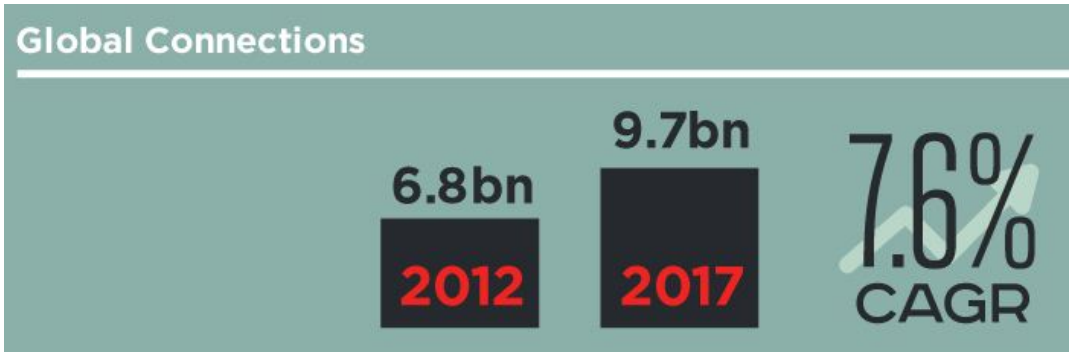
We're on the ramp to an important tipping point: GSMA says, by 2018, mobile companies will make **more money from data usage than with voice calls**.



The association has released a 5-year forecast that shows a surge in the number of connected devices and an increase in the amount of machine-to-machine communications.

It's an interesting document with lots of useful graphics-- and the main point seems to be **the GSMA wants to lay claim on the emerging areas**
where mobile communications will expand rapidly in the coming years.

Areas such as **mobile health services** (GSMA claims mobile communications could help to save one million lives in Africa and $400 billion in healthcare costs in OECD countries
),
education
(
GSMA says 1.8 million children could be educated using mobile devices by 2017),
smart metering
(mobile cab cut carbon emissions by 27 million tonnes – saving 1.2 billion trees, says GSMA), and
connected cars

(we'll save 1 in 9 lives through emergency calling services).

Mobile communications will even solve the **food shortage** (240 tons of food spoils each year during transit and storage alone, and GSMA argues
mobile data-- to keep better track of trucks and the temperature of storage facilities-- will save enough food to feed 40 million people). That's either going to mean a lot more obese people in the Western world or we will finally figure out how to help Africa feed itself.

So...are we evolving from the era of the smartphone to **the time of the superphone?**

Actually, no. It's more about moving the goal posts, widening the definition of mobile communications to include all that is the future of IP address-to-IP address communication. Other industries will also lay claim to this... and the GSMA wants to sink its roots into the emerging areas.



Just like the PC before it, the smartphone will give way to evolution. More sooner than later: because the smartphone takeoff was always faster than the PC, it's going to get to that part of the product maturity curve years before the PC did.

Just like PC makers claim the PC isn't dying, that it's just "transforming" into smartphones, tablets, and all sorts of devices...mobile phone makers (and their industry association) will be singing the same song.

As smartphone sales start to slow (and they already have in the advanced markets), the real action will be in **M2M, the internet of things**. Call it IT, web, or mobile, but the bigger revolution is in the evolution of moving the intelligence to the network's real edge and the embedding of the same intelligence in objects, clothing, retail goods and more.

At GSMA's own **Mobile World Congress** this week in Barcelona, a **Connected City** exhibit envisions a future where instead of people talking to each other, machines talk to other machines (and other machines listen and act...and even talk back or talk to more machines).

For example, **Google's glasses** or the **Armour39's next generation** *[shown in photo above]*, wearable technology is coming. Anyone hear echoes of John Gage's favorite tagline back when SUN really shone?: THE NETWORK IS THE PC.

It's the SMART and not the PHONE that makes smartphone work. In the near future, the NETWORK IS THE PHONE.

The Mobile Economy is more than stats, it's really a GSMA manifesto on how mobile should take its place in the broader world where industries will collide over M2M.

Why else would they need to go **outside the industry** and have their "MOBILE ECONOMY" written by general business consultants at AT Kearney instead of their colleagues and usual mobile industry researchers?

Go **The Mobile Economy** report