

Home	Events	Jobs	Marketplace	Contact Us
<b>Lead Stories</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">O2 bags lucrative content deal with BBC Worldwide</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">12million US customers to get voice to screen messaging</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mobile 'shopping mall' is just a short code away</a></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pocket Group looks to broader 2.5 and 3G distribution through Tanla to maximize mobile entertainment potential</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">In mobile we trust...</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Voice SMS service boom sees users sending more than 2000 messages per month</a></li> </ul>		

**Dear BuzzCity**

## Mobile crosses the class divide

Last week's report that a Juniper Research study published earlier this has shown that user-generated content is predicted to have explosive growth in the mobile space in the coming years, generating revenues of over \$5.7 billion in 2012 from \$572 million this year has attracted a lot of attention in the industry.

UGC is undoubtedly, alongside mobile marketing, one of the hot topics of 2007 for the content industry. But while many people see this as a developed world phenomenon, where the well off and young dabble in gadgetry, some see the rise of UGC as being driven primarily by growth in developing countries and by blue collar workers in the west..

According to Kok Fung Lai, CEO of BuzzCity, "Users attracted to mobile social networking will be very different from those using similar sites on the PC, in terms of experience, preference, usage and spending patterns. Operators and mobile social networking sites should appreciate these differences, rather than trying to replicate the formulas currently working in the PC world."

The issue this raises, in Lai's view at least, is that most attempts to expand successful PC-based social networking sites to the mobile will have limited success. Most mobile social networkers are not familiar with big name PC social networking sites, he says. Similarly, operators need to understand that mobile users see mobile user generated content in a different light to user generated content on a PC. A mobile phone user will want something easy and quick to access; they are less likely to blog on their mobile but more likely to log onto a mobile dating service. The key to creating revenue from user generated content will be ensuring that it is contextually-relevant.

Lai makes an interesting point. One of the biggest pitfalls facing the mobile content industry is trying to merely adapt what works online to the mobile environment. It won't work. For starters people are used to online being free – or very cheap. This is anathema to anyone in the mobile space. The key to mobile – not least in UGC and community services – is in using mobile USPs (personalization, immediacy, individuality, ubiquity) to add value.

It is also very much an issue of looking at who uses mobile to do what. As Lai points out, there is a growing divide between those with and those without fixed broadband – not just between the developed and developing world, but also between 'classes' in developed countries – and mobile is, as it does in different countries, open up services to a whole new range of people.

Yours

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