



**NOKIA
MONEY**

First of all, this isn't déjà vu. Nokia has been talking to Wallpaper* about using the mobile phone as a form of currency for almost ten years. However, 2010 looks like the year it will finally take off – and, interestingly, it's all thanks to Africa. In recent years, mobile providers M-Pesa in Kenya and MTN in South Africa have been running mobile-based banking services – a boon for developing countries where mobile handset penetration is greater than almost any other trapping of modern finance and communications. M-Pesa has 7 million customers using its money services, usually for transactions of less than \$40 per day.

Mobile banking clearly makes sense – but who can make it pay? Banks, for instance, have no direct way of getting software onto handsets to allow mobile-to-mobile payment. Even the mobile phone networks don't have that. Whereas Nokia can slot the software into place with ease and, using the mobile

financial service provider Obopay, will offer everything from paying bills to paying each other. There is also a network of Nokia Money agents on the way, where consumers can go in person and deposit or withdraw cash from their accounts.

'With our high market share and reach, Nokia is well-positioned, especially in emerging markets, to bring electronic means of payment to hundreds of millions of individuals for the first time,' says the company. 'Payments can be made irrespective of time and location, while we are also providing better financial control, especially for those people who have never had a bank account before.'

The service debuted at Nokia World in Stuttgart in September and will roll out gradually to selected markets in 2010. 'There are 4 billion mobile phone users and only 1.6 billion bank accounts,' points out Wolff Olins strategist Robert Jones. 'This will be big.'