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# Japan

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## The Current Episode

**Japan is the leading force in entertainment trends.** Those trends and behaviors that we see as part of the global next episode of entertainment are already current in Japan. This is especially true of the feminization of technology.

### G-Tech Revolution

In Japan there has never been a technology gender divide, and increasingly Japanese female consumers are driving technology and entertainment. Chiemi Isozaki, editor of Tokyo entertainment blog *Ping Mag*, says ‘G-Teachers’ are the most powerful consumer group in Japan.

In Japan, ‘G-Tech’ is represented by the ‘Gal’ and ‘Otaku’ [she-nerd] tribes. **“The ‘Gal’ she-nerd tribe finds new ways of customizing and redefining gadgets** – they are responsible for breaking pop artists and fashion movements. **The ‘Otaku’ she-nerd tribe is leading the gaming scene** – they are the early adopters of new games and consoles and even promote gaming to rest of the community,” says Isozaki. Our quant survey shows 37% of girls compared to 28% of boys have a portable gaming device.

Linked to this, the cult of cute cannot be underestimated in Japan according to Ricky Ow, general manager of Sony Pictures Entertainment Networks Asia, who says this has infiltrated Asia as a whole. ‘Cute Worship’ explains why miniaturization and manga are prevailing Japanese entertainment and digital trends.

This also explains why Japanese consumers have such an emotional, almost human attachment to technology and why they rarely question its humanization; it is often said the Japanese believe robots have a soul. Japan is one of the main driving forces behind the increasingly human and emotional nature of technology. Manufacturers like Nokia and Apple have looked to the humanization and feminization of their products and **we are seeing a global cultural shift from left-brain thinking, regarded as male, towards right-brain thinking, regarded as female.**

### Shared Entertainment

**Communal entertainment will be a huge global trend which we see Japan leading.** In Japan there has been a move towards the public and live elements of entertainment, evident in the way people congregate in groups to play with their mobiles. Unlike the rest of the world, our survey showed a low use of social network sites from Japan (just 22% regularly access social networking sites).

The Nintendo Wii, with its innovative control, has successfully expanded gaming to include the whole family and is becoming a competitor for TV programs. According to Japanese television executives, it is responsible for the recent low viewer figures in Japan.

At the same time, **portable devices will still have a place ensuring there is an intimate, personal element and a way of saving experiences to our digital memories and sharing them with friends.**

### Micromedia

Big is definitely not beautiful in Japan, **the shrink-to-fit capital of the world and Japan is set to drive micromedia globally.** Ricky Ow says, “As storage and wireless grows, the consumer may one day watch films through their mobile as opposed to buying DVDs.”

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## The Next Episode

With Japan's mobile entertainment model already entering the circular entertainment phase, future entertainment in Japan is moving towards services, and **expanding the parameters of what we think of as entertainment.**

### Ubiquitous Networking

**Navigating and accessing entertainment will become more of an entertainment experience in itself.** The Japanese government is currently working on RFID (radio-frequency identification) to tag the streets of Tokyo and Kobe, to ensure Japan is a truly networked and navigable country. 10,000 RFIDs will be tagged into 'smart shops', 'tagged goods', 'live restaurants' and 'multi-networked entertainment destinations'. This will allow the consumer to access a live network of entertainment and information channels, based on their location and using their mobile devices.

The Tokyo Ubiquitous Network Project, as it is known, is described by creator Ken Sakamura, a professor at Tokyo University, as "an infrastructure for the 21st century. It will see our everyday landscape guide us, inform us and generally hold our hand in an increasingly puzzling world."

Tim Westergren, founder of Pandora, says, **"Future geographical services will be very valuable to the consumer, reliably connecting you to entertainment in your vicinity.** Consumers will pay brands for this kind of entertainment service as opposed to the entertainment itself."

Most interesting is the usage of QR codes, or 2D barcodes which are readable by mobile phone. These codes are on every McDonalds wrapping, many magazines, billboards and pamphlets and allow consumers to scan the QR with their mobile which takes them directly to the site which hosts lots of info.

### Preservation Society

For Japanese consumers, downloading music has yet to catch on. Just 29% download compared to 62% who visit high street stores. Only 24% share media through peer-to-peer, which in comparison to their Asian neighbors, South Korea (57%) and China (60%), is extremely low.

This is down to Japan's culture of collecting; they want to own physical items. This is especially true for 71% of girls who confirmed they store their music on CDs given pride of place in their bedrooms; just 26% store music on their computer or laptop. **We imagine this trend will move more towards downloading as the notion of experience rather than ownership that we have seen elsewhere is embraced.**



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## STATISTICS

Out of the Japanese consumers we surveyed:

68%	listen to music at gigs
43%	listen to music on an MP3 player
37%	listen to music on their mobile phone
74%	read online blogs for entertainment
77%	go to the cinema
5%	own a digital camera
81%	regularly take pictures on their mobile
86%	watch TV on a television
45%	play video games
49%	own an MP3 player
74%	use the internet as a trusted source of information
24%	use the internet to share media through peer to peer software
85%	surf the net on their mobile device
32%	read blogs
29%	download music from online sites
62%	buy music at high street retailers
74%	would like all of their media platforms to be converged into the one device

Through our survey and correspondents, we have identified some of the exciting names in the field of entertainment and media that is inspiring Japanese consumers.

Top websites
Social network site: <b>Mixi (41%)</b>
Video-sharing website: <b>YouTube (62%)</b>
VoIP & IM Services: <b>Yahoo! Messenger (50%)</b>
Photo-sharing website: <b>Flickr (6%)</b>
Aggregator websites: <b>MyYahoo! (26%)</b>

Artist watch
DJ Kentaro
Takagi Masakatsu
Cornelius

Top Clubs
MixroOffice, Tokyo
Club Yellow, Tokyo
SuperDeluxe, Tokyo

Festival watch
Summer Sonic Festival
Fuji Rock Festival
Otaku and Akihabara gaming festivals

Websites to watch
pingmag.jp
public-image.org
honeyee.com