



An app for every occasion: apparently you can erase blemishes, or acne, with an iPhone application.

Hold on, I'm just zapping a zit

IT SEEMS only the imagination can limit the applications for the fast growing world of the Apple iPhone. After helping to keep Optus in the No. 2 telco position ahead of a fast finishing Vodafone Hutchison Australia (VHA), the latest iPhone application promises to zap wrinkles and acne while on the phone.

Dermatologist Dr Greg Pearson said the AcneApp used 420 nanometer blue light and 550 nanometer red light to help kill bacteria and promote collagen growth.

The colours appear on the screen while you are on the phone, leading to the possibility of a clearer

complexion on the side of your preferred ear.

Not everyone is convinced the application will work, with other dermatologists pointing out that coloured light therapy was not highly effective unless there were a lot of applications.

Which might favour the verbose.

AcneApp joins tens of thousands of other intriguing applications such as the iMussohmi which contains 100 speeches by the fascist dictator and a Virgin Atlantic app to help people overcome their fear of flying.

Optus chief Paul O'Sullivan said its heavily promoted iPhone deals had

helped the company gain market share and mobile services revenue — a claim that won't be verified until Telstra and VHA announce their numbers over the next two weeks.

"Our sense is that the industry is probably around about nine or 10 per cent at best, so we see ourselves as continuing to take market share," he said.

Revenue from Optus' mobile business surged 9.6 per cent to \$1.46 billion thanks to an 11 per cent increase in mobile services revenue to \$1.18 billion — much of it due to increasing use of data-rich smartphones such as the iPhone.

Bucking the trend, globally

THROUGHOUT the financial crisis, one listed financial product just kept growing while many others wilted.

Known as ETFs (short for exchange traded funds) and usually designed to reflect a share index or commodity in just one share, they have been steadily taking up the slack left as investors piled out of actively managed share funds.

According to research by two of the largest providers, iShares and State Street, global ETF inflows were above \$115 billion in 2009 with assets passing \$1.1 trillion.

Growth was even faster in Australia, with assets up 141 per cent in the year to January as we played catch up to major markets on the ETF trend.

Australian investors were particularly interested in buying ETFs representing the fast growing emerging market countries such as China, Brazil, Russia and India as a way of finding some share market growth in tough times.

They were on the right track with iShares' BRIC fund returning 47 per cent with other emerging market ETFs not far behind.

What everyone wants to know is which areas will be "hot" this year and State Street thinks the emerging markets trend will continue, along with fixed interest funds.

It also predicts that active managers will start to retaliate by listing their products as ETFs.

That means investors could buy and sell what is effectively a traditional managed share fund but with the instant liquidity advantage of doing it all directly on the share market.

Local iShares director Tom Keenan said Australian familiarity and trust of ETFs was growing quickly and he expected more investors to use them to provide a core portfolio with very low costs.

"The impressive growth of ETFs over the past year was mainly the result of investors demanding greater transparency as well as improved liquidity and lower fees," said Tom.

Hopes pinned on platinum

PLATINUM might be more valuable than gold but there are very few companies trying to find it in Australia.

John Kaminsky, executive chair of explorer Rimfire, is one of the few hoping to make some serious money extracting the precious metal from the central NSW area of Fifield.

With around 20,000 ounces of alluvial platinum already mined in

the area 110 years ago, John is confident there is plenty more left behind by the old-timers.

"We have found that platinum is present in multiple layers but you need to use different methods to quantify it," said John.

He is confident of eventual production.

Rimfire shares closed steady at 1.8¢ yesterday.