

Egypt mobile phone subscribers top 51 million

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Egyptian mobile phone subscriber growth continued unabated in August, with 1.4 million new accounts added, to bring the total number to 51.477 million, a government website said on Monday

Egypt is the Arab world's most populous country, with some 77 million inhabitants. Analysts and executives see room for growth up to some 65 million accounts, or 85 percent of the population, although estimates assume 20 to 25 percent of the market involves second phones.

The mobile landscape is underdeveloped compared to Egypt's regional peers but fiercely competitive, with three operators offering on-network discounts to garner customers.

More than a million accounts have been created every month since late last year. A year ago, there were 37.626 million subscribers, the government-run Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Centre said on its website (www.eip.gov.eg).

By comparison, penetration in the United Arab Emirates tops 180 percent, but numbers are expected to dip as population growth slows. In Saudi Arabia, with a population of around 25 million, penetration rates also exceed 100 percent.

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