SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Norway's Trolltech AS has demonstrated the first fully reprogrammable mobile handset to help phone designers innovate as fast as their counterparts in the personal computer industry have done.

A major divide that separates PCs from mobile telephones is that while designers can freely reprogram a computer's software, most of a phone's functions are fixed at the factory.

"(Independent) developers are having a hard time figuring out how to participate in the mobile phone market," Benoit Schillings, Trolltech's chief technology officer, said in an interview after a news conference to unveil the phone on Monday.

Trolltech, the world's top supplier of Linux software for mobile phones, said it will offer a mobile cameraphone running on the international GSM/GPRS standard it calls Greenphone.

Trolltech's phone is priced at around $690 and comes with all the software and source code necessary to develop a complete mobile phone model, including core Linux operating system controls, a phone dialler, address book and camera application.

The phone is not aimed at consumers, but would allow a wide audience of designers to create new features for future mobile phones.

While the Greenphone, which is due out in September, opens up the field of mobile phone development to small design firms and individuals, it gives large organizations a fully functioning test environment with which to develop new models.

"This industry is in a deadlock over how to make new services evolve on mobile handsets," Schillings said.
Trolltech aims to encourage everything from games to business-level applications to teen instant message devices to be developed using the open design of the Greenphone kit.

A corporation could find it economical to develop a custom phone for say, 1,000 employees, then take the design to a contract manufacturer who would build the phone using standard hardware components according to the design, Schillings said.

Trolltech, which held its initial public offering early last month on the Oslo Stock Exchange, supplies Linux mobile phone software controls to companies such as Motorola Inc., the biggest seller of Linux-based phones to date.

The company also supplies a variety of Chinese and Taiwanese electronics manufacturers including Wiston Group, Compal Electronics, ZTE, China Techfaith and Yuhua Teltech, which will build the Greenphone.

Linux is an open-source software system that has been gaining ground among electronics makers seeking common ground among the patchwork of hundreds of different phone designs that have fragmented the industry.

Phone makers have designed 40 models with Trolltech software, resulting in 4 million phones sold globally to date.
Trolltech offers fully reprogrammable mobile phone – Yahoo! News

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Vonage Local and Long Distance Phone
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