Technology for better business outcomes.
»Learn more about HP Service Management

If this page does not print out automatically, select **Print** from the **File** menu.

Mobile web's second coming heralded

Experts predict huge uptake in mobile browsing

Phil Muncaster, IT Week 23 May 2008

Mobile experts have argued that application developers are vital to the future success of the mobile web, but some warned that content must be presented simply in order to avoid alienating users.

Speaking at the annual Thinking Digital IT conference in Gateshead, representatives from handset manufacturers and mobile operators argued that flat rate tariffs, greater interoperability and new technologies like GPS have accelerated usage and spurred the a new dawn for the mobile web

"This is the second chance for everyone to deliver on the promise of the late 90s," said mobile strategist and ex-O2 executive, Bradley de Souza. "Then, it was premature from a technology perspective, the marketing didn't line up with what was being delivered and although there was collaboration from the developer community, the stars didn't align."

Mark Selby, vice president of sales and industry collaboration at Nokia, argued that the operators' walled garden approach to browsing is also collapsing, leading to greater take-up of the mobile web. Some Nokia figures point to data usage on smart phones nearing 90 per cent of total usage, he added.

"Our research shows that the amount of time people are browsing, accessing and uploading content is incredible," said Selby.

Others commented that good content holds the key to the success of the mobile web. Vikesh Patel, European general manager for products at Motorola, said that uptake will rocket "if you get the content right and people want it". He explained that during Big Brother 2002, O2 got 60 per cent of its yearly usage in just six weeks.

"There are a lot of people [in the industry] with different opinions," he added. "The network operators don't want to be just bit pipes but it really needs developers to feed the ecosystem to grow it."

De Souza argued that mobile platform providers and other stakeholders need to be more open in order to facilitate and encourage the developer community. "On the Symbian platform the developers can't even get their test apps onto users' phones to gauge their usability," he added. "Microsoft has done well to

[encourage openness] but it's not well structured."

Gerhard Grech, director of strategy and business development at Orange, agreed that content is king on the mobile, but argued that simplifying the presentation and accessibility to that content will be key to its popularity.

"You need to do something completely different in the way you present that content," he explained. "Widgets are a good hybrid [technology] to catch people's imagination – it's where the interface, browser and service all comes together in a very compelling way."

Motorola's Patel added that widgets are a "great way to cut through the layers of menu" and open up the mobile web to users.

Permalink: http://www.itweek.co.uk/2217441

www.itweek.co.uk/2217441

This article was printed from the **IT Week** web site
© Incisive Media Ltd. 2008
Incisive Media Limited, Haymarket House, 28-29 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4RX, is a company registered in the United Kingdom with company registration number 04038503

Close this window to return to the website