

COLUMNS

## Why a mobile user-generated content model will grow next year

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The teen, grandparent, spouse or neighbor living right beside you could very well be the developer of your next favorite application. Sound crazy? It is coming in 2012.

Dovetailing the rise in mobile social networking, new do-it-yourself mobile content publishing tools are making it increasingly easy and low cost for lay consumers to create and share peer-to-peer (P2P) content via mobile devices.

Mobile content publishing, in the hands of the masses, is set to bring new revenue opportunities to marketers and contribute to substantial growth of the mobile ecosystem.

### Mobile peer-to-peer

It is no surprise that consumers are following closely behind businesses in leveraging mobile content creation possibilities.

Be on the lookout for mobile P2P content creation programs to soon sprout and track in a big way.

For example, JC Penney's recent holiday "Santa Tag" program included a specialized gift tag with a purchase so that consumers could send personalized mobile messages to a gift's recipient.

The promotion uses text opt-in and a QR code on the tag to send a mobile audio message from the gift-giver to the recipient. It is easy, free and fun for the consumer-turned-developer and opens the door to even greater opportunities for the sponsoring brand, JC Penney.

Imagine a similar user-generated experience only via a mobile app. From video to post-holiday coupons that drive sender and receiver in-store, content creation possibilities are even further extended.

### Consumer affinity developers

Consumer affinity groups will also play a huge part in this wave of new developers in 2012.

From high schools to sports teams, churches to bloggers, a growing number of content marketers are ripe and ready to create and market mobile content to their stakeholders.

This hyper-localized, affinity-based, mobile communications channel presents interesting mobile marketing opportunities on several levels.

For example, a high school marching band creates a cross-platform app with content that includes highlights from the last competition, upcoming events and RSS-fed band news.

At \$4.99 per download, the app is sold through a popular app store and acts as an innovative fundraiser.

Advertising is inserted from a local music store, insurance agent and pizza shop looking to attract customers within a 10-mile radius of the school.

The marching band app gets downloaded 2,000 times from a mix of students, parents and friends. The local advertisers see sales surge from being on the phones of targeted customers.

The money raised funds new uniforms and the band's upcoming trip to Disney Performing Arts. Not only is a new mobile developer born but so too are a few new mobile marketers and revenue streams.

#### Personalized mobile experience

Users will also be leveraging accessible mobile app creation tools to personalize their own devices.

For example, a soccer parent may want to quickly create an app for their child's soccer team. Or it might make sense for a foodie to develop an app with simple click-to-call ordering buttons and social media feeds for coupons to their favorite restaurants.

Whatever the mobile content affinity appetite, the consumer will become the publisher where they control the mobile experience.

Business can get in this mobile UGC game through sponsoring local content feeds and/or adding app creation services to their local agency offering.

#### Mass ecosystem expansion

The sheer numbers and business opportunities of a mobile UGC publishing model should come as exciting news to most mobile marketers.

Take into account that there are currently more than 800 million Facebook users and 100 million-plus active blogs globally all content marketers with a broadcasting voice.

Furthermore, each Facebook user is connected to 80 community pages, groups or events. It is clear that the effect of a UGC model on the mobile ecosystem can and will be astounding.

Accessible, easy-to-use, low-cost, cross-platform tools that remove traditional barriers of cost, time to market and ease of use will open up doors and turn consumers into mobile marketers.

However, strategic content, tools and awareness will be necessary to facilitate profitable mobile ecosystem growth via a mobile UGC model.

These tools will extend an open invitation where no company, or individual for that matter, is too small or insignificant to participate.

Smart technology players and marketers will find their rightful place in the new mobile ecosystem with thriving innovative solutions, bundled packages and relevant business models.

So, brace yourself, as a new mobile UGC model is coming in 2012. Are you ready?

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