

Mobile Social Software - Applications that Drive Social Networking and Maximize Your Revenues

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Executive Summary

Recently, the mobile content community has been buzzing about **Mobile Social Software** (MoSoSo). Yet is it another new concept that is bound to get lost in the wilderness of mobile innovations? Definitely not, but what is really behind a MoSoSo?

This Exit Games whitepaper on the new MoSoSo concept examines key drivers of this evolution, shows business opportunities, concepts, features and examples of Mobile Social Software and mobile communities.

It starts with a quick overview of the development of virtual communities and the ever existing urge of humans to gather in communities. There will be no doubt that mobile communities are the logical advancement of all preceding types of communities.

This discussion will lead up to the question of why mobile technologies are particularly well suited to building communities, which is strongly tied to the presentation of the key technological driver for mobile communities.

So what is in it for the mobile industry and its players? Of course this is a main question for all developments in the mobile world, and revenue is the key criteria for operators and developers. The white paper will scetch some of the central opportunities and benefits that come with mobile communities and espacially with MoSoSos that are powered by Exit Games Neutron.

This paper concludes with examples of mobile social applications being powered by **Exit Games Neutron**. They demosntrate vital community features provided by Neutron and demonstrate how these features can be used in order to create robust mobile communities.

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Introduction

From a very early age on people move in groups – from the playground to the weekly drink with retired friends, social companionship is a key component of human life. While in earlier times communities were bound to the limitations of time and space, these restrictions have been removed by the global communication evolution brought about by the Internet and mobile technologies. As in the real world, in this space like-minded people organize themselves into **virtual communities**.

To kick off a virtual community, 3 requirements have to be met:

- People, who interact socially as they strive to satisfy their own needs or perform special roles, such as leading or moderating.
- A shared purpose, such as an interest, need, information exchange or service that provides a reason for the community.
- Communication systems plus server architecture that support and mediate social interaction and facilitate a sense of togetherness.

These 3 requirements can be met on the mobile, as in other media. However mobile is in certain aspects even better suited for social communities, than other media.

Ubiquitous Access

The idea of virtual communities has always been based on the instant access and the immediate interaction that is offered by highly evolved electronic networks.

By using mobile devices and mobile communication services, users have an anytime-anyplace connection to their community. This means whenever they get the impulse to participate in their community, they can do so instantaneously, no matter where they are at any given moment.

Instant Execution

2.5G and 3G mobile networks offer packet-switched data transfer. Compatible mobile devices can therefore instantaneously send and receive data such as SMS and emails (“always-on”). People can now contact other community members anytime and anywhere, which will lead to more spontaneous and emotional communications.

Social Device

Besides these technical characteristics, the mobile phone has a natural advantage in regards user behaviour: it is an extremely social device. Its original purpose was to connect people with each other. Besides that it has taken on a very personal aspect.

The enormous amount spent on the different means of personalization, such as ringtones, wallpapers etc., show that it is very important to many mobile phone users to add a personal touch to their device.

Which media could be better suited for participation in social communities than such a ubiquitously connected personnel device?

Location based services

Every mobile device, and therefore every user of mobile community-services, can be localized with the help of different positioning methods of mobile networks. For communities, these positioning technologies offer new possibilities to find other community-members within a defined vicinity and thus makes the step from virtual to real life, where users can meet others at certain places or leave messages for them associated to real locations.

The highly social aspects of mobile technology (e.g. SMS, voice) increase the interest in already existing online game formats (e.g. casual online gaming, MMORPG, Xbox Live). But besides adapting these formats to the new mobile media, the specific character of this media – as described above – also allows the creation of completely new, mobile-specific formats of mobile social software. Examples will be shown in the section “Exit Games Neutron: Mobile Social Software Ready”.

Key Drivers of Mobile Social Communities

From a technological point of view, 3G networks dispose of higher bandwidth and thus offer faster connections, which facilitates the development of social interaction between users.

Besides bandwidth, they also come with new possibilities to obtain information about other users’ presence status – showing whether they are online, available to play etc. These features enable users to **feel their friends** and thus create a sense of proximity.

From a business perspective, broadband connected content is pushed by operators who need to operate their high budget 3G networks at full capacity. In this respect operators have been keen to change their subscription models in various ways: by lowering prices, offering volume plans or even promoting **data flatrates**.

Business Opportunities

Operators realized that the handling costs per game are very high and they are thus reducing the number of games on their game deck. It is therefore in the publisher’s and operator’s interest to maximize revenues brought in by a single application. Mobile community applications fulfill these needs as their kick is generated by the social interaction with the other users and they are

thus also extremely varied. This strong community feeling and the variety make users stay longer and also leverage their readiness to pay for it, as the community becomes a part of their social life. Timebased subscriptions as well as additional assets that are downloaded which enhance an application for a specific community member generate important **post-download revenue**.

Furthermore, **Viral marketing** will be a key factor for distribution: the community itself will push distribution by exponentially spreading the word, or rather the application.

Exit Games Neutron: Mobile Social Software Ready

Exit Games Neutron offers a broad range of features and functionalities that enable developers to build strong mobile communities, as the following examples of Neutron powered games can exemplify.

Asset Upload & Download and In-Game Billing

Purchasing additional assets and downloading them directly into the application is an important way for players to enhance their status within the game. From the publisher's perspective it is a great means to keep the game interesting and extend its lifecycle. An example is given in **Master of Maya**, the world's first mobile trading card game, which allows players to purchase and download additional booster packs of trading cards and integrate them into the running application in order to be in a better position when it comes to fighting the opponent.

Buddy Management

Staying in touch with friends is vital to jumpstart and keep a community running. The community application **Friendscan** allows users to keep track of all friends, see their online and availability status and communicate with them via text and picture messages.



Tournament Management

What better way to bring people together than by evoking their competitive spirit with a tournament. As in the soccer title **Penalty Cup**, Neutron keeps track of all server-connecting events and tracks all data, leaderboards and high scores on the Neutron Servers.

Persistent Server Worlds

Exit Games Neutron provides game servers, supporting complex persistent server worlds, which save the game's status and its evolution. Therefore players can play against others even though they're not online at the same time. Exit Games Neutron thus unites thousands of players in an



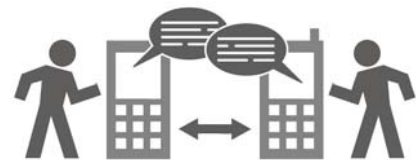
asynchronous multiplayer game, as for example in **Robot Alliance**, the world's first asynchronous mobile massive multiplayer first person shooter, in which players fight in individual battles for the predominance of the world.

Random, Invitation and Skill-Based Matchmaking

Finding the right opponent is the essence of great game play. Exit Games Neutron gives players the choice of entering the game community and playing against a random player, inviting a buddy to play or else finding an opponent with a similar skill level to create a thrilling match, as in **Chess Live!** an online chess competition.

In-Game Chat & Virtual Lobby

Communication is vital to communities. As demonstrated in the classic board game **Seabattle**, players can taunt each other through in-game chat. Usually, this feature will be used while two or more players are engaged in an active gaming session, but Neutron based chat functionalities can also be used outside of a gaming session making use of Neutron as a virtual lobby.



Application Ticker

Communication is not restricted to one on one conversations, but players can also be contacted via a central communication channel addressing all users.

This function can be used to push game-related news and in-game status, which actively balances a community game while it is running. This feature is utilized in the asynchronous massive multiplayer game **Robot Alliance**, in which two opposing alliances fight for predominance over the earth. If the game risks become unbalanced orders can be given from the central game management to a group of players to make them fight for a certain territory and thus balance the gameplay.

Outlook

Communities emanate from the natural desire of humans to interact with others – online networks such as the internet have 'made the world smaller', but have still tied users to their desks or laptops, as they could only participate in the community when they were in front of a computer – which is mainly at home or at work. However, these are not the general life situations in which people want to communicate with their online friends.

The development of mobile phones from a mere voice communication device to a powerful portable computer opens communities to the 'on the move' lifestyle people have adopted nowadays.

In many aspects, mobile phones are very well suited for creating and enlarging social communities. Not only do people take their phone with them wherever they go, but the devices also offer a wide variety of tools supporting social exchange, such as cameras, video and audio players, which allow users to communicate in a variety of audio and visual manners.

Finally, this evolution also helps carriers leverage their expensive 3G network by answering the question of why users should subscribe to a 3G service; we will see them support this development even more in the future.

With upcoming technologies, such as IMS, HSDPA etc. which enable faster network access and better opportunities to combine the different phone facilities, as well as elimination of technological barriers, the importance of mobile networking applications will exponentially grow in the next couple of years.

After very little impact of mobile TV and other streaming services, the field of mobile communities could become the key application driving data usage on the networks.



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