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Turning your mobile into a mini TV

By [NICKY BLACKBURN](#)



When Yossi Wellingstein, CEO and co-founder of Celltick Technologies, a developer of interactive broadcast technology, first began exploring value-added services on the mobile telephone, he soon realized that apart from a few dedicated techno buffs, hardly anyone was actually using them. He took the problem to colleagues in the consumer marketing industry, who told him flatly that no-one would use these technologies because they were just too complicated for the average person, who was only interested in using the phone to talk.

"There was a kind of hole," says Wellingstein, speaking from a taxi in London. "A world of applications was being developed, but they were very thinly used. It just wasn't a very compelling user experience. Most users were uninterested in additional applications, and were incapable of using them. We had to find a way to help ordinary people figure out how to use these features."

With this mission in mind, Wellingstein and his team began looking for ways to transform the user experience. Their gaze settled on the screen of the mobile phone, which usually remains blank.

Celltick took over this "idle" screen and developed a technology that would turn it into a kind of mini-TV, or a scrolling newspaper. Instead of seeing a blank screen, users would be sent real-time news and weather, information about sports, health, music or traffic. Any user interested in finding out more about any of these items simply clicks on the OK button. A menu opens and presents various options based on the service offered. This could be a video news report, an automatic link to a WAP site or web page, or an SMS message with more information. A second click launches the desired service.

FOR THE mobile operator, LiveScreen technology enables the establishment of an interactive channel with its mass subscribers, while at the same time increasing revenue from value-added services.

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from value added services.

"Whenever you look at the screen, there's something happening, and it's compelling," says 42-year-old Wellingstein, who helped found the Barak international telecommunications operator, where he served as VP of international carrier business until 2000. "It adds value to an established channel, allowing the mobile operator to manage the idle screen."

Right from the start, Celltick realized it was essential that this scrolling information be real data rather than advertising.

"Ads would just make the user angry," explains Wellingstein. Each service provider can decide what information to include, and the user can also personalize this to a limited extent. The content does not interrupt regular service, and does not disturb the user. The customer pays only if he dials for a continuation of the broadcast, not for the initial display.

Celltick's Livescreen technology is a far cry from traditional methods, where users must either navigate complicated menus or mobile Internet sites, or dial various numbers to get the information they require.

Today, mobile operators who have installed the LiveScreen technology have seen the number of users operating value-added services leap from an average of 2-5% before deployment to 25-32% afterward, boosting revenues accordingly, says Wellingstein.

CELLTICK WAS founded by Uri Baron, Ronen Daniel, and Ran and Yossi Wellingstein in early 2000. Seed financing of \$3.5 million came from Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP), an Italian company, Compagnie Industriali Riunite (CIR), owned by the de Benedetti family, and private investors.

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