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## Line's new R&D unit in Thailand first outside Japan

Line Corporation has set up a research and development team for mobile applications and service in Thailand, the company's first such department outside Japan.

The facility will allow the Thai operating unit to develop mobile apps and services to serve local demand.

"We foresee the adoption of local content requirements in the mobile app sector," Ariya Banomyong, managing director of Line Thailand, said after delivering the keynote speech at Echelon Thailand 2015, a regional tech conference.

Given strong technical and engineering skills and plenty of local tech start-ups, Thailand has the capability to assume the new role.

Line Thailand is on the verge of recruiting staff for the development team. The plan is to roll out the company's new mobile app service in early 2016.

The company may also provide an open application programming interface (API) to give developers programmatic access to proprietary software.

An open API makes it possible for application programs to interact with Line's platform.



Line has 33 million users in Thailand, making the country the second-largest user base after Japan and representing 83% of the nation's mobile internet users.

Thailand has 40 million mobile internet users, outpacing the 35 million desktop-only internet users, Mr Ariya said.

"This says that Thailand is a mobile-first country," he said. "Thais access the internet for the first time via mobile phone."

The forthcoming 4G wireless broadband service will provide faster communication speeds, widen business opportunities and encourage greater development of mobile app services.

Line earns revenue from stickers, games, music and digital content for television streaming, as well as the e-commerce marketplace, business-to-business marketing and mobile payment services.

Line Thailand recently introduced Line Gift, a feature that lets users send gifts by purchasing a digital voucher and sending the voucher to the receiver.

The receiver can redeem the voucher at partner shops such as 7-Eleven convenience stores.

The sender pays for the voucher using Line Pay.

To access Line Pay, users register their personal information and credit or debit card number in the Line App. Goods and services can be bought using a bank account with pre – deposited cash for purchases.

