

**Idle screens on mobiles could make an ideal way to push content to people, says Paul Dunone**



Advertising is going to be a key revenue stream for mobile companies, but what's the best way to push this unsolicited content to mobile users? Why, use the phone's idle screen, that's how. And that is precisely what Celltick Technologies is doing with its LiveScreen Media platform, which turns a phone's idle screen into an interactive mobile marketing channel.

The technology allows content providers or advertisers to push teaser messages direct to the mobiles, appearing on the idle screen when — and only when — the phone isn't in use.

The teasers can take the form of sponsored content, brand campaigns or promotional messages. For example, users can select to receive news headlines, traffic reports, games, sports updates or alerts about sales. When subscribers see anything that interests them, all they have to do is click once to access associated content or services.

"Early attempts at mobile marketing have been limited by the platforms available. SMS is costly and intrusive, and the browser-based approach lacks reach and segmentation," Stephen Dunford, Celltick's CEO tells me. "With LiveScreen Media we will generate traffic for the rich, yet underused, operator content offerings. At the same time it will provide advertisers and brands with a new medium to reach carefully defined audience segments and help funding the development of increasingly innovative content."

Celltick's mobile broadcast technology offers a low cost delivery method that makes the service extremely attractive for operators and marketers alike. Research indicates that it is able to deliver 1000 impressions for 5 per cent of the cost incurred for the same number of impressions over TV, or for 25 per cent of the cost of online impressions.

Dusan Hamlin, managing director at Inside, a leading mobile marketing agency, says that "Mobile is a relatively new channel for multi-media advertising and does not benefit from a high level of advertising funding yet — although this is not through a lack of demand. Our experience is that big brands recognise the potential of mobile to deliver increased user engagement through, delivery, segmentation and tracking, but are frustrated at the lack of clear market solutions. Brand owners are ready to allocate significant budget to mobile marketing, given the right ecosystem for mobile, marketing and technology expertise."

Harry Hobson of Fathom Partners, a consulting and venturing firm focusing on the technology, media and telecoms sectors, adds that "Vodafone's CEO Arun Sarin recently cited advertising as an important future revenue stream, and operators like Virgin Mobile in the US are already experimenting with some form of advertising-funded content or services. The potential of mobile as a marketing channel is widely recognised, but realising it lies in marrying the needs of operators and marketers with delivering a tangible benefit to the consumer in terms of high value and non-intrusive content. That's where a technology like mobile broadcast comes into its own, making full use of the screen during a subscriber's idle time."

LiveScreen Media can control not only who receives the messages, but also when, where and how regularly. Experience has shown that teasers are most likely to engage users if they are sent at a time when subscribers are receptive to content, for instance while commuting or during lunchtime. LiveScreen Media also has a smart analysis and targeting engine which constantly collects data on user behaviour and refines the relevancy of the content and promotions delivered to them.

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