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LEGALNOTICES SOUTHKOREA

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COMPUTERWORLD
Mobile/Wireless

SMS alert: 'You've been indicted'

Reuters

December 27, 2005 (Reuters) SEOUL -- South Koreans may look at their mobile phones with some trepidation in the new year because prosecutors will start telling people they have been indicted via text messages, an official said yesterday.

In a country where about 75% of the population carries mobile phones, prosecutors decided it was time to move away from sending legal notices on paper and instead send them electronically, said Lee Young-pyo, an administrative official.

"Most people in South Korea have mobile phones, and since the notices don't reach them immediately by regular mail, this is a more definite way for the individuals to know they have received a legal notice," Lee said.

Indictments sent via text messages are not intended to take people by surprise. "People will receive a text message of a legal notice only after they apply for the service," he said.

Prosecutors expect to save about 160 million won ($158,000 U.S.) per year by shifting to the service and reducing the number of legal notices it sends through the mail.

Other notices that will be sent by text messages include information on fines and penalties.

The service starts today but will be fully implemented in 2006.

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