

How do we make location a desirable user experience?

Cambridge Wireless - Location Special Interest Group
"Context Session / Group 2"
4th November 2009

- Context is king! Or is it another unsubstantiated promise of riches to advertisers and service providers?
- How will service providers exploit context?
- Who owns the users' context, and who will users feel comfortable sharing their context with?
- Should we abandon the term, Location Based Services and replace with "Context Aware Services"

The two sessions differed quite considerably in their discussions around the topic of context.

Session 1

- was very focused on trust, privacy and ownership of a users context
- wanted to understand the opportunities for new, innovative organisations to step in and take ownership of the context issue, who owns a user's context? Google was widely recognised as currently owning too much of a user's context
- trust and privacy were widely discussed, parental control, opt in to services, being able to switch services off and variable time stamping/data life were all seen as high importance to ensure a user's privacy
- it was widely acknowledged that the creativity of developers would lead the way in driving new contextual services and add value to the proposition
- a user's context was discussed as having very high value to the advertising business – it was reported that currently advertisers had a 30% success rate with the younger generation through mobile advertising – yet those around the table were unanimous in their personal dislike of any form of unsolicited mobile advertising
- control was a recurring theme through both sessions - being able to monitor, limit, stop data/location sharing was seen as key for users.

Session 2

- was very focused on the data and services that allowed for the provision of contextual information and mapping/data was discussed throughout the session
- a lot of emphasis was put on FREE, consumers of the internet expect free, but is anything really free / what must a user really give up for free? Free mapping/routing from Google, free mapping from Open Street Map, free services from many developers but yet many currently without an identifiable revenue stream
- advertising was seen as key – no big brand will engage with an advertising house who does not have a mobile strategy, context can only enhance the value to these advertisers, but how will users warm to new, more focused advertising?
- barriers to wide spread adoption of services was seen as a real challenge, fragmentation of not only OSes and handsets, but also the services, data, maps and technology
- user generated content was seen as key in the development of future services and context, even now it can be more relevant to find local services through Twitter than through internet reviews due to data age and relevance
- privacy also featured high on the agenda of group 2, state control & legislation, anonymising of data, control of information flow and generational differences.

