

Wireless World: Sponge Bob calling

December 9 2005

You're sitting on the metro, heading home from work, bored and exhausted. You used to have to wait until you arrived at home to watch some entertaining TV, but not anymore. Telecom carriers are now introducing content, like hot TV shows, including "CSI" and "The Late Show With David Letterman," and "Entertainment Tonight," as well as famous comic strips, that you can view from your mobile phone, wherever you please, experts tell United Press International's Wireless World.

"At the intersection of the mobile phone and the television lies tremendous programming," said Cyriac Roeding, vice president of wireless at CBS Digital Media.

CBS this week disclosed a deal with Verizon Wireless to offer programming for cell phones -- the network's first venture presenting shows on the mobile devices.

The service starts this month, as subscribers to Verizon's V CAST service regularly begin receiving video news segments from CBS News, produced specifically for the mobile-phone customer base.

Then, the service will start carrying clips from Letterman's monologue and Top 10 list. Other content will follow on Verizon's evolution data optimized (EVDO) network, purportedly the largest high-speed, wireless broadband network in the United States, which is available in 171 metro markets and 140 million Americans.

"V CAST is a pioneer in wireless video," said Roeding.

A few weeks ago another content developer, GoComics partnered with m-Qube, a mobile channel enabler, started delivering daily comic strips to Verizon Wireless customers.

This kind of content availability may change American lifestyles -- and the media business -- permanently, experts tell Wireless World.

"For years, getting a newspaper thrown on one's doorstep and reading one's favorite comic strips has been a way of American life," said Chris Pizey, president and chief executive officer of uclick Mobile, a division of Andrews McMeel Universal, the largest independent publisher of humor books and calendars in North America.

But given Americans' increasingly hectic lifestyles -- where there may not be time to read a paper or watch a specific TV show anymore -- cartoon content developers are looking for ways to reach consumers on the go. "By partnering with m-Qube and Verizon Wireless, we can now throw comics to wireless phones and preserve and build widespread fan loyalty to our most popular brands."

The comics are available on Mobile Web 2.0-capable handsets, Verizon said.

Other content developers, including the Sesame Network and Public Enemy, one of the pioneers of urban street music known as "hip hop," are also working to distribute their programming over mobile phones. Even producers of children's programming are pursuing that strategy.

"Nickelodeon has content available on cell phones, based on many of our shows," said a spokeswoman for Nickelodeon Communications, based in New York.

Yes, that means the inexplicable character Sponge Bob can finally be accessed far from home.

This kind of entertainment programming is the next step in the evolution of mobile-phone content. First there was "wall paper" to personalize the liquid crystal display of one's mobile phone. Then came music ringtones, where one could download pop music, including the theme song from the show that celebrates redneck culture, "The Dukes of Hazard," and employ that music to alert the subscriber that a call was coming in on the phone. There is also mobile gaming, and mobile gambling too.

According to research from the consultancy to the telecom industry, Informa, mobile content is the "fastest growing" segment of the telecommunications market, with revenue projected at \$35 billion by 2010.

The research firm Gartner Inc. recently said that global mobile-phone sales reached 265.4 million units in the third quarter of this year. "There is no question handsets will be a hot topic at the CES (Consumer Electronics Show)" next month in Las Vegas, a spokesman for Airborne Entertainment, a provider of mobile game content, told Wireless World.

One of the primary psycho-graphic markets for this kind of content is teens aged 13-17. According to MindShare Research, more than 50 percent of teenagers now own their very own mobile phone, a massive increase of 43 percent in just the last year. These kids want customized content -- and they want it now -- just like an earlier generation wanted its MTV.

"Our Internet and mobile communities have confirmed that today's teens demand the ability to customize and personalize all facets of their lives," said Kelly Hoffman, chairman and chief executive officer of Varsity Media Group, an Austin, Texas-based provider of media and content

"communities" for teenagers.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Wireless World: Sponge Bob calling (2005, December 9) retrieved 16 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-12-wireless-world-sponge-bob.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.