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Sharp SH906i, one of the latest high-end mobile phones from Japan
NTT DoCoMo

[Japan Doesn't Know What the iPhone Is](#)

A recent survey unveils that Apple's iPhone is not that interesting to Japan

Softbank, the third largest mobile carrier in Japan, has announced a few days ago that it would begin to [sell Apple's iPhone](#) (the 3G one) to its customers, later this year. This seems to be great news for Japanese users, as they'll finally get the chance to buy the handset that became hugely popular since its September 2007 launch. But will they really be conquered by Apple's handset? According to [Wired](#), a recent survey undertaken by Japan Railways unveils a funny and at the same time weird fact: although about half of the Japanese users that had been questioned said they might buy an iPhone, not even 20% of them were actually aware of what the iPhone was. As unbelievable as it may seem, this is actually logical, since Japan's mobile market is very different from the American and European ones, where the iPhone is so successful. We don't know yet what the 3G iPhone has to bring, but it's almost certain that it will have more advanced features than the EDGE-only one. Even so, it's hard to believe that Apple's 3G handset can compete with features like these: 480 x 854 pixel display, 5 Megapixel camera and Mobile TV capabilities - all found in the latest high-end phones from Japan, where users choose their phones mainly based on how long their specification list is. Let's take for example three handsets from Softbank's line-up: [920P](#) (made by Panasonic), [912SH](#) (made by Sharp) and [911T](#) (made by Toshiba). They all have VGA displays, at least 3 Megapixel cameras and more buttons than any regular handset that we get to see released in the US or Europe. Well, most of the handsets manufactured and released in Japan are similar to these ones, so it's clear that the iPhone would make quite a different appearance on the Japanese market. The advantage of owning an iPhone is the fact that its interface is quite simple to use, as opposed to the UIs implemented in Japan's phones, which are often too complicated, even for Japanese users (because they don't have time to check out all the features included by manufacturers into the menus). However, this might be exactly what will bring the iPhone into the Japanese spotlight. But at the same time it might not make a difference, in case Japanese users put the iPhone's list of specs near the one of a high-end device made by Sharp, Panasonic or Fujitsu - which is very likely to happen. Softbank should release the iPhone in the next few months, when we'll see exactly the amount of enthusiasm Apple's handset will be received with.