BCA4086

I WANT MY TV! MOBILE INTEGRATED TELEVISION (MI-TV)

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ABSTRACT

"In future, My TV experience will certainly have to be multi dimensional and delivered anytime, anyplace and anywhere. I want my favourite TV content at my fingertips - and I really would like it from my preferred media brand sent to my chosen device."

This is the kind of statement that is looming large in both the viewers' (and broadcasters) mind as mobile technology leapfrogs the distribution paradigm. Indeed, the classic futurist vision of new media broadcasting is being tested right now by the third generation world of Hutch 3 (making MTV, Playboy and English Premier League content directly accessible on the phone).

However, there are many other mobile operators and broadcasters repackaging and repurposing existing TV content for mobile interaction. i-POP itself has a good measure of experience implementing the latest interactive broadcasting activities in Asia, programs that have taken simple SMS TV formats to become what is now Mobile integrated TV (or Mi-TV) pronounced 'My TV'.

INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming impact of mobile phone adoption on the world's populations, economies and countries—is having a truly energizing effect on the broadcast media. It has been said that soon there will be more mobile devices than televisions[1]; as such, this new platform must be addressed and more importantly, embraced by broadcasters. The integration of all things mobile into the daily output of the media is absolutely critical to the positive and profitable engagement of the up-and-coming generations of television viewers.

This white paper seeks to both contextualise and highlight the critical strategic impact that mobile phone interaction with viewers is having on the broadcasting industry, both in Asia and beyond. It seeks to identify the key factors in developing successful mobile interactive programs and examine the potential future path for media brands —should they have the foresight to develop an intimate personal relationship with viewers through immersing them in value added mobile interactivity.

"Text TV will move to Participation TV, with new programme concepts going beyond both the text voting and red button, to higher levels of interaction, programme input and personalisation. Text TV will also evolve to more Picture TV, based on submitted content."[2]

In commenting on the year ahead, the UK's Mobile Data Association (MDA) has clearly identified the prospective change from SMS TV to Mobile Integrated TV (Mi-TV). This white paper looks at some real and highly successful mobile integrated programming case studies from MTV Asia, ESPN STAR Sports and STAR Group/National Geographic Channel already completed.

THE ASIAN MEDIA CONTEXT: UBIQUITUOUS MOBILE ACTIVITY

In terms of the market opportunity, all the economic and lifestyle indicators suggest that the broadcasting industry needs to react fast in order to profitably embrace the new found media opportunity presented by the world's mass adoption of mobile devices and wireless networks. Research reports from China highlighted by the BBC[3] shows that mobile phone ownership (currently aggregated at more than one billion worldwide) has far outstripped that of landline telephones in many markets across Asia, especially China.

However, now that China has powerfully demonstrated the societal impact of the pervasive use of mobile phones — it gives credence to the notion that the mobile is the key point of reference in an Asian's lifestyle. A view also articulated in the What Do Asian Mobile Phone Users Want, Have?[4]

"Four billion people, or half the world's population, will be using mobile phones by 2015, up from the 1.3 billion who have them now…" a top industry executive predicted Wednesday. *"By 2008, the world will already have two billion mobile users*." said Jorma Ollila, chairman and chief executive of Nokia at the 3GSM Congress recently held in Cannes.[5]

Key Markets in Asia will include China, Japan and India. With something in excess of 370 million mobile phone users in Asia alone, it is clear that the growing mobile phenomenon needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Ultimately the main contention arising from the adoption of mobile as a new media platform: *"Entertainment is a driving factor behind key wireless markets …Marketing that incorporates the entertainment value of MMS as an even higher entertainment value function than SMS …should be a key component of wireless industry positioning and marketing of MMS."*[6]

Media organisations should now see the significant value (especially as a new source of revenue) in applying mobile media services to their brand output and viewer relationships. Anecdotally speaking, even the most casual viewers in Asia cannot fail to see SMS short code interaction and mobile contests being widely propagated across both terrestrial TV stations (for example in Singapore with Mediacorp and Mediaworks channels) as well as their cable network viewing; whether it's CNN, BBC World, AXN, ESPN STAR Sports, or the original SMS pioneer in the region, MTV Networks Asia. Country-by-country, the same thing is happening in Philippines (ABS-CBN), Malaysia (NTV7), and Indonesia (SCTV), channel by channel, the growth of mobile interaction across regular programming is undeniable. More specifically, a quick glance at Textually.org (which reports on mobile interactive projects from around the world) reveals some 38 mobile projects across the media[7] — giving an insight into the vast array of activity influencing TV executives worldwide.

The burgeoning use of SMS in television is considered fairly mature and well documented, but the true growth in value will come from the impact of multimedia data services such as, MMS, Video clips, and related rich media content downloads. TV channels can maximise the viewers' love of all things mobile and capture a rewarding customer relationship at the same time. These days, no matter where the viewer is, the media client has the chance to connect with them.

Along with the rapid acceleration of SMS-TV in Europe, major media brands in Asia have adopted a number of innovative projects to see how this form of interactivity works with viewers across the region. This has led to experimentation with several new TV formats.

Mobile Integrated TV across Asia

In terms of case study details, i-POP is, to a certain degree, restricted to talking about the projects it has executed, the variety and nature of its references are particularly significant.

The company has innovatively built a unique platform to incorporate all mobile networks across Asia as the return path (or back channel) for viewer responses - and from that set of triggers, generated graphics-to-screen in differing production facilities - using differing broadcast graphic hardware and software combinations.

Cable/Terrestrial: MTV Networks Asia/MTV Philippines - Case Study: GOTCHA!

Start/End Date:	Aug 2003 to Feb 2004
Duration:	Twice-weekly (Sun 7.00 pm & Tues 5.30 pm) 30-minute show for six months
Cable Feed:	Single Philippines feed up linked from Singapore production facility
Elements:	Viewer Registration, Voting for videos, MMS to screen, Video Clips to phone and Ring tones & chat
Response:	Thousands of SMS and MMS inbound, more than 1000 video clips outbound
Sponsor:	GLOBE Telecom

MTV launched a new interactive program called MTV Gotcha which showcased MMS, SMS and video services (downloadable video clips and streaming video to mobiles). The program enabled Globe Handyphone subscribers to see themselves on MTV, and captured them when they attended MTV and GenTxt events and parties. It allowed Globe Handyphone subscribers to access the latest Gotcha events via their handyphones anytime, anywhere.

MTV Gotcha! Interactive Services includes the following:

Event Stream – allowed subscribers to download latest MTV Gotcha video footage (60 seconds worth of footage) near real time. This service included the transport, conversion and WAP delivery of the RealVideo clips. A third party delivered the clips to i-POP for conversion to 3GPP format and subsequent delivery via MMS.

Video Clips – allows subscribers to download and save 10 second video clips of MTV Gotcha event footage. These clips are gleaned from the RealVideo footage delivered by the third party and with the help of MTV; a ten-second portion of the content was made available for download via MMS.

Photo Poll – allowed subscribers to vote for the cutest a) gal and/ or b) guy caught on MTV Gotcha. Gotcha event organizers had Photo Poll instructions announced during event. MTV and Globe representatives with a Globe MMS phone sent a picture of various attendees of the Gotcha events to the access code 22688. The cutest guy and gal winners were posted weekly on the WAP site and the interactive program. Voting took place on the interactive board during the next MTV show airing. Winners were picked out/announced on the next program.

MTV Gotcha Photo Album – allowed subscribers to send MMS pictures of the event to an access code 22688 so that other subscribers can access them on the WAP site. Subscribers could also view still shots of MTV Gotcha, featuring highlights of the event as well as group shots (to be taken by the MTV crew via an MMS phone).

MTV Video Polling – allows subscribers to vote for music videos to be featured on the next MTV Gotcha program.

MTV Gotcha info – allows subscribers to download information on the next MTV Gotcha events that they can check out and participate in. i-POP provided a web portal to allow uploads by MTV or Globe of their events.

MTV Gotcha ticket – allowed subscribers to get a free ticket to a premiere or concert just by downloading information about the next MTV Gotcha event.

Live Chat – allowed viewers to post their comments via MMS or SMS messages on air. MMS, PICTURE and micro-site messages were validated before sending.

Music Downloads - featured the latest monotones/poly tones, icons/ wallpaper, and other related downloads on a scrolling portion of the Interactive Board. The interactive interface will allow actual samples of the content to be displayed with instructions on how to download.

In summary, anything you could do with a mobile phone, you could do on MTV's Gotcha! At the same time, it raised the bar for TV rich media content and subscriber charging in the Philippines, with the ten-second video clips being charged at USD $ 1.00 to the mobile user.

Cable/Terrestrial: ESPN STAR Sports - Case Study: SPOTTO!

Start/End Date:	October 2003 – May 2004
Duration:	Once weekly live presentation (Sun) "in show" for 8 months
Cable Feed:	SEA feed from Singapore production facility: Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand & Indonesia
Elements:	Viewer Interaction, Mobile Java Game and Weekly Football Picture Download
Response:	Thousands of SMS inbound, with game downloads in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia
Sponsor:	Nokia

As a key sponsor for ESPN STAR Sports, Nokia requested to brand and promote a mobile service that could demonstrate the powerful multimedia and Java capability of their popular range of mobile phones.

Already a regular supporter of mobile interactive TV applications for ESPN STAR Sport's football programs like the EPL Nokia Man of the Match contest and Fantasy League, it was suggested that a good vehicle to extend this branding would be the online and mobile version of the classic Spot the Ball game.

As such, i-POP help to quickly integrate the mobile components to allow users across Asia to download and play the Java game version (named Spotto!) using a combination of Service Indicator messages, WAP/GPRS infrastructure and premium billing.

"Spotto!" now takes its place every Sunday in show where ESPN STAR Sports experts review a picture of a piece of football action —from which the ball has been removed— and then try to guess from which position it originated. This process is done on the mobile phone using a cursor and the game completed by sending an SMS confirmation (at premium rates) of the coordinates finally chosen by the subscriber. It is the first time a mobile Java game has been used as and integral part of a live sports show production!

Cable/Terrestrial: STAR Group/National Geographic Channel – Case Study: Mission: MARS

Start/End Date:	December 2003 – February 2004
Duration:	Multiple TVCs coinciding with Exclusive documentaries on NASA's recent MARS landings
Cable Feed:	Regional feed including Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand
Elements:	Bring Mars to Your Mobile! Viewer SMS Contest, MMS downloads, Ring tones & SMS News Alerts
Response:	Hundreds of thousands of SMS inbound, thousands of pictures, games and ring tones downloaded, more than 10,000 daily alerts
Sponsor:	SONY

To coincide with the exciting NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Mars rovers (called Spirit and Opportunity) landings, STAR Group and National Geographic Channel invited i-POP to complement some exclusive NatGeo TV programming with an integrated series of mobile activity and content download opportunities for interested viewers in Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. This service was made available to i-POP's GSM partners in the following countries: Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. All the viewers had to do was simply send an SMS to an on screen number, and a list of the various features was sent back to them. He/she was then prompted to start the interactive session by sending a keyword 'MARS' to the short code provided for each region. The list of features included space related Contests, Alerts, Ring tones (such as Life on Mars), Java Game (Space 2315), SMS & MMS images of MARS downloads. The first contest for National Geographic Channel coincided with the landing of the Rover's on MARS, where the lucky viewer won a trip to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. Revenue was raised in various ways and through different tariffs depending on content.

Table 1: Mobile Content Pricing Tariff

COUNTRY	TARIFF
Hong Kong	HKD$3, HK$D10 & HKD$20
Philippines	Peso 2.50, 20 & 100
Malaysia	Ringgit 1.00, 2.50 & 5.00
Singapore	SD.30, SD3 & SD6
Taiwan	NTD$5
Thailand	THB$5, THB$15 & THB$40

How AXN Asia mobilised CSI for the Philippines

"A critical factor determining the success of i-TV lies with the penetration rates of standard cellular telephones in a country. Given that the penetration rates are approaching 100 percent in many parts of Asia, the time is right for more i-TV programs in the region."[8]

The CSI Mobile Club project is a prime example of carefully interwoven mobile creativity. Piloted by i-POP CIO Ian Morrison in the Philippines, the mobile club was neatly designed for show devotees who could appreciate another dimension of participation through their mobile phones.

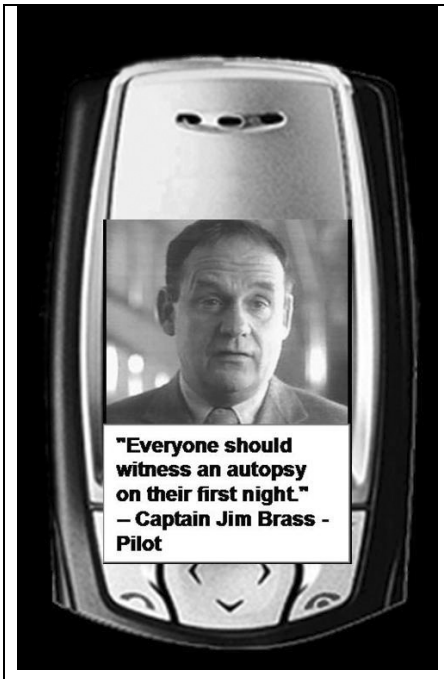

Figure 1: CSI stars direct to phone!

The launch of the CSI Mobile Club in the Philippines for AXN Asia featured a wide range of mobile interactive content and contests. A complete mobile involvement in the show, its quirky characters and the actors who play them, the plots and more especially, forensic learning —all made for a compelling service for true fans of the show.

The content is delivered via SMS and MMS and can be simple and to the point, or incredibly rich with colour pictures, text articles, "in show" phrases, scientific snippets and dynamically created contests.

Essentially, the prime objective of mobile integration is to get the viewer to become more involved in the show, almost as a participating investigative agent. This maintains ongoing interest and reinforces program loyalty.

The service also generates revenue from the mobile content on offer, content which allows viewers to personalise their phones and carry their show affinity with them throughout the week, as well as get reminded of local schedule show times.

Future Channel

Given the belief that the time is right for Mi-TV offerings, a lot of companies are jockeying for position in the value chain that delivers media to the mobile —and ultimately the viewer or subscriber. The mobile interactive dynamic can often be confusing and complex to understand and manage. To a degree, specialists are required to assist with leveraging broadcasters into the mobile paradigm, but once the right platform is made available, commercial programming creativity is truly unleashed. Mi-TV is not so much about putting the TV shows on someone's mobile; that's purely a technical nicety which has so far failed to capture the attention of many mobile "viewers" in markets where 3G has already been launched. Rather, and more crucially, it's about enhancing the viewing experience, program loyalty and media brand relationship for the viewer.

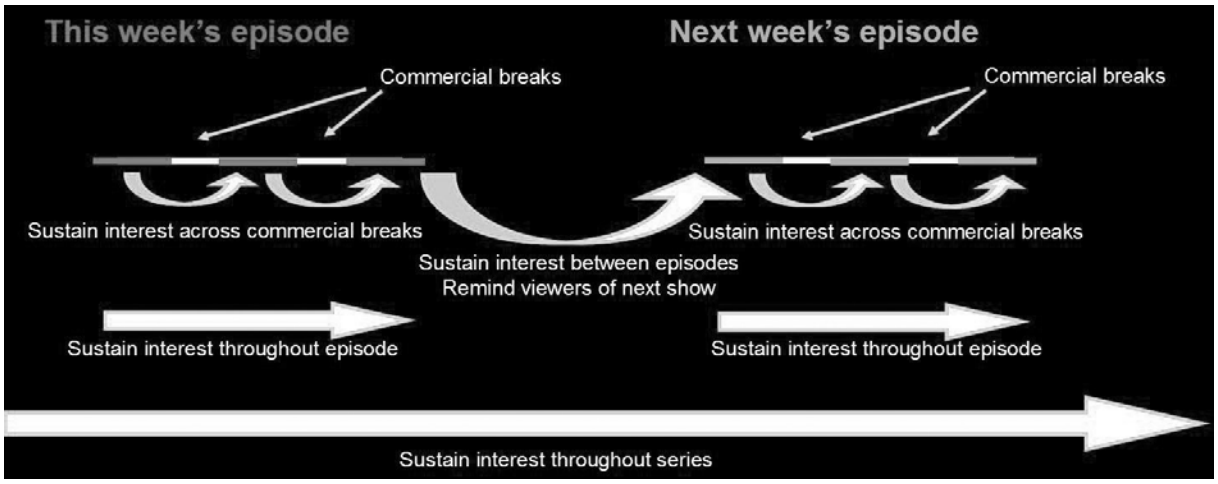

Figure 2: Mobile Continuum: Maintaining loyalty for a TV show through mobile interaction

So where are broadcasters now going with mobile? Progressing smoothly – but it must be said with smallish steps, toward the vision of fully Interactive Channels —with every part of programming across 24 hours airtime enabling the viewer (no matter what his geography, or mode of television channel access) to engage with the content being offered in a value-added way using his mobile.

Whether it is Reality TV updates, Pop Idol voting, game shows & quizzes, news items, documentary, sports telecast or movie – mobile elements are being introduced to maximise the impact of the creative —and capture the imagination, personal loyalty and participation of the viewer. Technology is presently offering an "always on" wireless connection to mobile content that can accompany a broadcasters programming output to the point that any data that is flashed on screen can likewise be flashed to the phone simultaneously, particularly interesting for sports scores, league tables and other dynamically valuable content. Fox Sports has pioneered this type of real time service in the US[9], but it can also apply to any programming content anywhere in Asia.

Summary

i-POP's view —hopefully supported in this White Paper, is that the Broadcast Media are organisations in a powerful position to create and market mobile media content, more especially when it matches and enhances program themes and creative delivery. Commercially speaking, the addition of Mobile Integrated TV 'turns on' potential sponsors —and augments the generation of new forms of revenue from multiple streams, in particular premium SMS revenue. As a viewer myself, I'm keen to get involved in my favourite programming and voluntarily establish a direct and meaningful relationship with my favourite broadcasters and programs through my mobile phone. If I have to pay something for the privilege, that's fine, as long as the value proposition is clear. This new dimension gives Producers and program makers an additional component to plan for, but the increased viewer interaction should prove worth the effort. For all these reasons, I Want My TV!

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1 *Paul Brannan, BBC Editor, quoted in 1999, "There are already more mobiles than PCs and forecasts suggest that within five years there will be more mobiles than TVs. But what if you cannot see the point, if you are not swept up in the crusading zeal for this newest of new platforms? Consider this internal memo from Western Union in the 1870s: "This telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." WAP - wireless window on the world, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/555722.stm*

2 *Mike Short, Chairman, Mobile Data Association, January 2004, The Year Ahead, http://www.mda-mobiledata.org/*

3 *BBC Staff Reporter, 7 January 2004, China Mobiles outstrip landlines, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/3374893.stm*

4 *Robyn Greenspan, 6 June 2003: What Do Asian Mobile Phone Users Want, Have? http://cyberatlas.internet.com/markets/wireless/article/0,1323,10094_2218491,00.html*

5 *IHT Staff Reporter, 26 February 2004, A cell phone explosion? http://www.iht.com/articles/131319.html*

6 *Scott Ellison, May 2003, IDC Research, U.S. Wireless Multimedia Messaging Forecast, 2003-2007*

7 *http://www.textually.org/textually/archives/cat_sms_television_and_radio.htm*

8 *Staff Reporter, 27 June, 2002, Asia's Ready For More I-TV Programs, http://asia.internet.com/news/article.php/1377671*

9 *Fox Sports Mobile: http://www.foxsports.com/content/view?contentId=581957*