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Mobile Communications Featured Article

July 15, 2009

What We've Learned from the iPhone: Devices Trump Networks



By Michael Dinan, TMCnet Editor

Apple's watershed smartphone – the touchscreen iPhone, whose 3G incarnation upended the worlds of IT, telecom and gadgets when it was introduced one year ago this month – has taught all of us that user interface innovation matters enough for operators to change their business model, an official with a Rockville, Md.-based communications consulting and software company told TMCnet in an interview.

One Number to Rule Them All

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According to Arjun Roychowdhury – assistant vice president of mobile terminals and applications at [Hughes Systique Corp.](#) – the iPhone's success upended a traditional model where the network "was king and the device a pawn."

"It fueled immense innovation across all OEMs and forced

operators to open up more," Roychowdhury, who writes a popular [blog](#), told TMC ([News - Alert](#)) President Rich Tehrani in an interview (printed in full below).

"This is a great thing for consumers," he continued. "Palm Pre has taken a positive step forward with its 'Web-aware' core operating system. Android has shown us how an open source mobile platform leads to user innovation. What we are learning is that phones are computers and will have as much of innovation as we have seen on our PCs. Some of these innovations will come from the OEMs themselves, but a vast majority of innovation will come from third-party developers. We are also re-learning that software is king, even for mobile phones."

Roychowdhury – who is speaking during [ITEXPO West](#) in September on "[Creating Mobile Voice & Video Applications](#)" – also told Tehrani that this economy has spurred the deployment of new applications for operators seeking to leverage their existing networks.

Their full exchange follows.

Rich Tehrani: What has the economic crisis taught you, and how has it changed

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Fixed Mobile Convergence

encompasses a wide range of mobile services that converge elements of fixed communications infrastructure to complement the core mobile service. In most cases fixed mobile convergence (FMC) services allow the user or the network to take advantage of higher speed, cheaper local unlicensed access networks in local environments for low value, high volume transactions.

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FMC Resources

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Social networking and the next generation of handheld devices will improve business decision-making through efficient, unified communications and location awareness.
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your customers?



Arjun Roychowdhury (pictured left): From our perspective, the "crisis" really means that the customer is more cautious about what they buy – focusing on key parameters like time to market and quality. We have not seen them stop work. From our perspective, it drives us to be quicker and more flexible. The economic condition has also been generally very positive for deployment of new applications as operators are wanting to spend monies on revenue generating applications using existing infrastructure to get more out of their current networks.

RT: How is this down economy affecting your decisions to reinvest in your company or market, if at all? Where will you invest?

AR: Mobile terminals and mobile commerce applications are two very strong areas that have show excellent results as well as promise to be significant growth areas for us.

RT: What's the strongest segment in the communications industry?

AR: There is no question, one of the strongest markets is that of mobile terminals. There is a lot of exciting work going on, and we have been fortunate to be right in the midst of it all – we currently work with a wide array of customers in helping them build next generation applications for the mobile industry. This is not an area that anyone can just jump into, because it needs very specialized skills in knowing how the network works, phone optimizations, knowledge of a large span of mobile technologies, and special skills on mass device testing. HSC had indentified this space several years ago, and our focus on building skills in this area are paying off, especially in this cautious market, where customers want to work with companies who have "been there and done that"

The other area of potential growth is LTE powered networks and technologies. We see LTE being a primary driver to fast broadband over wireless and is an important element to deliver the media rich applications to consumers. This is another area where we have a lot of expertise and are seeing good traction.

RT: With the rise of smartphones and netbooks, many wireless technologies, such as WiFi (News - Alert), appear to be poised for rapid growth. For example, we're seeing more and more airlines add in-flight WiFi. In general, how widespread should WiFi be, in your view?

AR: There is no question, that WiFi should be ubiquitous. I am happy to see a resurgence of wifi on flights at reasonable prices (I use them regularly on southwest, Virgin Atlantic and others). I hope this time, their business model is solid so that they don't need to rethink the costs for WiFi deployment as was the case a few years ago.

RT: Which nation or region of the world will present the largest opportunity for your company in 2009/10?

AR: Clearly the developing economies of China and India are the fastest growing economies, however from our position in the value chain we still see the developed countries of North America and Europe to present the largest opportunity

RT: In what ways is President Barack Obama helping or hindering the technology markets? What more can he do?

AR: President Obama has put a lot of emphasis in using IT for lifting the country of the current crisis. Two of his initiatives that are helping the technology markets are healthcare and alternate energy.

RT: What device or devices do you use, and what do you wish you used?

AR: That's quite a broad question. I use many devices for different needs. In terms of what I wish to use, certainly, the new MiFi from Verizon (News - Alert) is next up my list to try.

RT: What has the iPhone 3G taught us? I know it's very new, but what about the Palm Pre? What are we learning from the smartphones based on the open source Google (News - Alert) Android platform?

AR: Simply put, iPhone – not necessarily 3G – taught us that user interface innovation matters. It matters enough for operators to change their business model. In a world where the network was king and the device a pawn, the iphone turned this around its head. It fuelled immense innovation across all OEMs and forced operators to open up more.

This is a great thing for consumers. Palm Pre has taken a positive step forward with its 'Web' aware core operating system. Android has shown us how an open source mobile platform leads to user innovation. What we are learning is that phones are computers and will have as much of innovation as we have seen on our PCs. Some of these innovations will come from the OEMs themselves, but a vast majority of innovation will come from third-party developers. We are also re-learning that software is king, even for mobile phones.

RT: Why should customers choose your company's solutions? How do they justify

strategies for implementing or improving mobile applications and foster an efficient workplace.

Who Needs a Desk Phone?

By Cliff Edwards
BusinessWeek

FMC White Papers

[The CIO's Guide to Fixed Mobile Convergence](#)
[BlackBerry Enterprise Server IT Policy and Administration](#)
[BlackBerry Wireless Enterprise Activation](#)
[Security for BlackBerry Devices with Bluetooth® Wireless Technology](#)
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FMC Press Releases

[Sprint Extends its Fixed Mobile Convergence Capability for Businesses](#)
[BlackBerry MVS Server for Cisco Unified Communications Manager Unifies and Controls Corporate Voice Services on BlackBerry Smartphones](#)
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FMC Convergence Showcase

BlackBerry® Mobile Voice System (BlackBerry MVS)

converges office desk phones and BlackBerry® smartphones, allowing users to access standard enterprise voice features whether at their desks or on the go*. BlackBerry MVS encompasses BlackBerry® MVS Client software for BlackBerry smartphones, BlackBerry MVS Services of BlackBerry® Enterprise Server, and the Ascendent Voice Mobility Suite.

With BlackBerry MVS, BlackBerry smartphone users can access enterprise desk phone options directly from the menu interface of the BlackBerry phone application, while at the same time securely authenticating to the organization's enterprise telephony system (PBX). BlackBerry MVS also gives IT administrators the control to set voice policies on the BlackBerry smartphone, so that inbound and outbound calls use the enterprise line. This allows for all mobile calls to be logged or recorded for compliance with regulatory or corporate standards.

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the expense to management?

Simply put, Hughes Systique ([News - Alert](#)) Corp. offers "been there, done that" expertise to our clients. We invest in learning and keeping up with the emerging technologies, which we bring as the value add to our customers. Therefore, the "expense" is actually a significant cost reduction with world class quality.

Learn more about Hughes Systique Corp. at [ITEXPO West](#) — the biggest and most comprehensive IP communications event of the year. ITEXPO West will take place in Los Angeles, Sept. 1 to 3, 2009, featuring three valuable days of exhibits, conferences, and networking opportunities you can't afford to miss. Don't wait. [Register now.](#)

[Michael Dinan](#) is a contributing editor for TMCnet, covering news in the IP communications, call center and customer relationship management industries. To read more of Michael's articles, please visit his [columnist page](#).

Edited by [Michael Dinan](#)

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