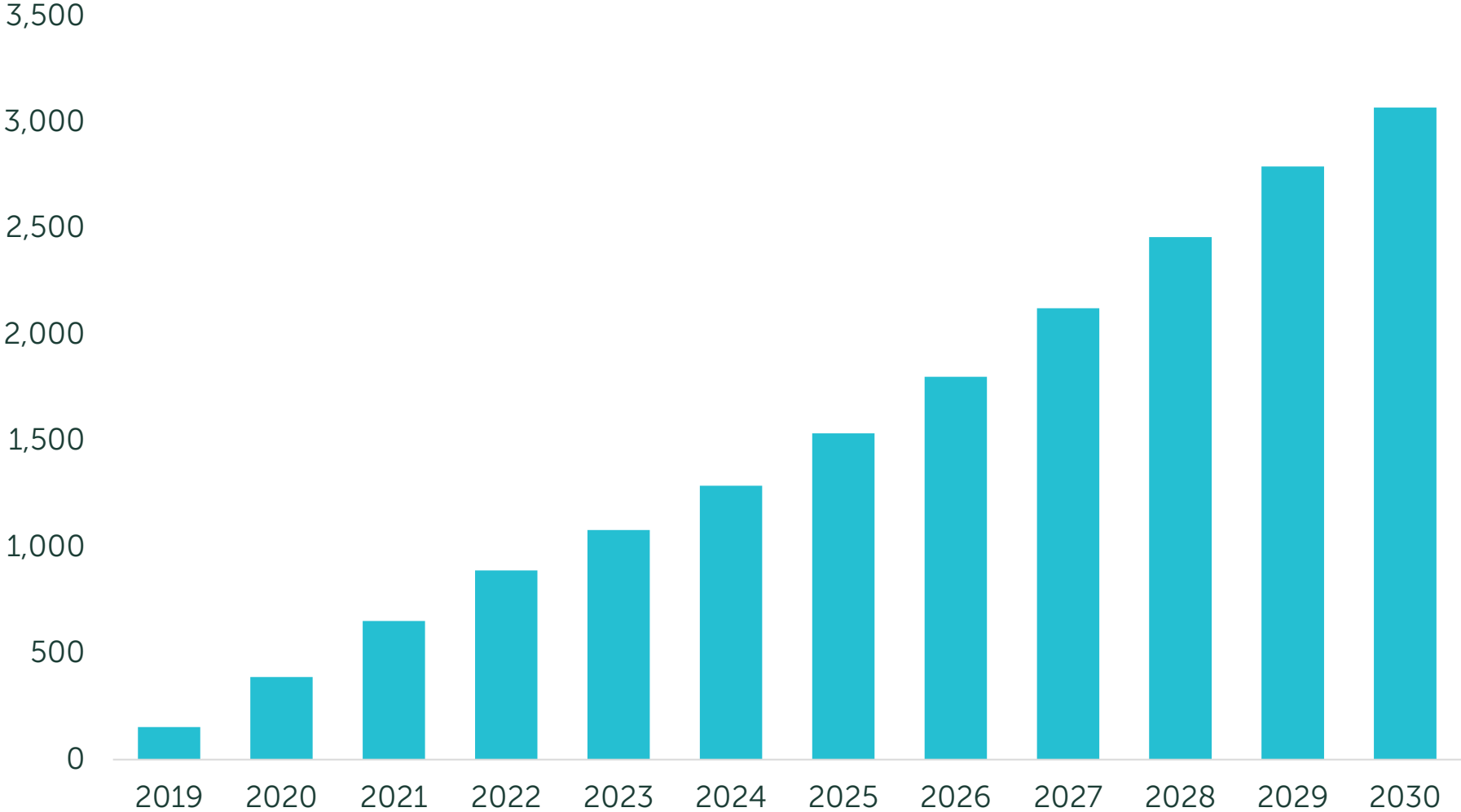
Travel eSIM



The advertisement is set against a red background with a faint, large UEFA Champions League ball graphic. At the top left is the UEFA Champions League logo. In the center, the text reads "The CHAMPIONS Travel eSIM". Below this, a small red circle contains the word "Exclusively" with "from Vodafone" written below it. To the right of the text is a blue eSIM card with the UEFA Champions League logo and "TRAVEL eSIM" text. Below the main text, it says "Worry-free travel data in all 55 UEFA member nations, including the UK, Germany, and France". At the bottom left is the Vodafone logo and "OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT". At the bottom right, there is a small circular logo and a block of fine print: "Manufactured under licence by Vodafone. The words UEFA, CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, and all other UEFA Champions League marks, names, logos, mascots and trophies are the property, registered trade marks, designs and/or copyright of UEFA. All rights reserved. Subject to Terms and Conditions. The Travel eSIM service is provided by Vodafone Global Connect S.A., 11,15 rue Edward Steichen, L-2540 Luxembourg, VAT LU29846245".

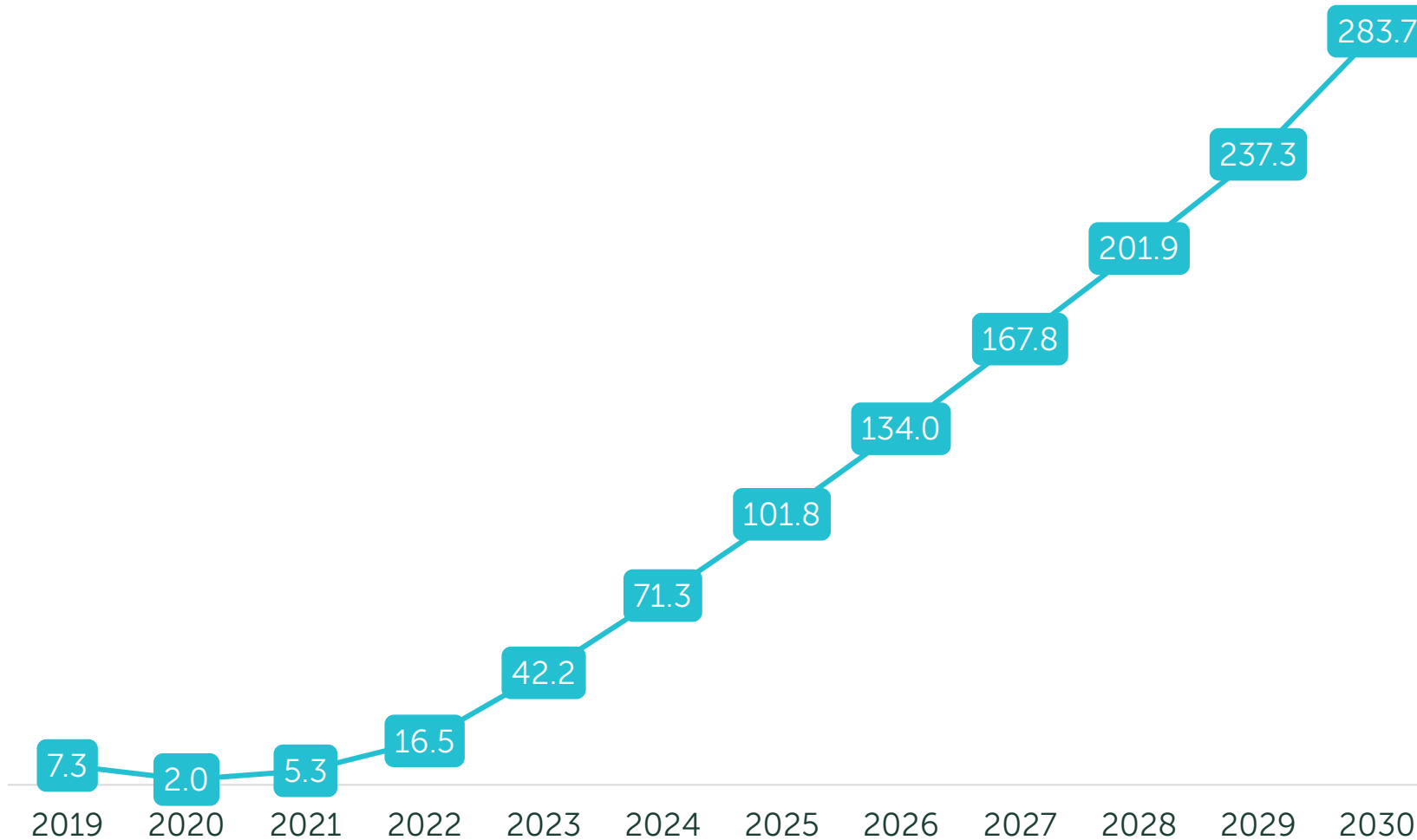
Over 3 Billion eSIM-Capable Smartphones Will Be in Use by 2030

Installed base of eSIM-capable smartphones, worldwide (M)



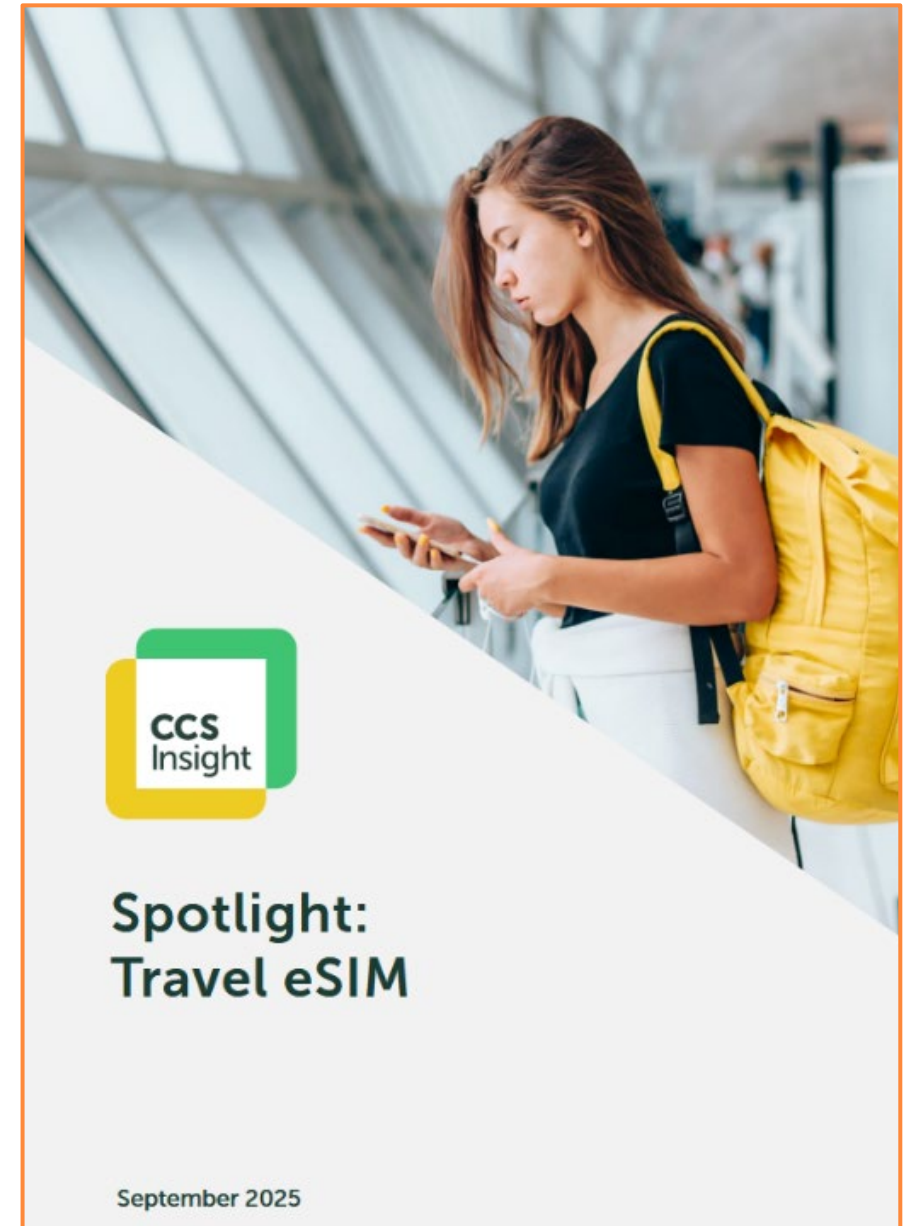
Market for Travel eSIM Forecast to Grow Significantly

Number of travel eSIMs provisioned per year (M)



New Report Available

- ✓ Detailed market analysis in PDF report and Excel data file
- ✓ eSIM in smartphones: key trends
- ✓ Assessment of travel eSIM specialists
- ✓ CCS Insight consumer research
- ✓ Forecast: downloads, revenue, device shipments
- ✓ Telecom operators: strategy recommendations
- ✓ Opportunities for travel companies and other players
- ✓ Future scenarios: how could this market play out?

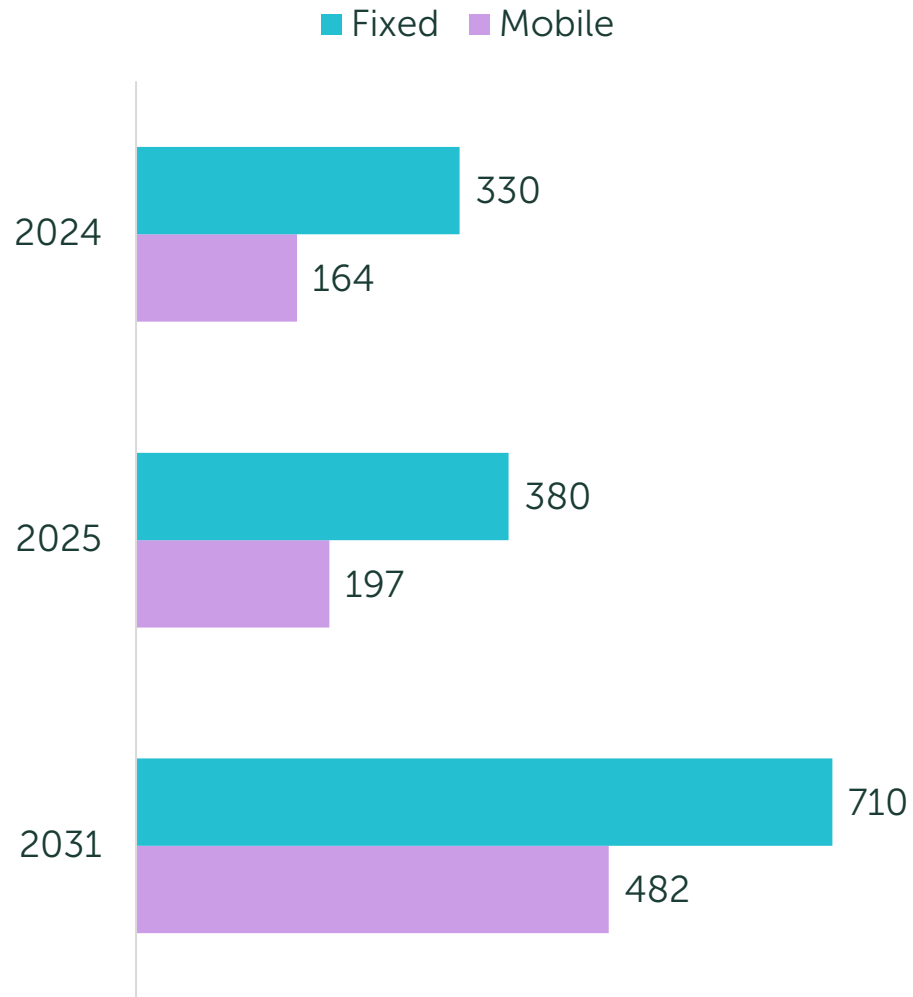


The image features a dark blue, teal-toned background. In the center, the curved horizon of the Earth is visible, showing a mix of dark landmasses and lighter, cloud-covered areas. At the bottom of the frame, a dense cluster of small, bright yellow and white lights represents city lights at night. Overlaid on this scene is a complex network of glowing cyan lines that connect various nodes. These nodes are represented by small, glowing cyan satellite icons with four solar panels extending from their bodies. The lines form a dense web across the sky, suggesting a global satellite communication or data network. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and futuristic.

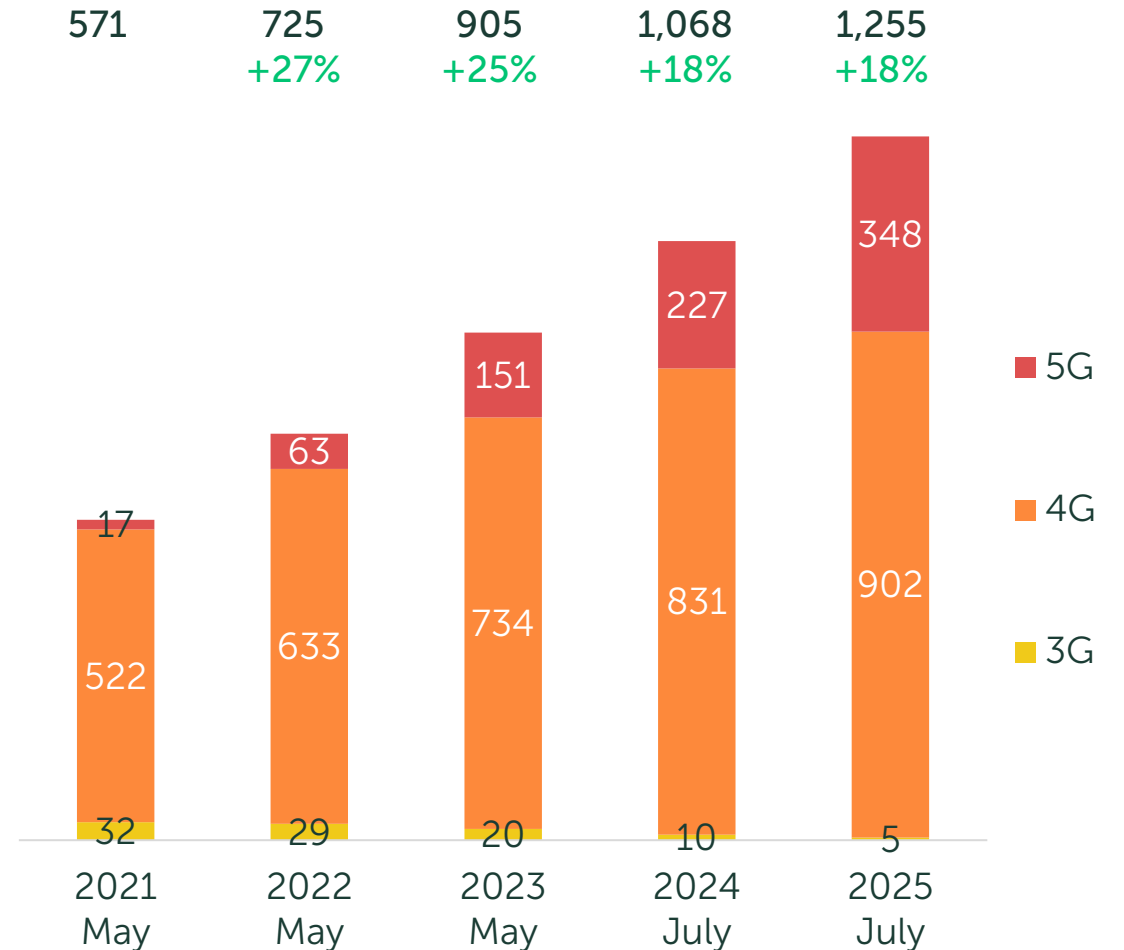
Network Innovation and Satellite

In 2026, the Industry Must Manage Rising Data Usage, Globally and in the UK

Global network data traffic (EB)

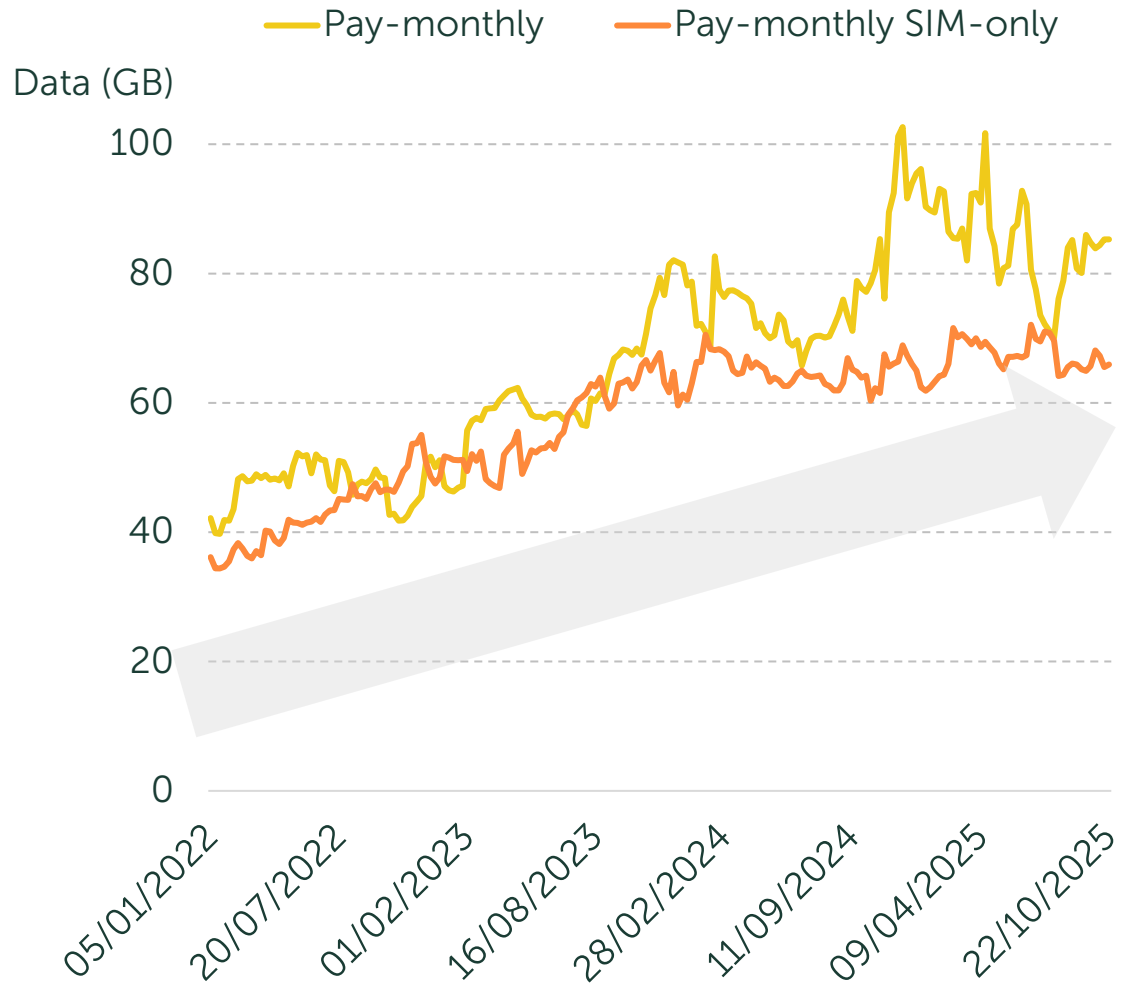


UK mobile data traffic by network generation (PB)

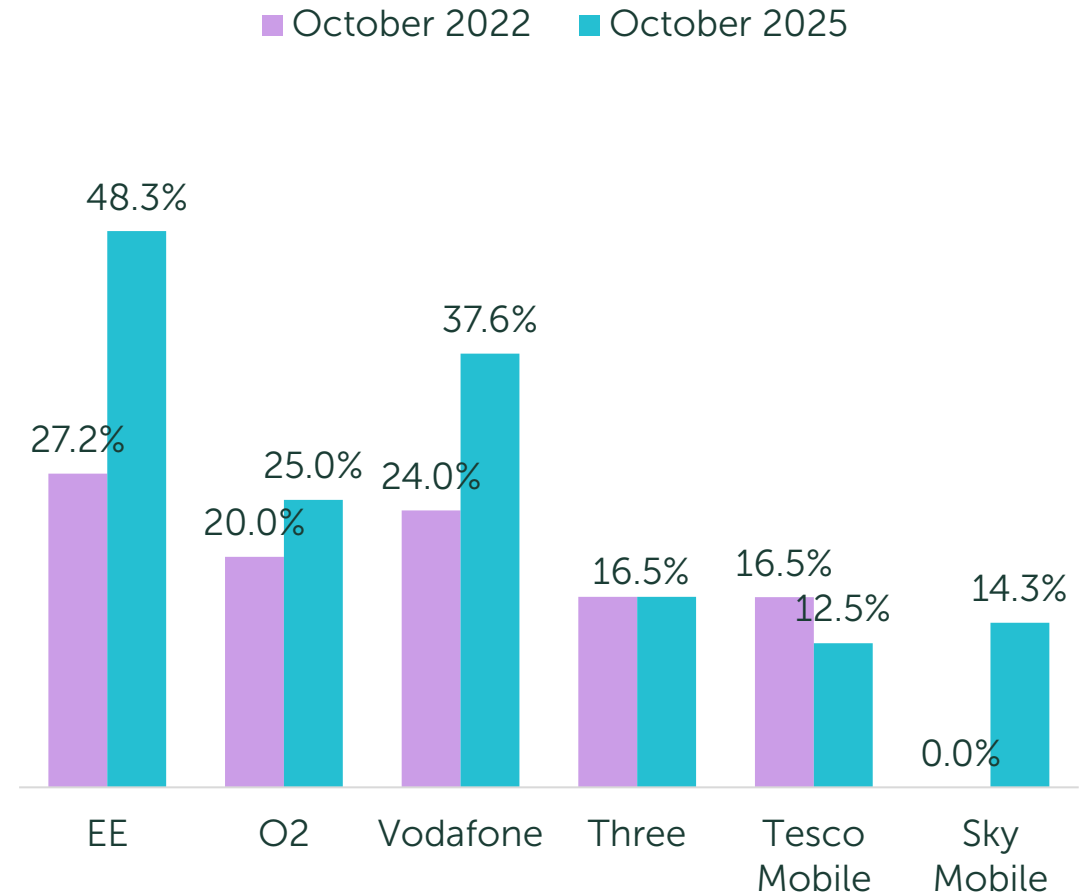


Marketed Data Is Up Too: If Investment Fails to Keep Pace, Performance Will Fall

Average data marketed in consumer tariff plans, UK






Proportion of consumer tariff plans with unlimited data

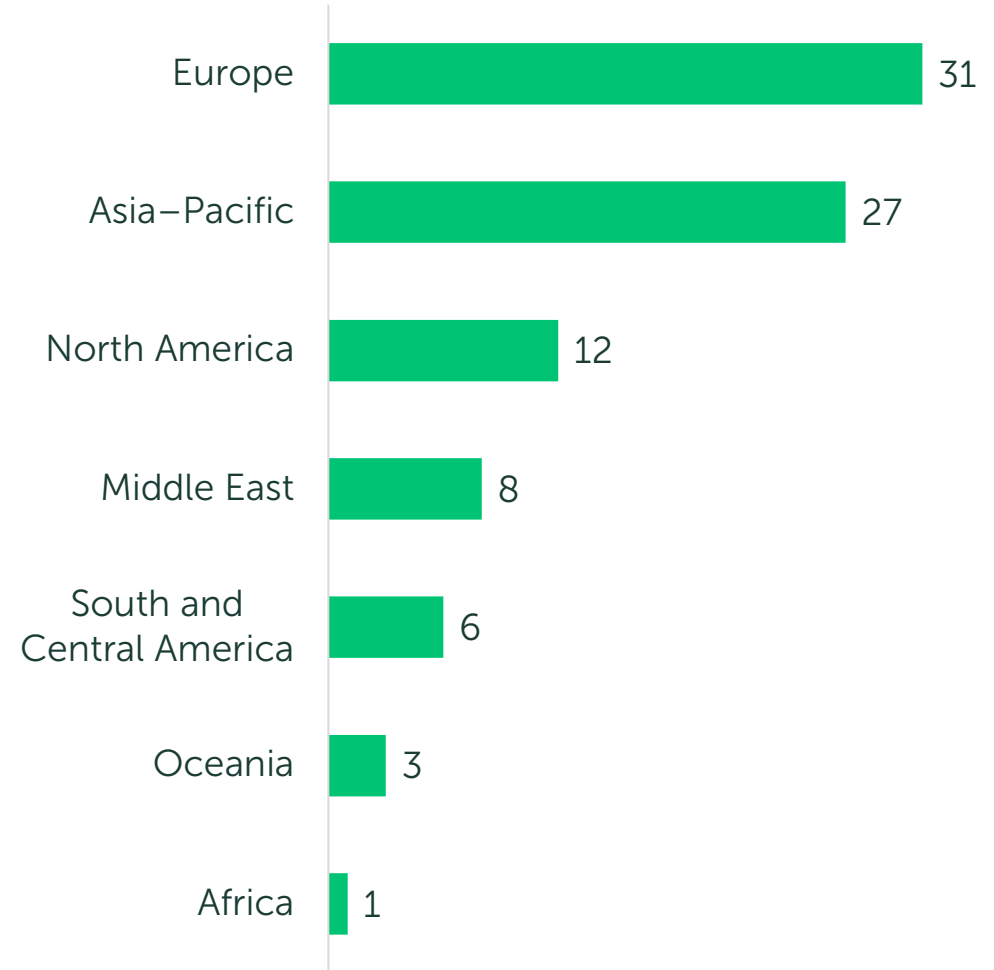


Operators Need to Secure a Return on 5G Standalone Networks Too

In 2026, the focus should move from 5G standalone coverage to new 5G standalone-based services

Number of 5G standalone networks launched to date

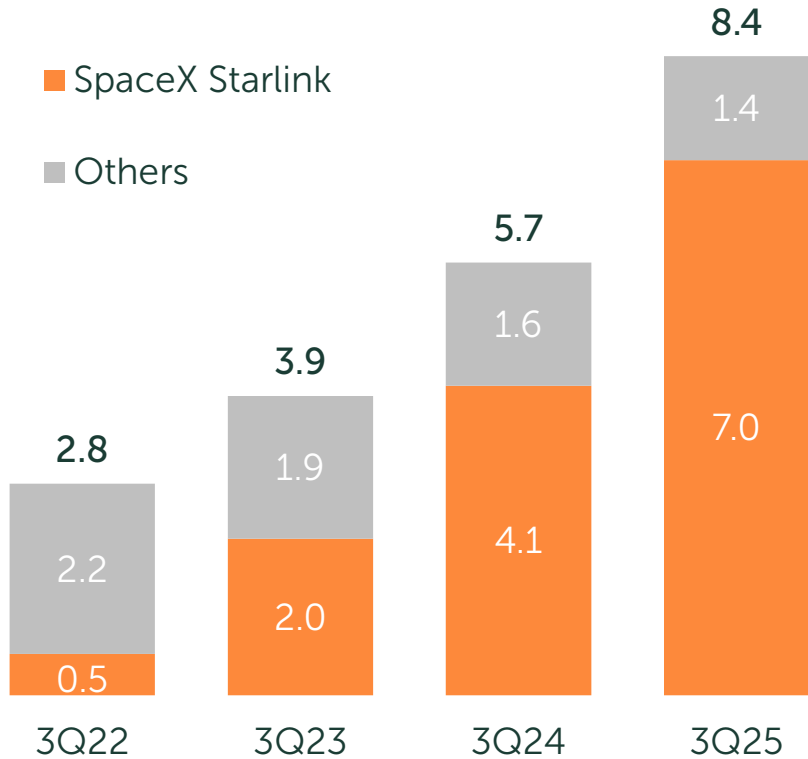
Operator			
Launch date	June 2023	September 2024	February 2024
Branding	5G Ultra	5G+	5G SA or 5G Standalone
Coverage	47% population coverage	Over 44 million people, 66% population coverage	Over 70% population coverage, about 49 million people
Targets	90% by year three of the merger 99.95% by 2034	99% coverage by the end of 2030	In keeping with UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy: 5G standalone to reach all populated areas by 2030



Operators Must Carefully Position Services, and Invest Wisely, in Hyped Satellite

Fixed Broadband

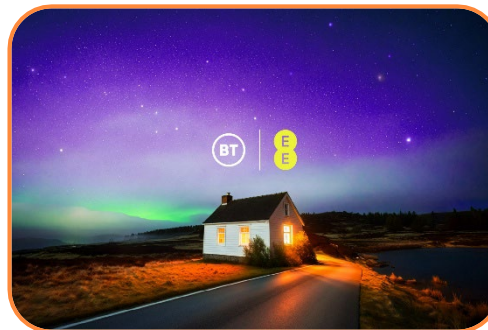
Satellite fixed broadband connections, worldwide (M)



Amazon Leo launch is imminent



Starlink is growing its operator partnerships, including BT (EE)



Direct-to-Device

Current services:

7.8 million connections



Telstra, Australia

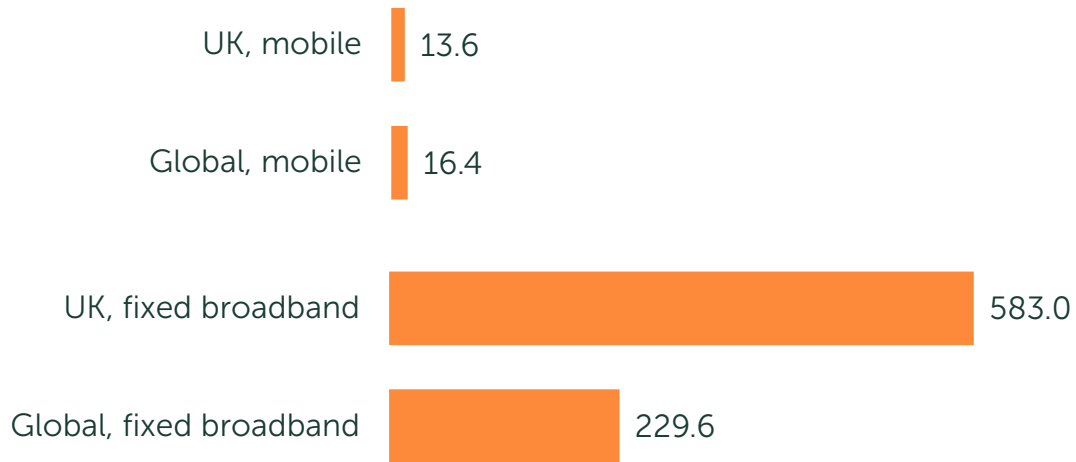


European launches in 2026 will include:



In 2026, Satellite Will Complement Terrestrial Fixed and Mobile Networks

Data traffic per connection per month, 2025 (GB)



Direct-to-device relies on small smartphone antennas



Examples of satellite-enabled smartphones include the iPhone 17 Pro and Google Pixel 10 Pro



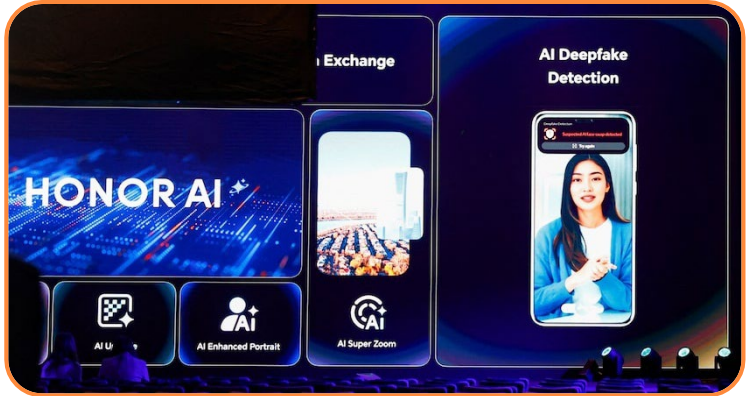
Starlink's fixed antenna is large compared with a smartphone

- Satellite will continue to have less capacity than terrestrial networks, although larger low-Earth-orbit constellations will improve satellite capacity over time.
- Satellite is a part of 5G mobile standards from 3GPP Release 17.
- In 6G, it will be a core pillar: Ubiquitous Connectivity.
- Key satellite uses include:
 - Cost-effective coverage extension.
 - Resilience and emergency back-up — a big theme for 2026.
 - IoT connectivity in sectors such as logistics, agriculture, automotive.
- Mobile services will evolve from text messaging to rich communication and real-time voice.

A photograph showing several people sitting together, focused on their mobile devices. In the foreground, a person's hands are seen holding a white tablet, with their fingers touching the screen. To their right, another person is holding a smartphone. In the background, other individuals are also using their phones. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The word "Devices" is centered in white text.

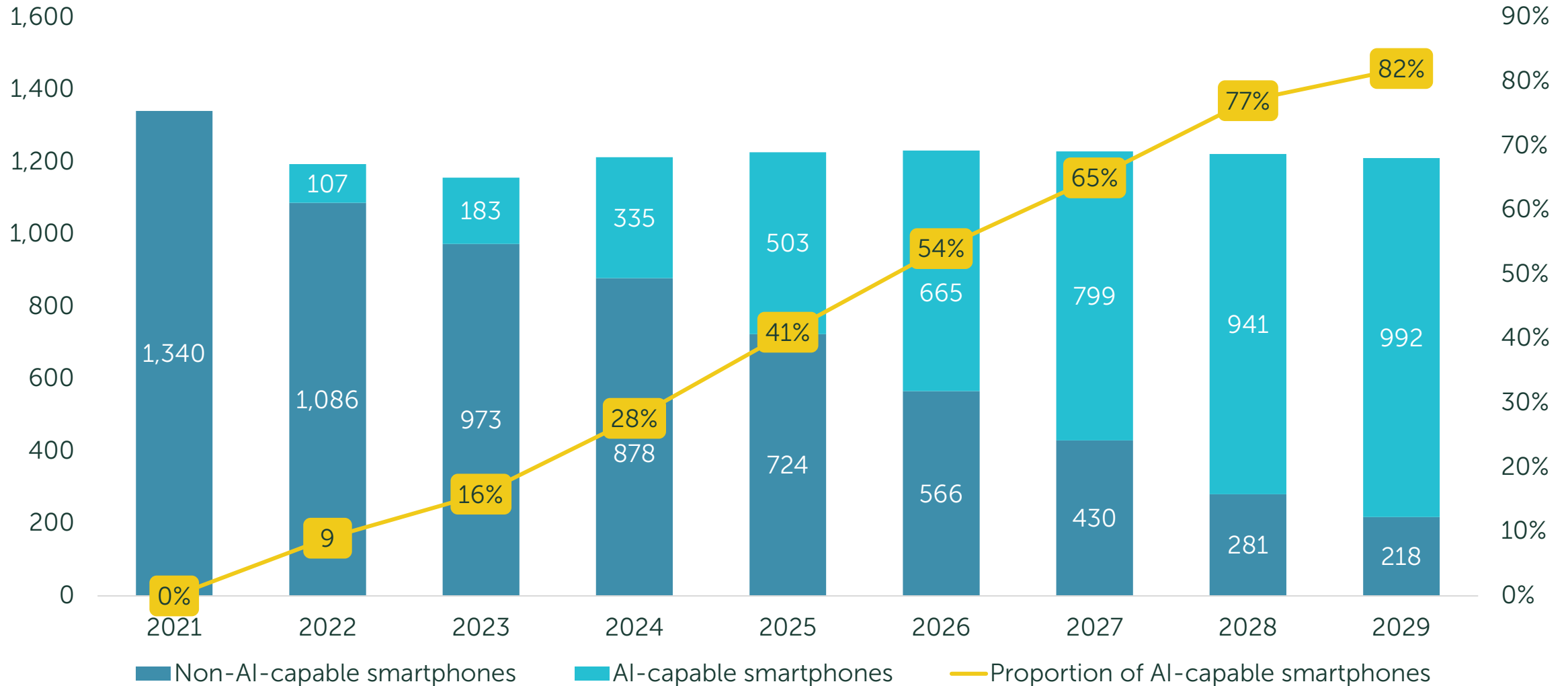
Devices

Android Device-Makers Drive Focus on AI in 2025 – A Continued Theme for 2026



Proportion of AI-Capable Smartphones Is Growing

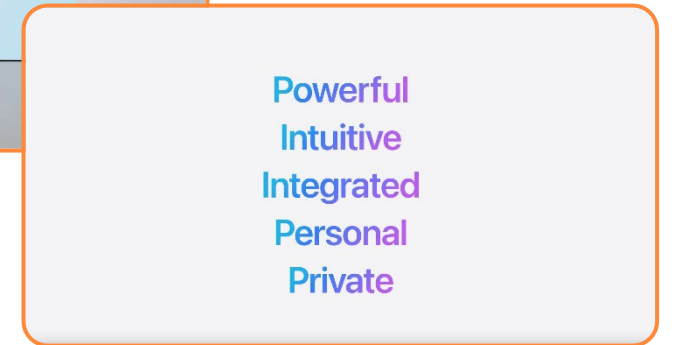
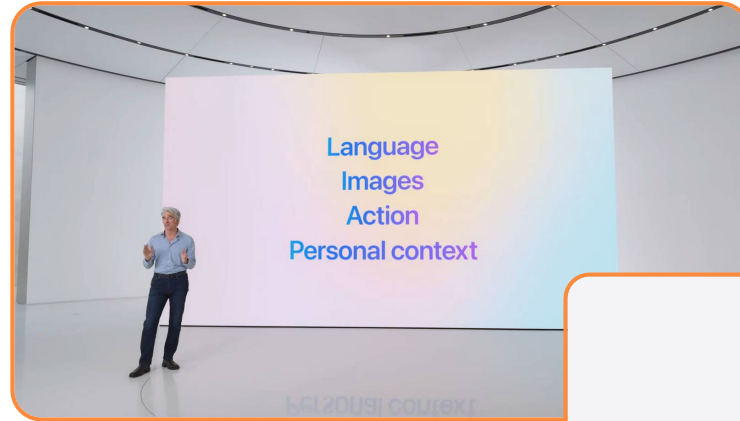
Shipments of new AI-capable smartphones (M) and share of the overall smartphone market



iPhone 17: The Freight Train Rolls on... But AI Is Lagging



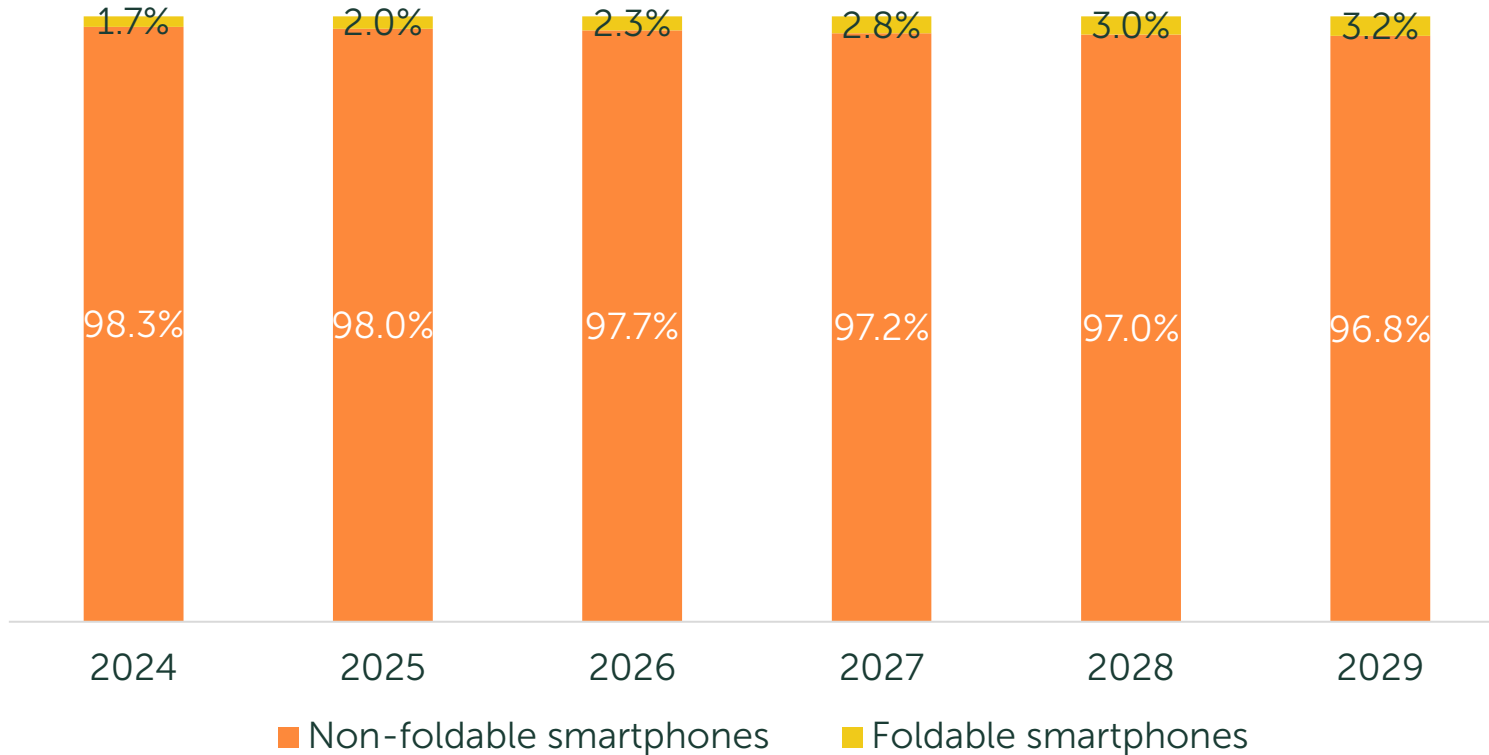
Apple Intelligence



- Despite the broader industry narrative, the lack of attractive AI features did not affect demand for Apple's iPhone 17 range.
- Apple is expected to step up in 2026, with all eyes on WWDC.

What's Next for Apple?

Market share of new foldable and non-foldable smartphones, worldwide

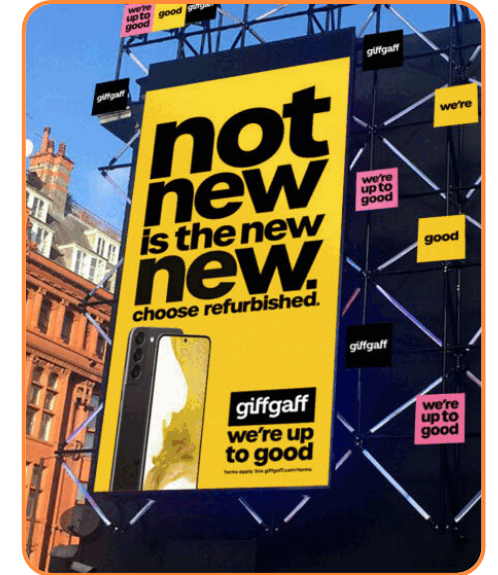
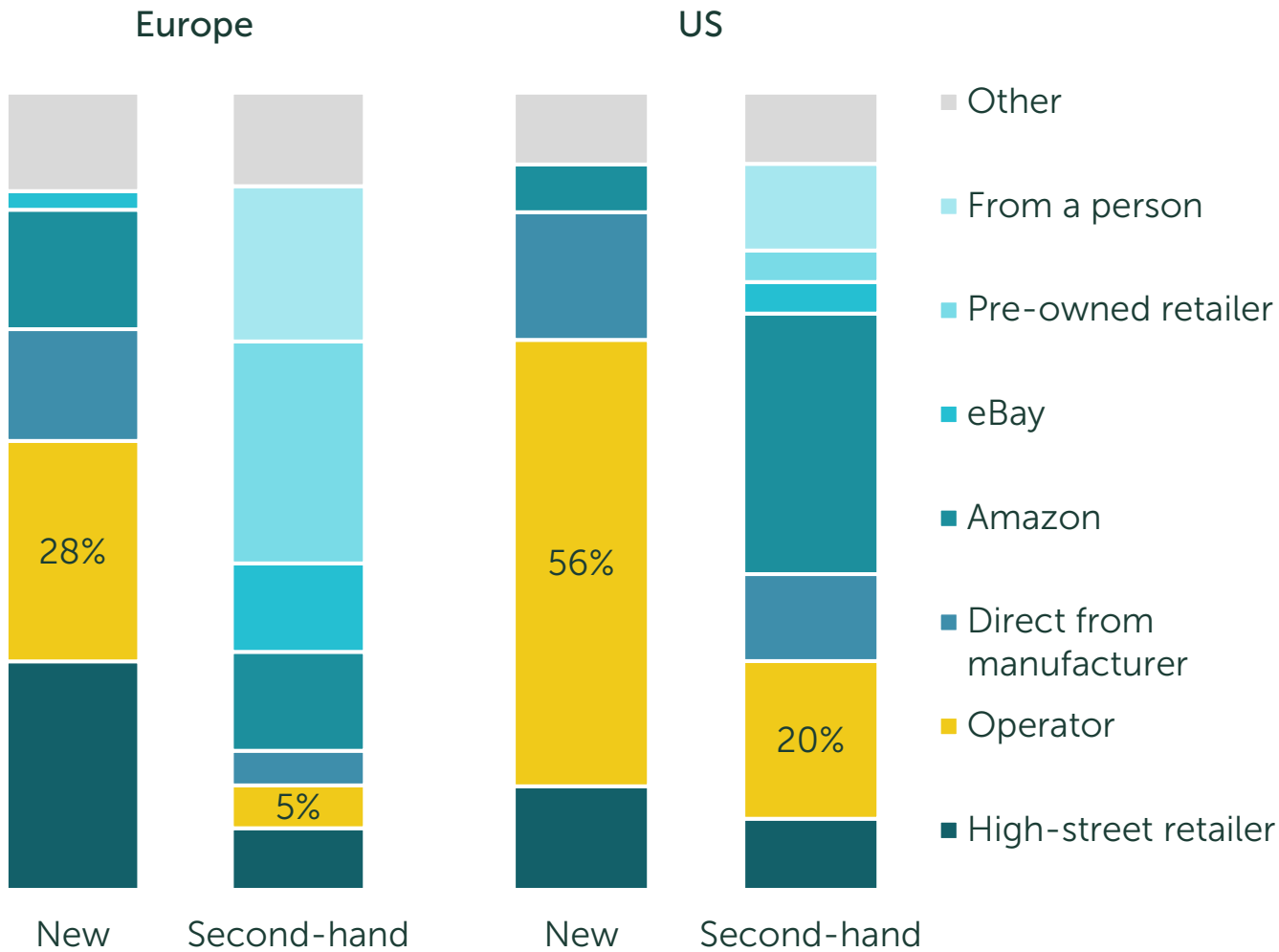


Concept image (MacRumors)

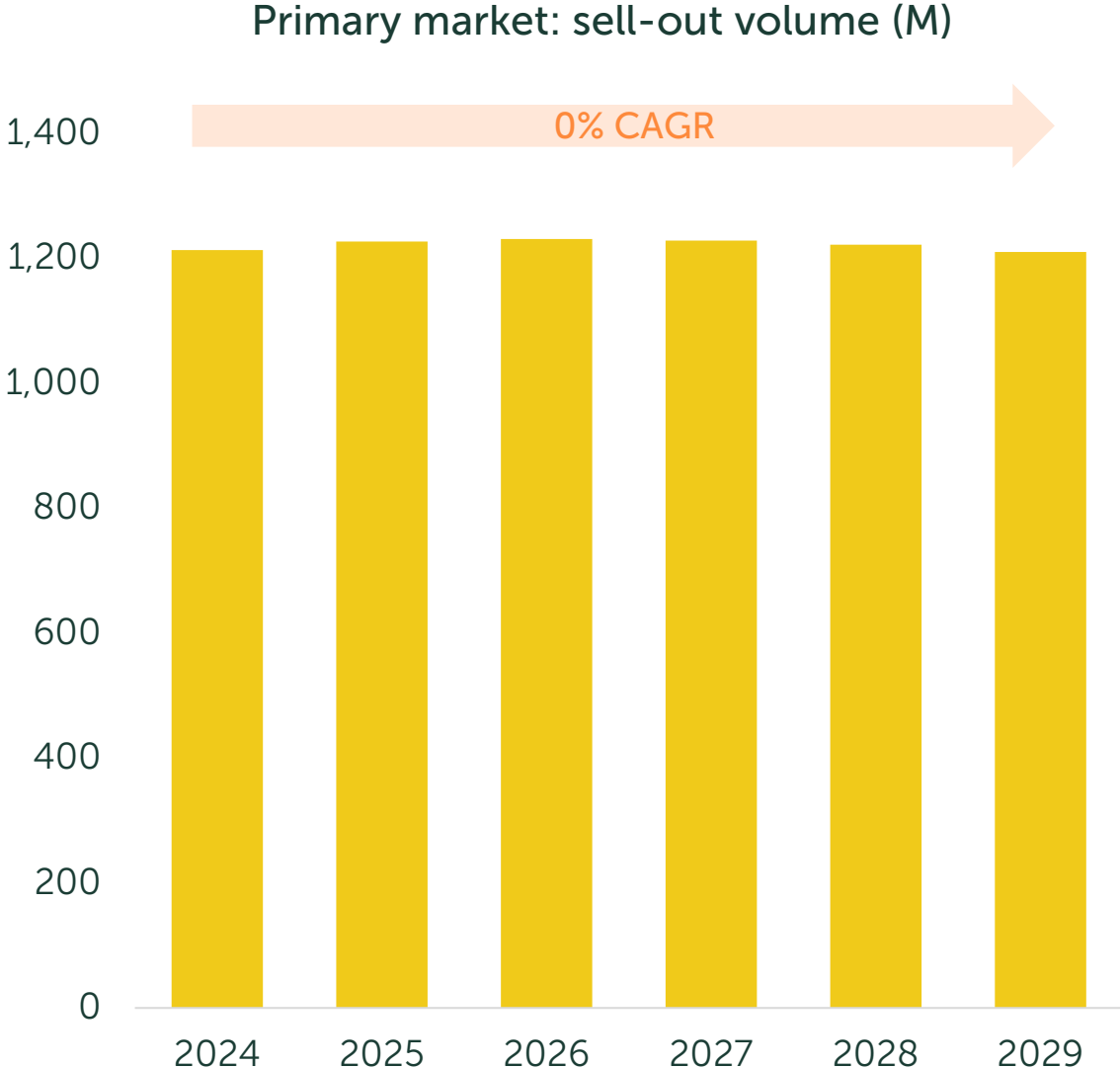
- Beyond AI, there is widespread speculation that Apple will announce a foldable iPhone in 2026.
- New ultrapremium category, which may require additional longer contract period.

Operators Are Targeting a Better Position in the Secondary Market

Where did you buy your current mobile phone?

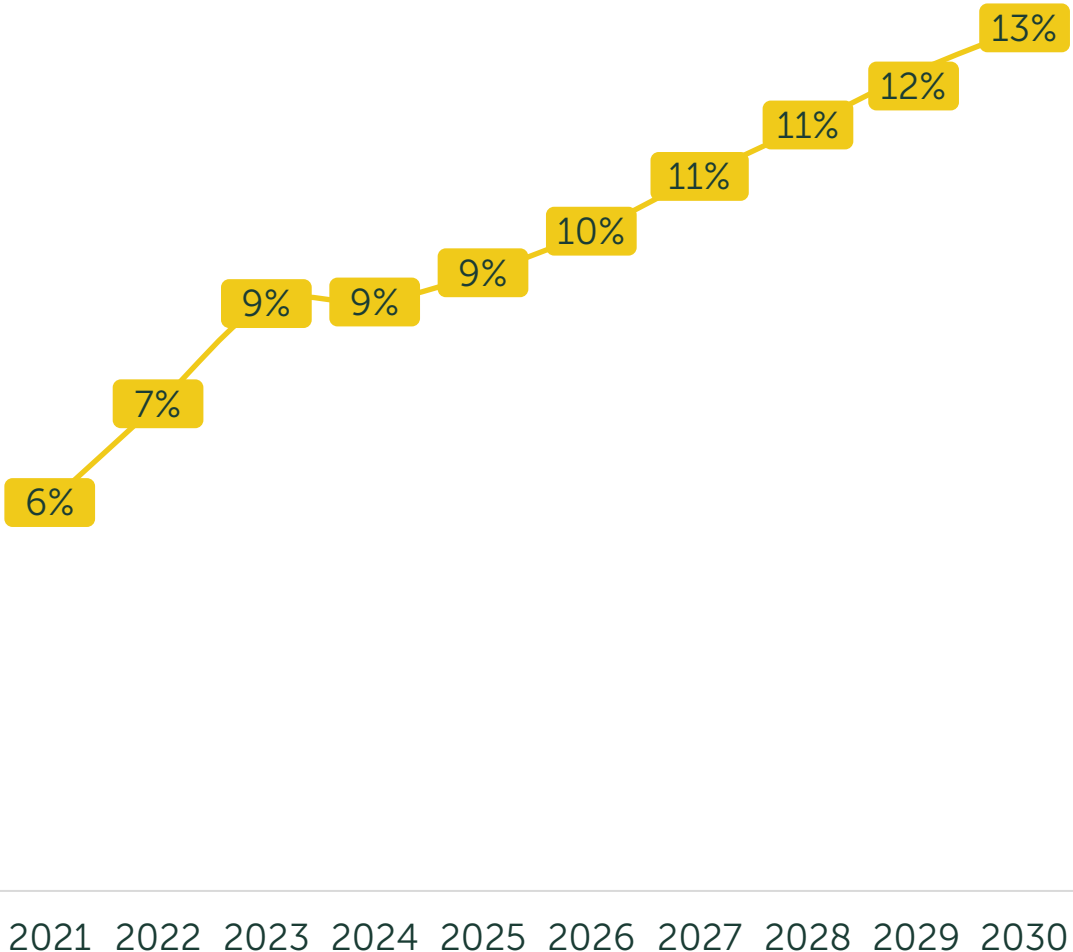


Secondary Market Is Expected to Continue to Displace Sales of New Devices

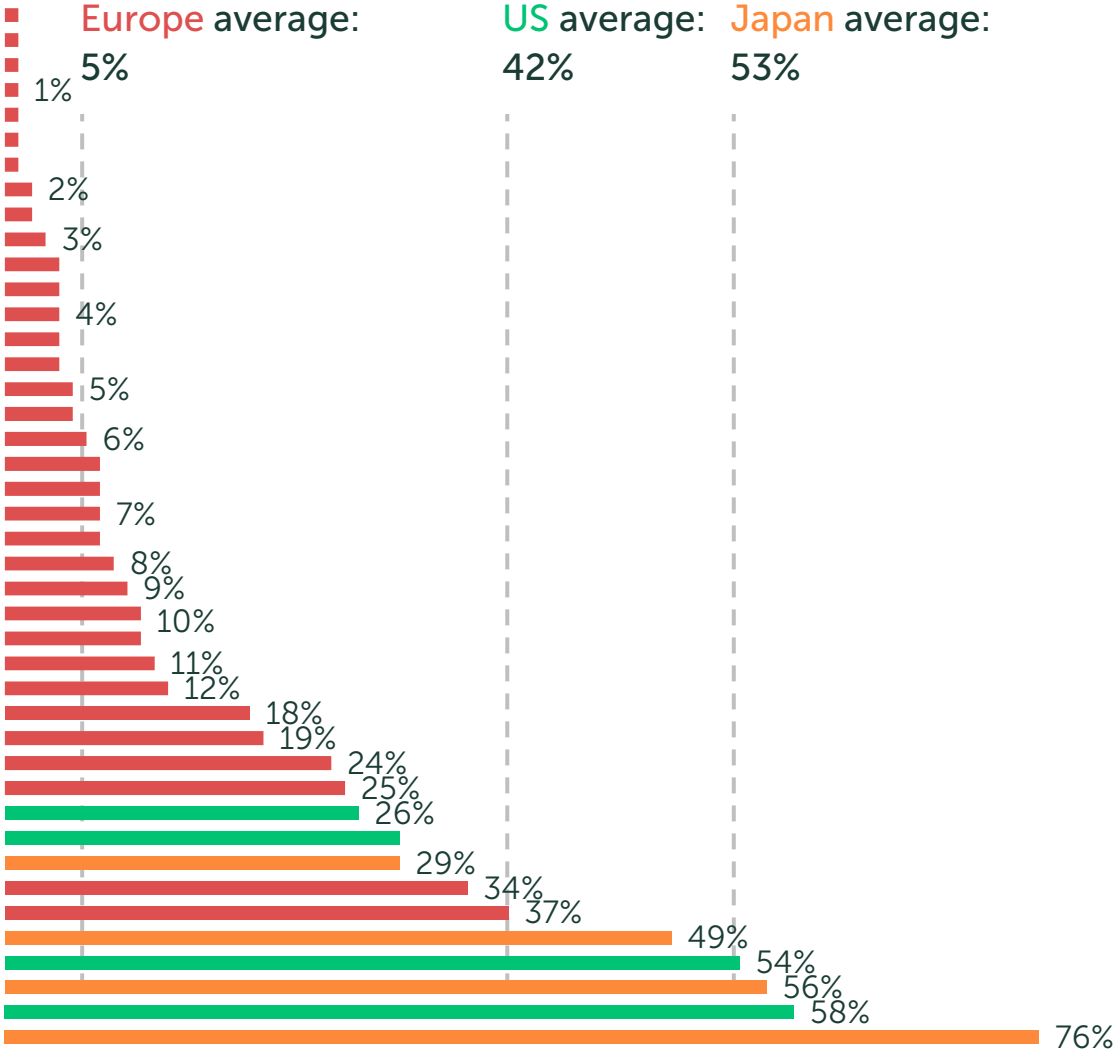


Operators Focus on Take-Back of Used Devices in 2026 to Boost Supply

Projected take-back rate for operators in Europe



Take-back rate by operator (anonymized), 2024

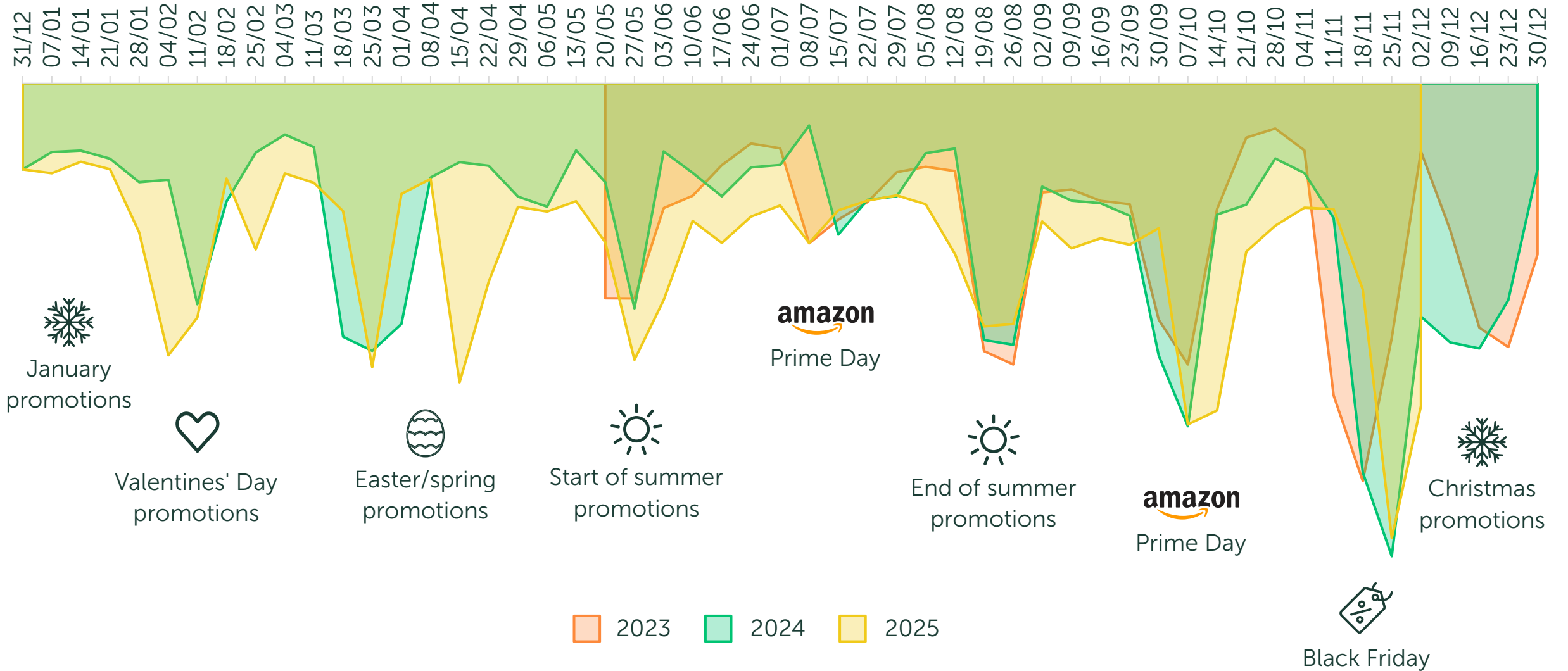




Smart Home

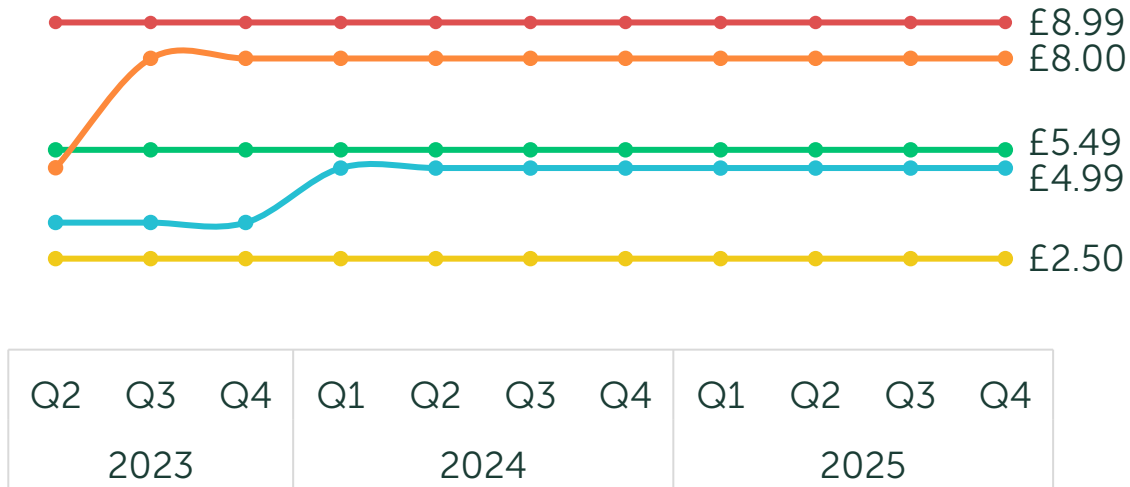
Black Friday Remains the Top Period for Promotional Depth, at -25.52% in 2025

Average promotional discount on indoor cameras, outdoor cameras and video doorbells per week, UK



Ring's Premium Tier Subscription Price Has Doubled since 2Q23

Basic-tier subscription pricing



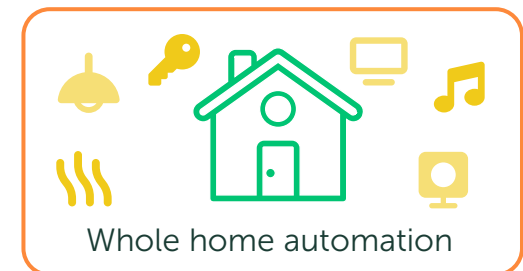
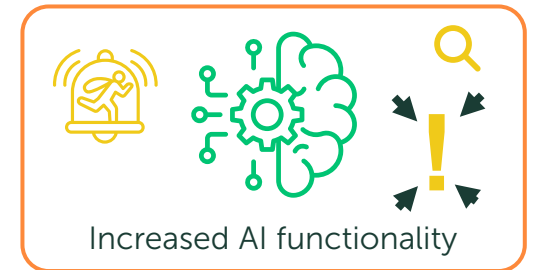
Premium-tier subscription pricing



As Camera Resolution Peaks, AI and Compatibility Lead as Differentiating Factors

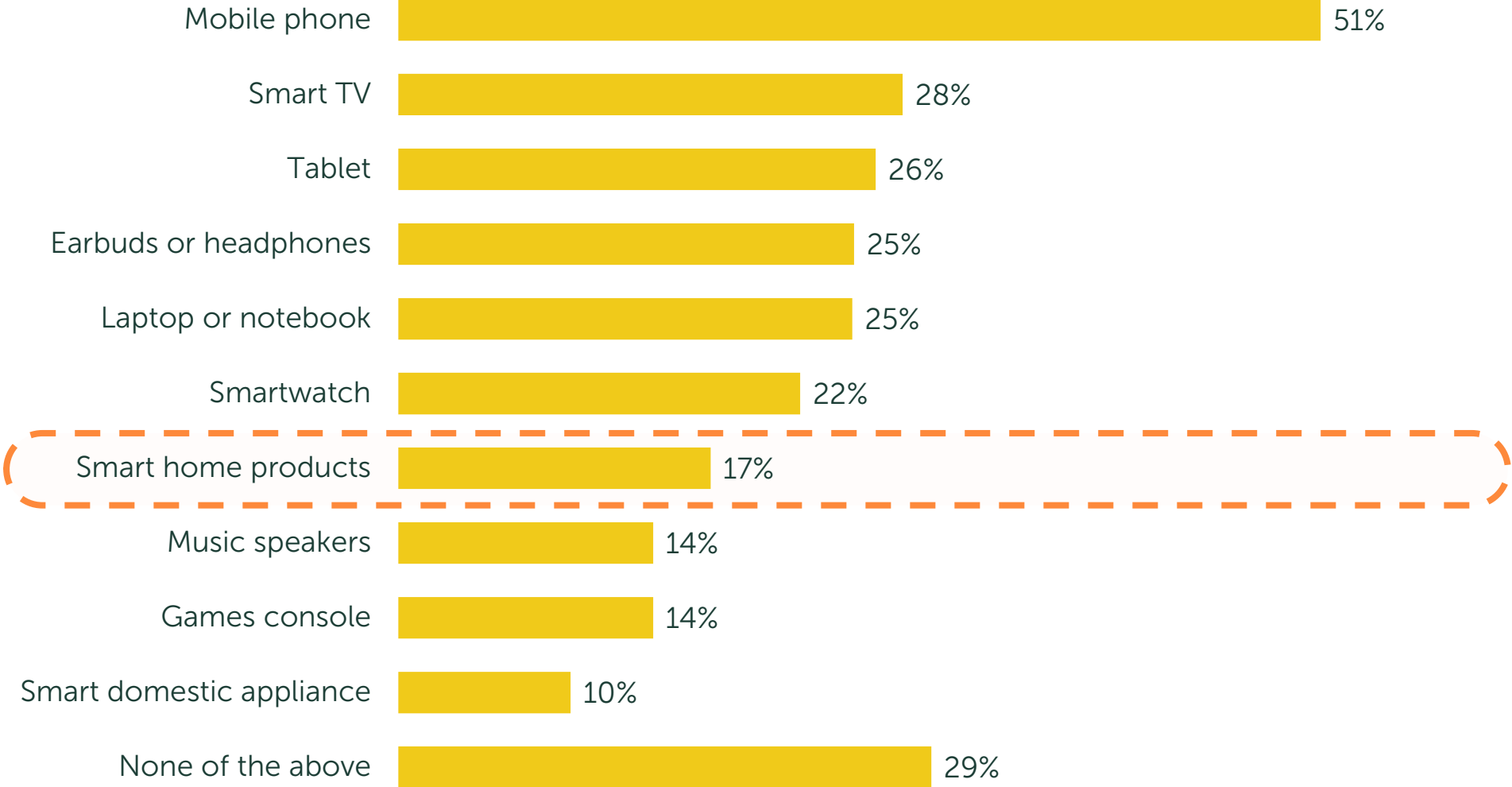
Availability of indoor cameras, outdoor cameras and video doorbells

Brand	Resolution	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23	1Q24	2Q24	3Q24	4Q24	1Q25	2Q25	3Q25	4Q25	
arlo	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available			Available								
	4K	Available							Available				
blink	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available											Available
	4K	Available											
eufy	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available											
	4K	Available			Available								
G	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available											Available
	4K	Available											
ring	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available								App upgrade		Devices	
	4K	Available											Available
tp-link	1080p	Available											
	2K	Available											
	4K	Available									Available		



Smart Home Devices Are a Good Opportunity for Operators

Would you buy any of the following from your telecom provider?

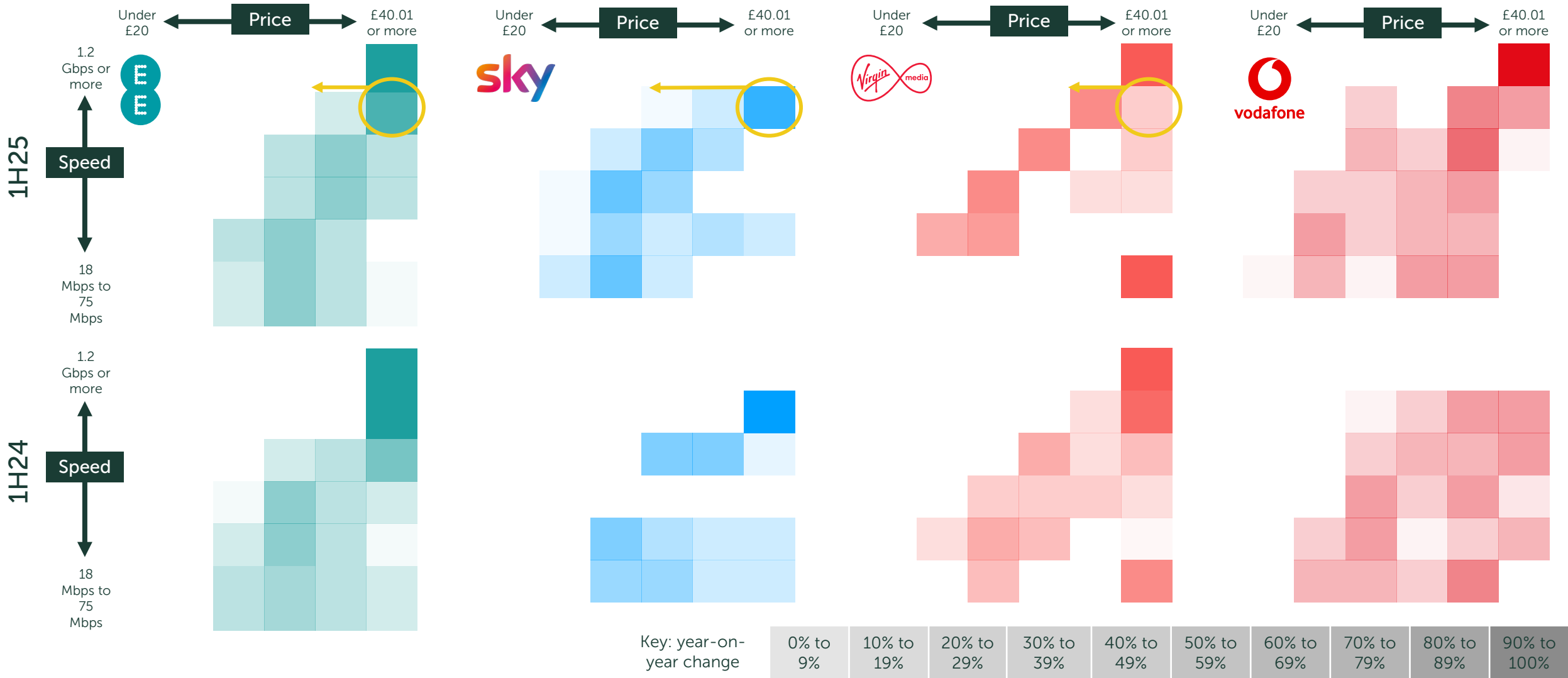


Broadband



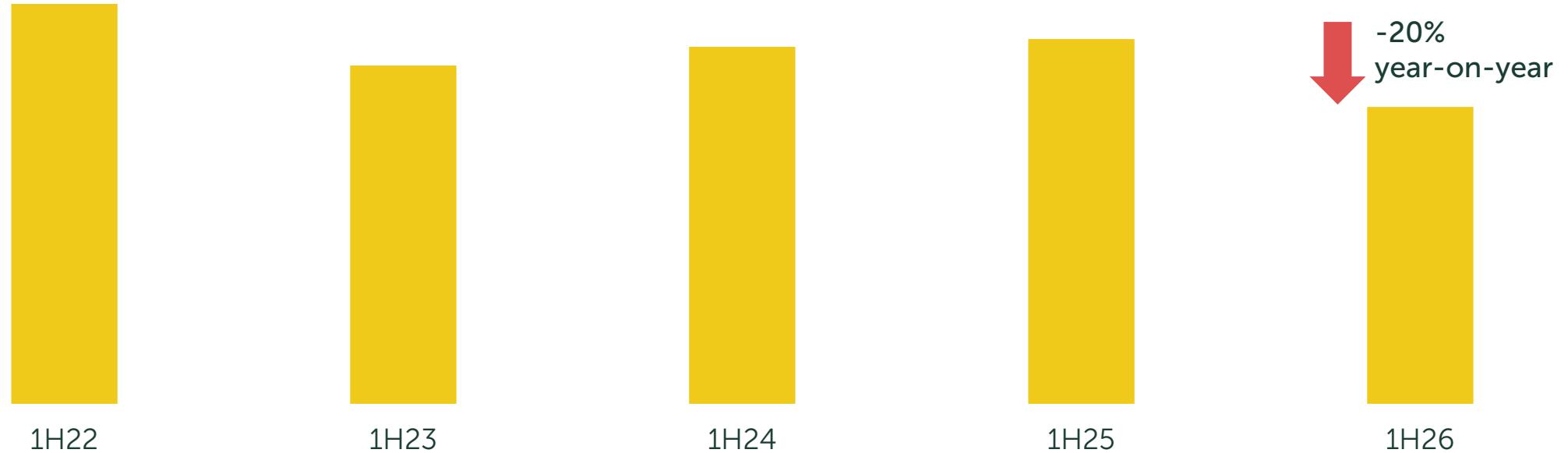
Pressure from Altnets Is Driving Pricing Erosion for Ultrafast Broadband

Year-on-year price erosion of broadband packages by operator



Lowest Addressable Market Forecast in 1H26 Owing to Contract Length Changes

Forecast for consumer broadband addressable market



- In 2024, Sky and Now Broadband moved from 18-month contracts to 24-month contracts.
- When making this switch, it created a six-month window in 1H26 where no Sky or Now acquisition customers return to the market.
- As a result of this change, we forecast the lowest first-half addressable market since FDM launched our Consumer Broadband Sales Panel.

Highlights

- Fintech companies are pushing into mobile as MVNOs continue to enjoy strong growth.
- In 2026, we will see further consolidation among European operators.
- Travel eSIM is a strong growth area, with more momentum expected in 2026.

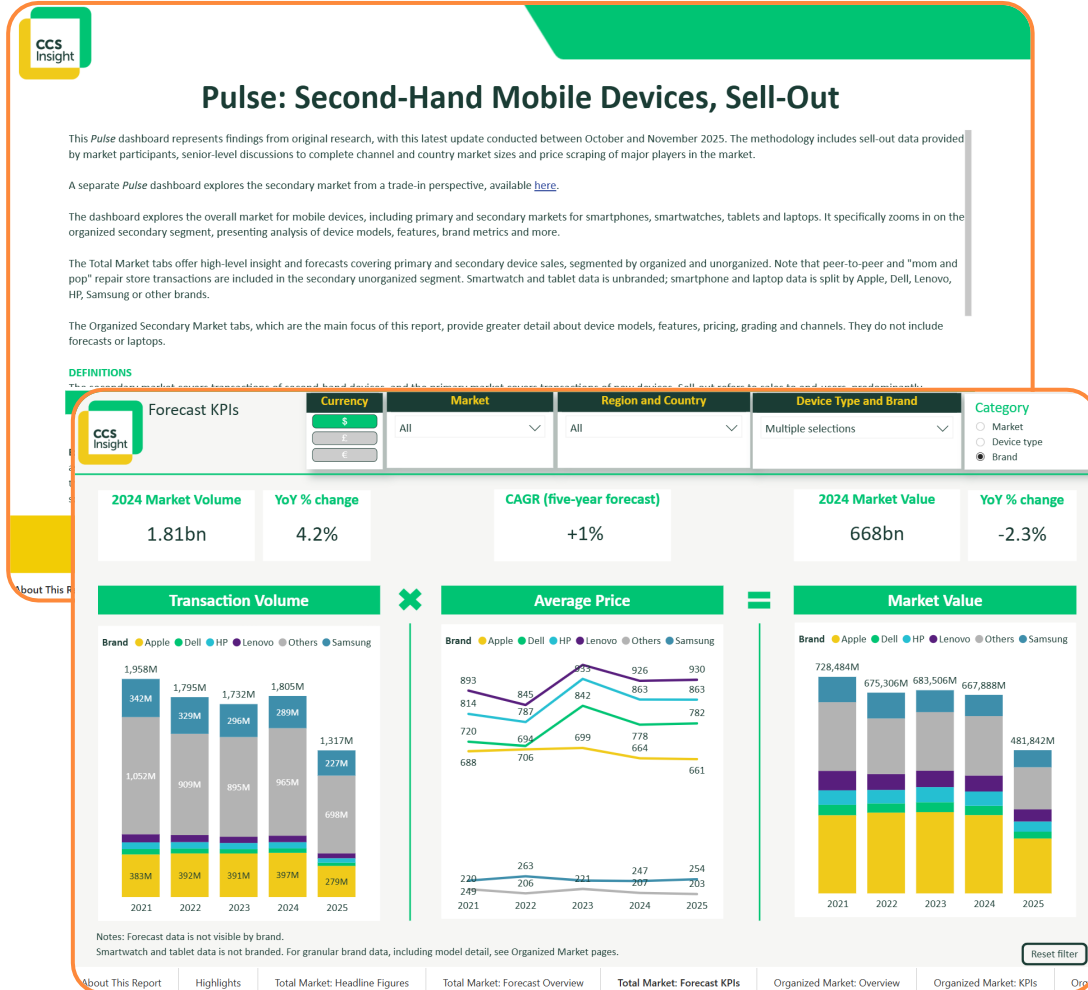
- Operators need to keep network investment high enough to keep pace with rising data traffic.
- 5G standalone needs to be the basis for new services, not an end in itself.
- The industry needs to position satellite networks carefully and not base offerings on hype.

- AI will remain a core theme for smartphones in 2026, but we are sceptical that it will help drive significant growth.
- Operators will find it hard to profit from AI services on smartphones.
- Apple bucked the AI trend in 2025, but it needs to address this in 2026.
- Operators will step up their efforts in the circular market to improve trade-in or take-back volume.

- There is widespread fluctuation in smart home devices pricing, centred around specific events like Black Friday.
- Smart camera technology is shifting from focus on camera resolution to capabilities such as AI to increase revenue.

- Intense competition from altnets is driving down the price of gigabit broadband.
- The broadband market will be disrupted in 1H26 as a result of Sky's contract length changes in 2024.

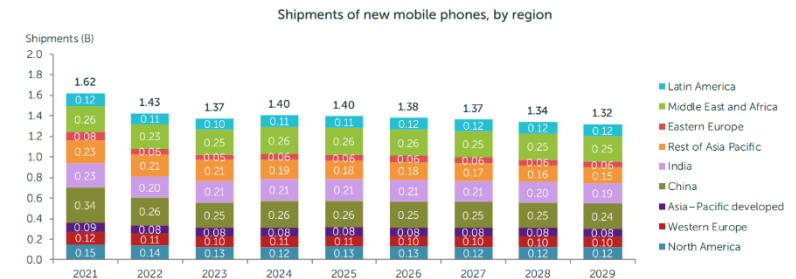
Market-tracking research



Forecast Mobile Phones, Worldwide 2025-2029



iPhone Demand to Accelerate Sales in Emerging Markets



After a challenging first half of the year, the global mobile phone market is expected to return to normalcy in the second half of 2025. New smartphone launches from Apple and Samsung are set to inject momentum into the category, especially in emerging markets where Apple continues to hold strong aspirational appeal. Easy financing options and Apple's retail expansion will further improve product availability and feed demand. Likewise, Samsung's improved line-up of new types of smartphone, and expansion by brands such as Motorola and Google are expected to boost shipments.

However, in the long term, we forecast the segment to decline. Mature markets like the US, China and Western Europe have reached saturation point. In China, government subsidies helped pick up smartphone sales temporarily, but as this is not organic growth, demand will contract once the subsidy is called off.

Emerging markets like India will see some growth thanks to a large and growing young population, which is still underserved. Sales will gradually decline in the long term because of income inequality and growing demand for second-hand smartphones.

Forecast: Mobile Phones, Worldwide, 2025-2029

Key Research

Consumer surveys

CCS Insight

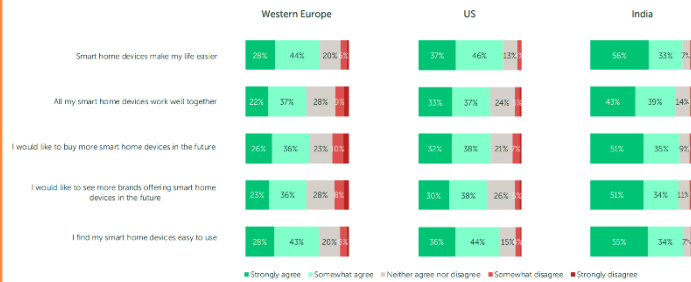
Pulse: Connected Consumer Western Europe, the US and India

August 2025



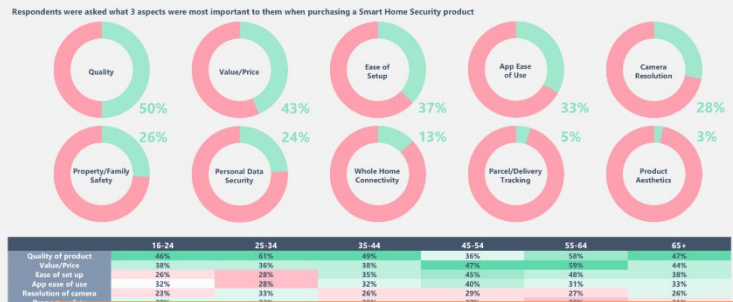
One in Three in the US Want More Smart Home Brands

Level of agreement with statements about the smart home and shared devices



Q512 How much do you agree with the following statements about the smart home and shared devices? Audience: owners of smart home devices
 Pulse: Connected Consumer, Western Europe, the US and India, August 2025

Quality Ranked 1st Overall for Top Purchase Priority, While 45-64 Year Olds Favoured Value/Price



53% of people would purchase either a Mobile, Broadband or TV package during Black Friday



CCS Insight

Boost Survey: Mobile Buying

This dashboard presents the results from our Boost Survey: Mobile Buying, which is conducted twice a year in four countries. It equips users to navigate the ever-changing mobile consumer landscape, providing insights into:

- **Brand loyalty and preferences:** Discover which brands dominate in each market, including the growing trend of second-hand phone purchases and the factors driving consumer choices.
- **Mobile purchase decision-making:** Identify the pivotal triggers and factors that draw consumers' decisions to buy or to upgrade their phones.
- **Usage and preference of mobile services:** Gain insights into mobile network provider choices, plan types, contract structures, data usage habits, and the primary drivers of switching behaviour across markets.
- **Awareness of eSIM technology and providers:** Assess consumer awareness and potential interest in the emerging eSIM technology.

METHODOLOGY

The survey is conducted online, on desktop computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and other connected devices. It currently covers the UK, Germany, Spain and the US. The survey sample consists of 1,000 (or just over) respondents per country, selected to represent the population by age, gender, household size and region. At this sample size, the error margin at country level is +/- 3%, at a confidence level of 95%. Questions are designed to be logical, easy to understand and unambiguous.

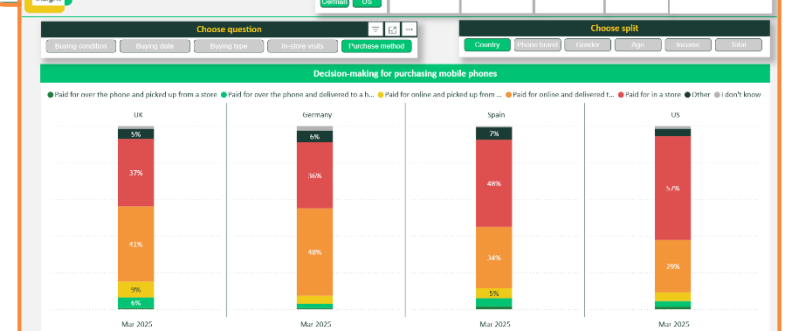
For quality assurance, we deploy automatic screening methods, for example, monitoring the time each respondent takes to answer the survey, straight-lining answering and more. In addition, we deploy logical screening to ensure respondents answer consistently and believably.

DEFINITIONS

USER TIPS

Expand: Some charts and filters are necessarily small. Think of them as thumbnails that can be expanded: hover over one, then click the focus mode icon (above centre) to expand it to full screen.
Export: After applying the filters to get the desired data, take screenshots to export the charts to slides and add narrative.

Boost Survey: Mobile Buying Buying Behaviour



- **Buying condition:** When you bought or received this phone, was it brand new, refurbished or used?
- **Buying date:** When did you buy or receive your phone?
- **Buying type:** Which statement best describes how you got your phone?
- **In-store visits:** Can you recall having visited a mobile phone shop in person over the past six months?
- **Purchase method:** What statement best describes how your phone was bought?

FDM

CCS Insight

CIRCULAR MARKETS LONDON.

**LEADING THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION ON
MOBILE DEVICE CIRCULARITY**

4 FEBRUARY 2026





Q&A

