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New *iGR* Study forecasts Strong Growth for Smartphones in Regional and Tier 2/3 U.S. Mobile Operators

New research from iGR shows that by 2016, over 19 percent of all smartphone sales are expected to be through regional smaller mobile operators

AUSTIN, Texas, April 10th, 2012 – According to new research from iGR, while the Top 4 mobile operators will dominate U.S. handset sales (and specifically smartphone sales), the Regional and Smaller Operators (RSOs) will make some gains which are largely attributable to the “catch-up” effect caused by the clear demand for smartphones. That is, RSOs will need to increase their smartphone portfolio to meet consumer demand, especially Apple and Android products. In doing so, RSOs are likely to see rather rapid growth in their percentage share of smartphone sales.

In the U.S., four main operators (a.k.a. Tier One) provide devices and services to the majority of subscribers. Due primarily to their size and scale, these operators are typically the most aggressive in terms of network technology upgrades (particularly to 4G LTE), and in terms of obtaining the latest devices of increasing capability (e.g., faster processors, powerful cameras, etc.). However, smaller carriers and rural operators continue to compete, both in terms of technology and devices – MetroPCS, C-Spire, Leap and U.S. Cellular are all good examples of smaller/regional carriers who are innovating.

As time goes on, what will become of these smaller/regional operators? Will they be able to capitalize on the rise of smartphones and 4G? Or, will they be left behind?

“The demand for smartphones is not limited to customers of the larger mobile operators in major metropolitan markets,” said Iain Gillott, president and founder of iGR, a market research consultancy focused on the wireless & mobile industry. “Consumers in smaller markets, as well as those served by tier 2 and 3 operators in metro markets, have also been buying smartphones. And with the recent announced increased availability of the Apple iPhone, iGR expects smartphone sales growth among regional operators to exceed growth in the tier 1 operators.”

iGR’s new market research report, **U.S. Regional & Small Carrier Smartphone Forecast, 2011-2016**, looks at U.S. mobile handset sales, smartphone vs. non-smartphone sales, and mobile operating system (OS) sales across U.S. operators from 2011-2016, specifically in terms of operators, and addresses the following questions:

- What share of total U.S. mobile handset sales did smaller/regional carriers garner in 2011?
- What share of total U.S. mobile handset sales will smaller/regional carriers gain by the end of 2016?
- Will smaller/regional carriers see gains in non-smartphone device sales share by the end of 2016?
- Will smaller/regional carriers see gains in smartphone sales share by the end of 2016?
- What mobile OS trends will impact smaller/regional carriers from 2011-2016?

All data and forecasts within the new study are for the U.S. Brands discussed in this report include RIM Blackberry, Apple, Motorola Mobility, Samsung, LG, HTC, Android, Microsoft Windows, US Cellular, C Spire, Cricket Communications (Leap Wireless), MetroPCS, Boost Mobile, and Virgin Mobile USA.

The new report can be purchased and downloaded directly from iGR's [website](#), providing immediate access to a digital copy of the research. Alternatively, contact [Iain Gillott](#) at (512) 554-1701 or at iain@igr-in.com for additional details on this report as well as information on the **Wireless and Mobile Landscape** advisory service.

U.S. Regional & Small Carrier Smartphone Forecast, 2011 – 2016: https://igr-inc.com/Advisory_And_Subscription_Services/Rural_markets/Regional_Smartphone_Forecast.asp

Rural Markets Research Advisory and Subscription Service: https://igr-inc.com/Advisory_And_Subscription_Services/Rural_Markets/

About [iGR](#)

iGR is a market strategy consultancy focused on the wireless and mobile communications industry. Founded by Iain Gillott, one of the wireless industry's leading analysts, in late 2000 as *iGillottResearch*, *iGR* is now entering its twelfth year of operation. *iGR* continuously researches emerging and existent technologies, technology industries, and consumer markets. We use our detailed research to offer a range of services to help companies improve their position in the marketplace, clearly define their future direction, and ultimately improve their bottom line.

iGR researches a range of wireless and mobile products and technologies, including: smartphones; tablets; mobile applications; bandwidth demand and use; small cell architectures; DAS; LTE; WiMAX; VoLTE; IMS; NFC; GSM/GPRS/UMTS/HSPA; CDMA 1x/EV-DO; iDEN; SIP; macro-, pico- and femtocells; mobile backhaul; WiFi and WiFi offload; and SIM and UICC

A more complete profile of the company can be found at www.igr-inc.com.