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Mobile Content - A View from India

Posted by Jamie Laux on November 22, 2009 at 11:38pm

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A while back we were asked to do some research and present our thoughts on the market for digital content in India.

We should have politely declined, but we didn't, lured by the power of the Raj we topped our Skype accounts and called India!

Now we at Bleep Purple have never been a fan of Market Intelligence or as we like to call it 'future gazing' because in general most reports follow this general formula:

Thoughts + pretty numbers + lines that go upwards = Good Future (better known as a Madoff future)

Thoughts + ugly numbers + lines that go downwards = Bad Future

Here we believe that good decisions = a good future and the only way I have made any good decisions is on the advice and opinion of others. So with that in mind, we thought we'd garner opinion from the companies that matter, the ones already working in India.

And we thought we'd share their musings with you!

Ps - We couldn't fit everything on this blog post so instead we given you some heavily edited transcripts.

Mentions

We'd like to thank many of the people we spoke to but special mention goes to all these people who took time out to speak to us personally:

Amit Gupta (InMobi) – Founder one of the largest Mobile Ad Networks

Sanjay Vijayakumar (MobMe) – One of Asia's most popular mobile Social Networks

Mobisy and Tunescape – Shining lights from the world of Indian Mobile development

Numbers and Future Gazing in India - I know we hate numbers but...We thought we give you a little insight into the world's fastest growing market!

FACTS:

Globally in terms of mobile subscriptions, India is the world's second largest wireless market after China. At the end of June 2008, the total subscriber base was 286.86 million by this time next year it is expected to be at over 500 million.

In Real terms that means the number of new subscribers each and every month will far exceed the population of Scotland. Just absolutely enormous!!

Inside views on the Indian content market

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FEATURED MEMBER



Tim Bryans is director of

Bleep Purple: Could you please give our UK customers a brief insight into the current Indian Mobile Market/Industry?

Lalit Bhise: Currently, The Mobile market in India is more Voice oriented. Voice related products like "Caller Ring Back tone" or "Music on Demand" tend to work much more. Data oriented products tend to suffer from return on investment...

...Since Mobile forms the only point of contact for the majority of the Indian population, I believe Mobile Payment is going to be a huge market in India going forward....

Sanjay Vijayakumar: The Indian Mobile Industry is growing at its fastest pace ever. In the last 19 years, India added 350M mobile users and in the next 3 years, India will add another 350M mobile users.

With 3G to be licensed very shortly, rich content uptake is going to see a major upswing. Global giants like Etisalat (UAE), MTS (Russia), and Telenor (Norway) have made fresh moves to compete against already existing players like Vodafone and Singtel (through Airtel)...

Of course with a potential market the size of 500M subscribers India is a potential goldmine...

Bleep Purple: With the introduction of 3G services hopefully only a few months away, how do you expect this to change the mobile marketplace for content (and advertising) in India?

Amit Gupta: 3G should act as a catalyst to the mobile internet usage. People will get good user experience with probably affordable pricing which will take the content consumption to the next level. Also the marketing noise that would be created post its launch will further educate the new users and hence drive up the adoption of this medium.

Bleep Purple: When realistically, do you think we will see mainstream adaptation of 3G services among both urban and rural populations?

Amit Gupta: my gut says 1 year.

Bleep Purple: One barrier that may discourage western advertisers from entering the Indian mobile space is the diverse language base and although Hindi is the national language many people in India do not speak it at all. One mistake we can see western advertisers make is in equating India as a localized market to another localized market, say China when in essence India is pretty much unique. Is this fragmentation one that you are concerned about and how would you advise Western clients hoping to plan a cohesive mobile campaign?

Amit Gupta: I don't think language is a big issue in India. As per my analysis, more than 95% of the mobile (web) traffic is on the English language sites. I would like to point that the popular categories are mobile content sites and chat/communities where language is not a barrier.

Bleep Purple: We've had comment that the model for distributing mobile content in India is very different to that of the UK and US. With out of favor Bluetooth hardware (here in the UK that is) still being used and successful retail chains like Mobile Magic accounting for a large share of distribution. Do you see this changing in the near future to Western models like app and mobile stores (e.g. thumbplay, iphone app store)?

Amit Gupta: India has many companies which are similar to Thumbplay, Playphone etc. Some of the large ones Indigames, Buongiorno, will continue to grow with the adoption of 3G services. (Indian) Social networks on mobile will also be helpful in expanding this user base...

Do you think branded content (e.g. branded applications, custom downloads) will take off in Indian like in the US / UK?

Sanjay Vijayakumar: In India, mobile content is as simple as ABCD - Astrology, Bollywood, Cricket and Devotional (ed - We think that means dating). Stick with that and you can't go wrong.

Amit Gupta: My take is Yes, but the pricing should be as per the Indian market.

Bleep Purple: From our own viewpoint and those of our clients and publishers, what advice can you give to Western companies wanting to leverage mobile advertising effectively in India?

Amit Gupta: India is now the second largest mobile market across the globe and with the demographic pattern skewed towards youth, it should do well. It's a long term play for sure. Focus on the market size and not on margin per sale. The overall number will take care of the justification for entering into this market.

Sanjay Vijayakumar: In my personal view, it might be more feasible for UK based companies to take the Ultra low cost solutions that are existing here...where by you spend in Rupees while your earn in pounds.

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We have to say that our favourite quote comes from Sanjay from Mobme, in which he describes his whole market eloquently in one simple sentence:

'In India, mobile content is as simple as ABCD - Astrology, Bollywood, Cricket and Devotional'

Spotflick Limited, an iPhone apps developer based in Northern Ireland.

Spotflick has recently launched a World Cup penalty shoot-out game for the iPhone, iPod and iPad. If your country is failing dismally in the World Cup (or didn't even qualify) the game is a good way to restore some national pride! USA are topping the charts to far, after England easily won the warm-up shoot-outs.

Say hi to Tim [here](#)

FEATURED GROUP



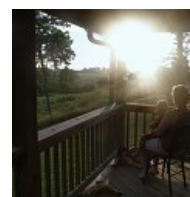
Directory is a new group on 38minutes which aims to provide a handy at-a-glance guide to all our members according to their specialism. A great way to connect with colleagues, clients and even competitors! Join the group to get on the list.



Jobs does what it says on the tin. Formerly known as 'Wanted' group, it's been renamed to highlight the huge number of vacancies and opportunities currently advertised. Not to be missed.

UNSTAGED

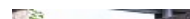
relaxing



impeccable beauty and the epitome of evil



Dont see this every day



Anyway we hope you enjoyed the some of the opinions shared by these companies. If anyone wants any more information they can contact us through our site bleeppurple.com or why not leave a comment on this post.

Until next time keep it Mobile

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Comment by [Stuart Cosgrove](#) on November 23, 2009 at 3:37pm

Fantastic insight into pace, speed and specifics of market - thanks - Arrow points up for me.



Scary tree.....



the paddling pool....



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