



Pangolin's push technology allows attendees at a meeting or convention to text their questions to the event moderator.

The Big Push

You can run, but you can't hide from the wizardry of wireless BY DON HANDLEY

Remember when cellphones were the size (and weight) of a concrete block? And all they could do, on a good day, was make a phone call? That was way back in the 20th century. Today, the cellphone is practically an integrated part of the body. But, in addition to being our constant companion, that little dongle can do some really useful things.

Text messaging, using SMS, is all the rage. But that doesn't really expand much on the idea of using a cellphone to call someone. That same SMS technology can make you smarter, healthier and entertain you.

PangolinSMS has developed a system that allows an entire community of users to interact in near real time with their phones.

"Pangolin's technology has exciting applications for entertainment, including creating an innovative, interactive environment at rock concerts, bars, nightclubs, meetings, private parties, [in] television and more," says Pangolin President Bill Benner. "The technology is currently being used at concerts, including major acts like Clay Aiken, to enable concertgoers to interact with each other and even with the musicians on stage through the displaying of text messages on large screens. The same type of interactivity is applicable to clubs and restaurants, where patrons might be asked to vote for a favorite ballplayer, song or drink, to request songs, or to post a message to show over the house video system." Filters, of course, are available to the system operator to screen out verbiage that is inappropriate.

For those looking to the cellphone for a truly useful purpose, Vocel provides many opportunities (and excuses) for joining the age of push technology.

"We work with premium brands and take their content to mobile handsets," says Vocel President Carl Washburn. "In that, we are looking

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for unique opportunities to enhance the experience with our push technology. We came up with a very unique implementation and a process that can be embedded into an application. Our technology is template-based, interactive messaging.

"The *Princeton Review* is the first application [of ours] that uses push technology and we've since deployed it in two or three other applications," adds Washburn. "With the *Princeton Review*, you can set it up to get test questions during the day. The phone is closed in the pocket, it rings a special ringtone and the user opens it up. There's an SAT practice question, a multiple-choice question. You respond by clicking on the answer and it gives immediate feedback whether it's correct or incorrect. That process is far richer than a simple SMS message, which is limited to a certain number of characters."

Vocel provides the same functionality in the application *Living Language*, for learning foreign languages.

"It's a very easy way to learn a foreign language. Instead of 30 minutes a day of intensive study, you get questions randomly throughout the day," says Washburn. He also notes that additional functionality will show up later this year in an application they're developing for managing a regime for prescription medication.

Clearly, the SMS and MMS technologies are being utilized for far more complex activities than originally envisioned. But it's the new broadband (EVDO) wireless networks that open up the real possibilities. Naturally, everyone turns their attention first to entertainment, gaming in particular. And longtime mobile game developer Gameloft is leading the pack.

"We have two games—Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* and *Asphalt: Urban GT*—that are real-time, multiplayer games, which means you can play simultaneous, head-to-head. This has never been



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available before on the mobile platform," says Sanette Chao, PR manager at Gameloft. According to Chao, EVDO has made it possible to move beyond the turn-based (you go, then I go) environment that is used in every other game, whether it carries the definition of multiplayer or not.

The EVDO technology now makes it possible for players to interact with (or against) each other in the same real-time environment they would get with a console game.

"The latency is either nonexistent or very, very low—500 milliseconds is the highest it will ever get," Chao explains. "That's the whole point of this technology. You want to be able to play head-to-head, simultaneous competition. It's not turn-based in any way; you get immediate results. So, if you're in Los Angeles and I'm in New York, I'll connect, you connect, you look for my name and then we can play each other across the nation [in real time]."

With Gameloft's offerings, players log into the game to search for opponents. "It will tell you if there's anybody on the network that wants to play," notes Chao. "The game gives you a multiplayer option when you log in and you create a screen name that logs you on. Then if you select multiplayer, the network will look to see if anybody else is logged on waiting for players. You can also search for specific people as well."

So, where is it heading? "Multiplayer is one of the biggest trends for 2006 and into 2007 for mobile gaming," Chao says. "The only other platform that has a live gaming community is Xbox Live. So, to be able to connect live anywhere across the nation is big for mobile gaming because everyone has the capability to play [with new generation handsets]. They take it with them everywhere. The excitement factor and the competition factor [to be able] to play on your cellphone with anybody is huge."

They're just scratching the surface of what can be done with what was once a cumbersome, expensive and marginally useful device. Now, just reach for your belt, pocket or purse to bring an amazing world of... well, whatever it is, just bring it on. **np**



(Top) Push technology also has exciting applications for rock concerts; (above) Gameloft's Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm

Lead, Follow or Just Get Pushy

Technology for the outwardly mobile

Push technology is becoming the driving force for wireless carriers. The cellphone is morphing into the do-all, end-all device. No longer just for talking, mobile handsets are becoming the source for research, entertainment and just plain being cool. Here's a quick peek at some of the latest stuff to make your mobile life more helpful, more fun and more cool. Check out NowPlayingMag.com for more detailed reviews.

PRINCETON REVIEW

OK, young people. Here's the reason you need to have a cellphone. This is the cool way to study up for the SAT. Rather than going through books of sample tests, use your phone to run you through some practice. It can be set up to feed questions throughout the day or in a time block. And you can always tell folks you're texting if you don't want them to know you actually do want to go to college.

GAMELOFT GAMES

Push technology couldn't get much pushier. Lay down the gauntlet, put your game face on and go after those nasty jungle fighters in *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*. Your nemesis can be imaginary or a live person anywhere else on an EVDO cell network. Real-time, head-to-head action. Not into shoot-'em-ups? Take the challenge to the track in *Asphalt: Urban GT*. Up to four players can bang fenders at once.

TURBOCHARGE

There are any number of disposable tag-along doodads that can give a tired cellphone battery a second life. But the TurboCharge is the one you don't have to throw away when it runs out. And you don't have to recharge it, either. It uses a single AA battery to work its magic. Study for the SAT or play games all you want, then plug in the TurboCharge and do some more.

CELLFAN SKINS

Doing cool stuff with a cellphone is one thing. Looking cool while you're doing it is something else. CellFan offers the most extensive line of licensed graphics you'll find for cellphones, iPods, PDAs, even laptop computers. The most recent additions to the CellFan collection are graphics from the *Star Wars* franchise. They also have logos from many of the most famous universities in the country—the reward for scoring high on that SAT!