

Mobo vendor spins Windows phone

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Veteran motherboard manufacturer Micro-Star International (MSI) is making its first entry into the mobile phone market with a handset based on Windows CE and Intrinsic's Soleus software platform. The 5608 will be the first in a series of Soleus-based phones and handhelds, according to MSI.

[\(Click here for a larger view of the MSI 5608\)](#)

The 5608 (shown above and below) includes EDGE/HSDPA WAN capabilities as well as WiFi WLAN functionality. It may also be offered with WiMAX, although no further details of this were provided. Using a 667MHz Samsung [SC36400](#) processor, the 5608 also boasts a two megapixel camera, GPS, and digital TV reception in T-DMB, DVB-H, and ISDVT formats, MSI says.

Ironically given such a feature-packed and powerful camera, the [Soleus](#) software stack was originally conceived for "feature phones" that did not have the power to run Windows Mobile. Updated last year to run on top of Windows CE 6.0 as well as the previous Windows CE 5.0, Soleus comprises a suite of development tools, along with software and telephony elements said to be "pre-certified" for specific hardware. Third-party options currently include handwriting recognition, voice dialing, and a "comprehensive list" of optimized audio and video codecs for multimedia playback, according to Intrinsic.



MSI's 5608 has a distinctive user interface
(Click to enlarge)

Intrinsyc says the user interface framework in Soleus allows developers or operators to change a phone's look and feel easily. User interfaces can even change themselves dynamically based on a subscriber's location -- when WiFi is being used, for example. Compared to the default Soleus appearance shown at right, MSI has apparently selected a look reminiscent of Apple's iPhone.



Intrinsyc signed a Software License Agreement (SLA) with MSI in June 2007. This is one of a multitude of recent Soleus design wins cited by the company: In November 2007, for example, it [announced a deal with Quanta](#), under the terms of which under the terms of which Soleus will be used to create a 3G HSDPA-enabled (high-speed downlink packet access) mobile device, "expected to be a breakthrough in design concept." Earlier deals last year included those with [Taiwanese ODM Wistron](#), [Ginwave Technologies](#), [Cellon International](#), and other unnamed licensees.

Initial markets for MSI's 5608 are China and Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA), with shipments planned for the second quarter of 2008, according to MSI.