

MOBILETV

A Portable World Cup

Will soccer fans want to follow a ball on a two-inch playing field when the World Cup kicks off in Germany next month? That's what telecom operators are betting on with new services that promise to deliver real-time video to mobile phones. Streaming-video packages of highlights, analysis, and coverage of 20 matches will be offered to owners of broadband phones by T-Mobile for a daily fee of \$2.50 or \$9 for the month. Similar offers are to be had around Europe. Meanwhile, live TV broadcasts to mobile phones will be available on a trial basis to about 1,000 journalists, mobile-phone executives, and business partners, who will be issued broadcast-ready handsets made by companies such as BenQ Mobile, a Siemens spinoff. Korean mobile manufacturer LG will make its TV-enabled U900 handsets available to soccer-crazed fans, but only in Italy through telecom provider 3Italia. The handsets will sell for between \$120 and \$480.

Streaming broadband takes a video feed and uploads it to a server, which sends the feed through the cell network to broadband phones that are fast enough to handle the data transmission. But a streaming network slows down with high demand, and if use is too heavy, the servers can freeze. Digital broadcast for mobiles works like television. The signal is sent through a modified digital TV transmitter to any subscriber who has a phone that can pick up the signals. The reception on the new devices is surprisingly smooth and clear, though regulatory issues and transmission standards need to be ironed out before service will be widely available, and battery life could be a problem. "It's a natural way to be," says Søren Haubold, BenQ's innovations manager. "Now I can be on the move and watch the match." That's a worthy goal, but it still may be hard to follow the ball on such a tiny screen. —Michael Dumiak



GOAL! LG's U900 television phone

Bud vs. Bit

In this land where beer is king, Budweiser is a stranger. But just days from now, when Germany hosts the World Cup, the crown jewel of its favorite sport, Budweiser will make a run for the throne. As the World Cup's official beer, Bud has pouring rights at all 12 stadiums where games will be played. But while the brand is everywhere in America, it has few fans among German beer drinkers. "I've tried Budweiser once in my life," says Bense Fels, a 24-year-old from Dortmund. "I don't even remember how it tastes. It was that thin." There's even a Berlin website called Bud Out. Anheuser-Busch, the St. Louis company that owns Bud, reportedly paid \$40 million for the sponsorship. It will have enough beer on hand to pour 3.5 million cups over the four weeks of the tournament. And to help all that American beer go down, it cut a deal with Bitburger,



the German beermaker, allowing the home-team company to sell its brew at three of every ten taps—a Bud Bowl-style competition stacked in favor of the visiting team. While Bud signs on a World Cup stadium in Munich may leave a bad taste in some mouths, attitudes are fairly liberal toward foreign sponsorship of what Germans see as an international celebration. Even though Korea's Hyundai is the official World Cup car, not Mercedes or BMW, it's fine with Fels. "If other companies are going to put more money into it," he says, "they're the sponsors. That's capitalism." —Michael Dumiak

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MERCEDES' MONUMENT TO MOTION

Stuttgart, Germany

GERMAN AUTOMAKERS are world-renowned for putting design in motion. Now their most breathtaking concepts are standing still: Mercedes, BMW, and Porsche are each opening showpiece museums featuring gleaming lines, curves, glass, innovative architecture—and, of course, cars that don't move. First to the flag is Mercedes, which opened its \$192 million shrine, the Mercedes-Benz Museum (above), in May. The building, designed by Dutch firm UN Studio, took eight years from drawing board to opening. It takes visitors on a twisting, double-helix pathway through 16,500 square meters of display space and 120 years of Mercedes history, beginning with the invention of the first gas-powered automobile by Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz in 1886.

BMW is scheduled to open its museum, BMW World, in Munich next spring, and Porsche's entry in Stuttgart will open soon after. All three are big, beautiful, and expensive ads—cathedrals to auto engineering. But they arrive as many carmakers are ailing; Mercedes cut 8,500 jobs last fall. Along with a number of new auto factories, including Volkswagen's "glass factory" in Dresden and architect Zaha Hadid's BMW plant in Leipzig, they can be seen as either costly arrogance or faith in the future. In the meantime, the German automakers are expecting big crowds. Mercedes says one million people a year will walk through its Guggenheim Museum-inspired spiral showcase, and Porsche is expecting 200,000 visitors a year. —Michael Dumiak

Photograph by Michaela Rehle—Landov