

The men behind Vcast mobile music service

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Verizon's new mobile music on demand Vcast service is a customized version of WiderThan's music platform.

Poyner: We focus mainly on services and solutions to the wireless carrier market place in the areas of mobile entertainment, games, and messaging. We have 42 carriers that we do business with worldwide in 17 different countries. The main thing about it is, that we not only deliver these platforms, but we manage them. Verizon would be an example in the U.S. We started our relationship with them in 2002 by providing them with two different ringtone platforms. At the recent Consumer Electronic Show Verizon announced their new Vcast music download service, which we provided for them.

Most of the things we do, we host in an ASP environment, which we then white label to carriers.

Poyner: The highest memory card at the moment is 1GB, which will hold about 450 songs. The vendor who makes these cards has already announced 2GB and 4GB cards that will be available soon.

Kim: Just to give you an idea, all of the Samsung phones come with a flash card that hold 512MB; in March they are coming out with a 1GB model that is different than Scandisk's memory chip and are going up to 3GB. Instead of using a cable you can take your memory card from your phone and plug that directly into your PC.

Poyner: In Korea, for a company called SK Telecomm, we had a product in place called "Mellon" which has been live for about a year and half. Korea is about two years ahead of everyone else, so what we do is build, test, and sell services there before we spread it to other areas. The reason Verizon bought it from us, is that we already had a large scale implementation of it and proved its viability.

Kim: Verizon is one of the leading adopters of technology, they saw what was happening with SK

Telecomm and saw the "Mellon" service and decided they wanted to use it. So we deployed it in their environment based on their specifications.

Kim: No, not at all, it goes directly into their billing system. If you look at the backend we connected all of the components with Verizon.

Poyner: One of the neat things about this phone is that there's an airplane mode; you can listen to the music on your phone with the wireless functions turned off. They still need to educate the flight attendants, because they don't understand that the phone doesn't interfere with the plane while in this mode.

Poyner: It's one of those things that are still improving. At CES, Steve Ballmer from Microsoft said that if you leave the house without your car keys you go back in the house, if you leave the house without your phone you go back in the house, if you leave without your MP3 player you don't go back in. The maturity of this device is something that you would carry everywhere. But the user interface is going to continue to get better, the disk storage will get better, and the battery life will get better.

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