



## **IDC Forecasts Worldwide 5G Connections to Reach 1.01 Billion in 2023**

**FRAMINGHAM, Mass., December 16, 2019** – In its first worldwide 5G forecast, International Data Corporation (**IDC**) projects the number of 5G connections to grow from roughly 10.0 million in 2019 to 1.01 billion in 2023. This represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 217.2% over the 2019-2023 forecast period. By 2023, IDC expects 5G will represent 8.9% of all mobile device connections.

Several factors will help to drive the adoption of 5G over the next several years:

- **Data Creation and Consumption.** The amount of data created and consumed by consumers and businesses will continue to grow over the coming years. Shifting data-intensive users and use cases to 5G will allow network operators to more efficiently manage network resources, improving performance and reliability as a result.
- **More Things Connected.** As the IoT continues to proliferate, the need to support millions of connected endpoints at the same time will become increasingly critical. With the ability to enable an exponentially denser number of simultaneous connections, 5G's densification advantage be key for mobile network operators in providing reliable network performance.
- **Speed and Real-Time Access.** The speed and latency that 5G enables will open up the door for new use cases and add mobility as an option to many existing ones. Many of these use cases will come from businesses looking to leverage 5G's technological advantages in their edge computing, artificial intelligence, and cloud services initiatives.

"While there is a lot to be excited about with 5G, and there are impressive early success stories to fuel that enthusiasm, the road to realizing the full potential of 5G beyond enhanced mobile broadband is a longer-term endeavor, with a great deal of work yet to be done on standards, regulations, and spectrum allocations," said [Jason Leigh](#), research manager for Mobility at IDC. "Despite the fact that many of the more futuristic use cases involving 5G remain three to five years from commercial scale, mobile subscribers will be drawn to 5G for video streaming, mobile gaming, and AR/VR applications in the near term."

In addition to building out the 5G network infrastructure, mobile network operators will have a lot to do to ensure a return on their investment:

- **Unique, must-have applications.** Mobile network operators need to invest in the development of 5G mobile apps and work with developers to create robust apps and use cases that take full advantage of the speed, latency, and connection density offered by 5G.
- **Guidance on 5G best practices.** Mobile operators need to position themselves as trusted advisors around connectivity, dispelling misconceptions and providing guidance on where 5G might best be utilized by a customer and, equally as important, when the need can be met by other access technologies.
- **Partnerships are critical.** Deep partnerships with software, hardware, and services vendors, as well as close relationships with industry partners, are required to integrate the diverse technologies necessary to realize the most complex 5G use cases and ensure that 5G solutions closely align with the operational reality of customers' day-to-day needs.

The report, *Worldwide 5G Connections Forecast, 2019-2023* (IDC #US43863119), provides IDC's first forecast for the worldwide 5G market. The report examines two categories of 5G subscriptions: 5G-enabled mobile subscriptions and 5G IoT cellular connections. It also provides a regional 5G forecast for three major regions (the Americas, Asia/Pacific, and Europe).

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### **For more information contact:**

Jason Leigh  
jleigh@idc.com  
401-297-4624  
Michael Shirer  
press@idc.com  
508-935-4200