

# mobile news



## Brightstar claims 'UC' mantle

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### Distributor says its the UK's "first truly converged distributor"

Distributor Brightstar Europe has said it is the only UK distributor with a claim to offer a fully converged product portfolio, as it looks to bundle smartphones with netbooks in the UK and tie up a deal for forthcoming Acer smartphones.

Brightstar Europe business development director Max Caballero told Mobile News: "We are realistically the only distributor with full access to the IT channel and we have been working with all the traditional laptop manufacturers for several years now. We are probably the first truly converged distributor.

"We can maximise being an IT distributor with our mobile expertise. If that is the direction the market is taking then it's fantastic news for us."

Brightstar is set to bring new smartphones from Taiwanese computer manufacturer Acer to the UK later this year, and suggested last week the deal could be exclusive in the UK.

Caballero said Brightstar will bundle smartphones and netbooks from manufacturers producing both types of device, and is primed to capitalise on converged opportunities as computer manufacturers such as Dell are likely to follow Toshiba and Acer into the smartphone market.

"Brightstar will include netbook and smartphone packages in its portfolio, incorporated into the Brightstar Europe portfolio as we see more demand for these types of propositions," said Caballero.



"We will hopefully have a contract with Acer, but it is going to be a niche offer that isn't going to draw volumes. The size of the opportunity is probably just for one distributor."

He said the entry of computer manufacturers to the smartphone arena was a natural progression of their product portfolio, but added they pose little threat to incumbent mobile manufacturers as they will target niche market segments.

"Last year these companies were engaging with the networks over netbooks and low tier notebooks," he said.

"They are not a threat to the incumbent manufacturers. It's just that the pie is getting bigger. In 2008, 12 per cent of all phones shipped globally were smartphones.

"In the UK it was about 15 per cent of phones. We expect it to grow this year by about 50 per cent, to be around 22 per cent."