

MMO2 Teams Up With DoCoMo to Bring i-mode to UK

December 4 2004

mmO2 plc, a leading European mobile operator, and NTT DoCoMo, Inc., Japan's largest mobile communications provider, today signed a long-term strategic agreement under which O2 will launch the i-mode mobile internet service in the UK, Germany and Ireland. This partnership will complement O2's existing expertise in data services with DoCoMo's experience in non-sms data and its extensive research and development capabilities. Customers will benefit from easy to use services, rich content applications and messaging across a range of advanced handsets.

Under the terms of the agreement, O2 is licensed by DoCoMo to offer the i-mode capability to the 22 million customers of its 2/2.5G and 3G mobile communications networks. Already the world's most popular mobile internet platform with more than 45 million subscribers using over 6,100 official content sites in 10 countries and regions, i-mode will be available on an extensive selection of advanced multimedia handsets and devices from major Asian, European and US manufacturers. These currently include NEC, Panasonic, Siemens, Motorola and Samsung, amongst others.

i-Mode

NTT DoCoMo's i-mode is a wireless internet service for i-mode mobile phones using HTTP, popular in Japan and increasingly also elsewhere. It was inspired by the drawbacks of WAP being discussed at the time, and a rough concept aimed for businessmen introduced to DoCoMo by McKinsey

in 1997. After a 2 year period of developments at NTT DoCoMo, i-mode was launched as a mass-market product in Japan on February 22, 1999.

i-mode is a mobile Internet service which as opposed to the mobile specific WAP standard which utilizes WML, instead uses standard Internet HTML, C-HTML, as well as DoCoMo proprietary ALP (HTTP) and TLP (TCP, UDP) protocols. It became a runaway success because of the use of de-facto Internet standards, its well designed services and business model. It uses C-HTML (for "Compact HTML") markup language, a subset of HTML. Later on NTT DoCoMo's collaboration with Sun Microsystem resulted in DoJa i-appli, an extension of CLDC (not compatible with J2ME/MIDP). There are some 3000 content-providing companies for i-mode.

O2 UK and O2 Ireland will have exclusive use of i-mode branding and technology in their respective markets. In Germany, the company will launch the service based on i-mode technology under its own brand. In addition to its 800 retail outlets in the three countries, mmO2 has the right to sell the i-mode service and handsets through its existing independent retail channels.

Peter Erskine, chief executive officer of mmO2 plc, said: "Following the recent success of i-mode elsewhere in Europe and its growing subscriber base, we have conducted a thorough evaluation of the opportunities offered by licensing this technology. Of particular significance is the ARPU increase experienced by other i-mode licencees - largely driven by the combination of an intuitive, easy to use interface with an impressive selection of handsets and a wide-ranging content library.

"O2 remains focused on delivering the best possible service to our customers. I look forward to a highly productive partnership with DoCoMo - marrying O2's skills in brand, customer insight and data

services with DoCoMo's considerable research and development capabilities and strong relationships with both device and application/content providers."

This agreement builds on O2's market-leading position in the provision of mobile messaging and content services. With one in three text messages in the UK sent across the O2 network and Europe's most successful online mobile operation, nearly 22 per cent of the group's service revenues now derive from data. The addition of the i-mode capability to O2's service portfolio in the medium term will complement the highly successful O2 Active WAP portal which now has well over 3 million customers and represents more than 50 per cent of UK mobile internet traffic.

i-mode provides access to a comprehensive range of mobile content, covering everything from 3D-based games to online shopping. It also offers e-mail, video clips of movies and sports, real-time streaming, online banking, ticket reservations and even restaurant advice. i-mode will enable O2 to build on its existing strengths in content, music, messaging and other data services to develop a wider portfolio tailored for its UK, German and Irish customers. O2 plans to introduce i-mode in the UK and Ireland during the second half of 2005. In Germany, the service will be offered from Spring 2006, allowing sufficient time to develop handsets based on i-mode technology that will incorporate O2 Germany's Genion HomeZone product.

NTT DoCoMo president and chief executive officer, Masao Nakamura, commented: "I am very pleased to initiate a partnership with mmO2, a leading provider of mobile services. This new collaboration will certainly drive further expansion of i-mode in the global arena."

The agreement with mmO2 marks DoCoMo's eleventh partnership for the i-mode service. mmO2 joins an international base that includes: E-

Plus Mobilfunk GmbH & Co. KG (Germany), KPN Mobile N.V. (Netherlands), Far EasTone Telecommunications (Taiwan), BASE N.V./S.A (Belgium), Bouygues Telecom S.A. (France), Telefonica Moviles Espana (Spain), Wind Telecomunicazioni SpA (Italy), COSMOTE Mobile Telecommunications S.A (Greece), and Telstra Corporation Limited (Australia) and Cellcom Israel (Israel).

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