Smartphones Overtake 'Dumb' Phones Worldwide

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NEW YORK (AP) — Research firm IDC said more smartphones than "dumb" phones are being made this year, a milestone in a shift that's putting computing power and Internet access in millions of hands worldwide.

Manufacturers shipped 216 million smartphones worldwide in the first three months of this year, compared with 189 million regular cellphones, according to a study IDC released late Thursday. IDC said smartphones made up 51.6 percent of the 419 million mobile phones shipped.

In the U.S., smartphones overtook regular cellphones in 2011. IDC analyst Ramon Llamas said Friday that the shift to a global majority of smartphones is now being driven by consumers in developing countries such as China, India and Indonesia.

Another firm, ABI Research, found that smartphones made up 49 percent of shipments in the first quarter. Samsung Electronics Co., the world's largest phone maker, doesn't provide a breakdown of its phone shipments, and analysts vary in their estimates. Even going by ABI's numbers, it's clear that smartphones will solidly overtake the market this year.

The shift from phones primarily designed for calls, and perhaps texting, to ones with advanced operating systems and touch screens has roiled the cellphone industry.

Finland's Nokia Corp. was for many years the world's largest maker of cellphones, but it has failed to translate that into success in smartphones. It's now the second-largest maker of phones overall, behind Samsung Electronics Co., but it falls far down the list of smartphone makers.

Cellphone pioneer Motorola Mobility, a U.S. company now owned by Google, has stumbled through the transition as well, while Apple Inc. has become the world's third-largest maker of cellphones, less than six years after launching the first iPhone. Samsung and Apple are the top makers of smartphones. LG Electronics Inc. of South Korea;

HTC Corp. of Taiwan; and ZTE Corp. and Huawei Technologies Ltd. of China jostle for the No. 3 position.

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