

Chapter XXXVIII

Mobile Magazines

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ABSTRACT

Mobile magazines will be magazines on a mobile computing and communication platform (in contrast to print magazines about mobile technologies), providing valuable, current multi-media content. However, there is a gap in the value chain between mobile operators and content publishers, hindering established small and medium sized publishers to enter the mobile market despite its commercial potential. A mobile operator publishing and entertainment platform enables the creation of a new category of mobile service called a mobile magazine. An m-Mag (mobile magazine) eco-system is a next generation mobile publishing service that is made available from a mobile operator's portal, that is integrated with value added mobile data services and that uses the operator's billing capabilities to charge consumers for access to the magazine. Using Parlay/OSA as an open approach, the m-Mag platform can integrate into an operator's network using standardised APIs and is portable across different operator networks. A discussion of the commercial potential analyses the route to the market.

INTRODUCTION

In his editorial of Pervasive Computing (Satyanarayanan, 2005), Satyanarayanan compares the paradigms of the “Swiss Army Knife” to the “Wallet” approach for the area of mobile

computing. He finds the knife most versatile when far from civilisation, but sub-optimal in the individual functions (such as a full-size screw-driver compared to the small one on the knife). The wallet, in contrast, containing credit and identity cards, enables the user to all ameni-

ties of the civilised world, providing payment and access to plenty resources.

The mobile phone, as the first truly ubiquitous computing device (Abowd, Iftode, & Mitchell, 2004) can provide such a wallet functionality, transforming generic infrastructure into highly personalised services (Satyanarayanan, 2005). Abowd counts the current main mobile phone usage (voice and SMS) as the first two ubicomp killer applications, considering the over a billion devices deployed today (Abowd et al., 2004).

Magazines on general topics however, generating a massive revenue on the print market, and getting out of the red with their Web-based offsprings, are only beginning to discover the mobile devices.

The term “mobile magazine” in this chapter should therefore be understood in the meaning of a magazine on a mobile platform (in contrast to print magazines about mobile technologies). Besides technical marketing tools of mobile operators, only very few mobile magazines have entered the market of mobile communication since 2004.

The issues that exist already, are manually tailored for the mobile community, such as from Sendandsee and Zed/LaNetro, one of the leading providers of consumer mobile value-added services in European, Asian and American markets (Schuurmans & Poropudas, 2004; Sendandsee, 2004).

The global publishing industry, that so successfully took advantage of the Internet as a distribution channel during the 1990s, has not been able to exploit the “mobile” Internet to date. This is due to a number of technical, financial, and business issues. Recently a number of these barriers to success have been addressed with new types of colour mobile phone and technologies such as GPRS and UMTS — but still a number of critical problems persist.

While much has been speculated about why appropriate services are not being developed and used in Europe and the U.S., in contrast, NTT DoCoMo has convincingly demonstrated the public’s appetite for these services with i-mode in Japan. Takeshi Natsuno, managing director for i-mode Strategy, NTT DoCoMo (Takeshi, 2003) believes that the problem is one of market structure; that in Europe and the U.S., a value chain that supports the creation of a mobile services ecosystem is still missing, hindering the fully automated creation/conversion of time-sensitive, premium multi-media services.

Mobile operators do not have the resources or content to build a sufficiently critical mass of revenue generating 3G services to make 3G a success by themselves—they need to create an eco-system of third party service providers.

MOBILE MULTIMEDIA VALUE CHAINS

Karvonen and Warsta (2004) have analysed the value chain perspective for mobile multimedia services development within a number of companies. Based on a history of value chain and value network models, and the increasing diversification of revenue models, they derive the model as presented in Figure 1.

They clearly distinguish the infrastructure and services provision from the content. The latter needs to be created, further developed (specifically reflecting MMS content such as games and ringtones), appropriately packaged, and marketed to the consumer. Karvonen and Warsta conclude with the requirement of an eco-system for mobile multimedia development, providing room for a complex combination of separate members.

Mobile magazines are becoming part of the mobile entertainment market, which is a sub-

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