



## MEA markets driving mobile advertising growth for BuzzCity

The Middle East and Africa are proving to be surprising sources of growth in mobile social networking, according to BuzzCity. The Singapore-based company says it served more than 26 million banner advertisements to Egyptian users of its MyGamma social network in 1Q08 – 5,400% more than in 1Q07.

MyGamma's traffic in Saudi Arabia grew 900% year-on-year in 1Q08, to 22 million banner ads. The figures are part of BuzzCity's Global Mobile Advertising Index, which shows impressive growth in emerging markets.

For example, India generated 577 million advertising page views for BuzzCity in 1Q08, and South Africa (426 million), Kenya (79 million), Romania (57 million) and Bangladesh (53 million) were among its top 10 countries.

These millions of ad impressions aren't necessarily generating big profits for BuzzCity, since the advertising rates in some such countries are probably low. But they indicate that there is strong growth for mobile social networking in countries where low PC penetration means that the big web-based social networks – MySpace, Facebook, Orkut and Bebo – don't have as strong a foothold.

"There is no competition for mobile social networking in these markets," BuzzCity CEO KF Lai says. "Many of these are huge countries with small Internet penetration. We didn't target these markets on purpose in the beginning, but we are seeing huge growth there. And it is not the same users you see online, so it is a new audience for advertisers to target."

Who is advertising on MyGamma? There's a suspicion that even in developed markets, a lot of advertising on WAP sites is simply for other WAP sites. "Other mobile Internet sites make up 20 to 30 percent of our advertising in some markets," Lai says. "But we are seeing other brands coming in, like banks and mobile telecommunication companies, and even FMCGs [fast-moving consumer goods]. In South Africa, these advertisers already take up nearly 50 percent, and we're seeing the same thing in India, Thailand and Malaysia."

BuzzCity seems set to focus on countries that the big online social networks have shunned, with the most recent MyGamma launches happening in Croatia, Iran, Namibia, Nepal, the UAE and Yemen.