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NEWS NEWS

Kyocera shows portable video phone



MAY 18, 1999

BY ANTHONY CATALDO

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TOKYO — In a move that presages Japan's planned move to third-generation digital cellular phones in 2001, Kyocera Corp. announced it will soon start selling a portable phone equipped with a camera and an LCD. The phone will be able to capture and store still images and will also display video at low frame rates .

The **VP-210 VisualPhone**, which Kyocera touts as the first portable “video phone,” can display real-time Motion JPEG video at two frames per second and includes a hands-free speaker. The phone is designed for Japan's Personal Handphone System (PHS), a wireless service originally positioned as a low-cost alternative to cellular, but which has lost subscribers in recent years as cellular prices have fallen. Operators have recently been searching for ways to revive consumer interest in PHS by introducing data-transmission features.

With a built-in lens and 110,000-pixel CMOS image sensor, Kyocera's phone can also double as a digital still camera, allowing users to store up to to 20 still-frame JPEG files. As many as 200 images can also be pasted onto a “telephone book” function screen.



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The images are viewed on a 40-mm x 30-mm reflective TFT-LCD screen, which the company said is viewable under bright outdoor conditions. Aside from displaying video and still images, the screen provides a clear display of e-mail messages and other content delivered via Japan's P-Mail DX wireless data service, according to Kyocera.

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The VP-210 also works as a kind of video answering machine. Callers can view a preset message and image when the answering function at the receiver's end is on. Callers can then send their own image along with a 15-second voice message. The phone can receive one image per recorded call, and a maximum of four recorded calls.

Running the video phone continuously will drain the unit's lithium ion battery in 60 minutes. While in power-saving mode with the LCD turned off and the hands-free function disabled, the phone has a continuous connect time of 120 minutes. Standby time is 200 hours in power-saving mode with the LCD shut down.

At 165 grams, the phone is about twice as heavy as portable phones currently used in Japan. It's physical dimensions are 54-mm wide, 140-mm high and 29-mm deep.

Kyocera is showing VP-210 VisualPhone this week at Business Show '99 in Tokyo. The phone will be available to consumers at the end of July. The price, which will be set by retailers, was not disclosed.

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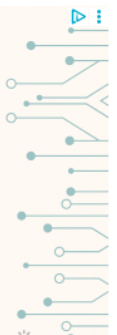
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