Mobile Advertising, by Edipresse

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Yesterday I attended this month's Mobile Monday meeting in Bern[1], and among all the presentations, the best ones (in my opinion, they were outstanding) were those of Nicholas Heller from Google and Marc Lamarche[2] from Edipresse. I will quickly summarize this last one in this blog post.

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Marc did a great job of presenting Edipresse[4] to an audience coming from all over Switzerland, striking a chord when he mentioned that recently Edipresse merged[5] with tamedia[6], which is the owner of major German-speaking newspapers such as the SonntagsZeitung[7], 20 minutes[8] or the Tages Anzeiger[9]. Edipresse enjoys a nearly monopolistic position in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, as a matter of fact.

Statistics

Marc's presentation consisted of very interesting statistics of mobile traffic in some of Edipresse's mobile apps and websites. For example, did you know that LeMatin.ch[10] mobile website drives more than 15% of the total traffic generated by all of Edipresse's sites?

One of the most striking statements of Marc's presentation was that 86% of the visits to Edipresse's websites comes from iPhone OS devices! This, in turn, means that currently most of Edipresse's online mobile advertising efforts are

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[1] http://www.mobilemonday.ch/?page_id=2115

[2] http://twitter.com/MarcLamarche

[3] http://www.mobilemonday.ch/

[4] http://www.edipresse.com/

[5] http://www.newspaperinnovation.com/index.php/2009/09/17/edipresse-tamedia-merger-approved/

[6] http://www.tamedia.ch/

[7] http://www.sonntagszeitung.ch/

[8] http://www.20min.ch/

[9] http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/

[10] http://www.lematin.ch/

directed towards this platform. I think that the outcome of the iPad will help maintain this level, while the Android platform grows at the same time.

Other interesting stats showed that mobile traffic peaks at 8am and 8pm, while during "office hours", pure web traffic is higher; the conclusion is that most of mobile traffic is done when people travel from or to their jobs, and from home, in the evenings.

Amusingly, in the graphics there was a clear indication of a new trend towards "in the bed browsing" late at night, which somehow confirms my theory that we are entering the era of Couch Computing[11]. Of course, the iPad will only strengthen this phenomenon.

Web apps vs. native apps

In a relatively debatable note, Marc's assertion that web apps will take the lead in the next 10 years left me rather unimpressed, as we've heard similar claims in the past 10 years, precisely, but this never happened (at least until now). Marc's argument has to do with evident cross-platform issues. Clearly understandable, since supporting all of these platforms with the same content requires added costs for Edipresse, while this problem is already solved in the web, at with the price of a somewhat less pleasing user experience.

I think, in any case, that "native" platforms still have a bright future ahead, as do web apps. Both have their relative strengths[12] and can complement each other perfectly well. Particularly, the raise of "App Stores" for most mobile platforms provides an increased level of visibility for companies looking to expand their brands, which is a differentiating added value that web apps do not provide (yet).

Formats

Edipresse provides advertising in, basically, two formats:

- Full screen
- Banners

Currently they are also testing contextual, geo-localized advertising. I'm interested in knowing how it works for them, particularly now that there are rumors[13] that since the release of the iAds platform by Apple, the new clause 3.3.9 in the developer agreement restricts the use of device data information for advertising.

Full-screen format

Full screen advertising is pre-downloaded and shown on next run of the application, but only for 3 seconds, and is saved for 2 days. This format is both "clickable" and "skippable", and in the case of the iPhone OS, it is designed to make the user stay in the application, by embedding the target website in the app.

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[11]/blog/the-dawn-of-couch-computing/
[12]/blog/webtuesday-mobile-app-frameworks/
[13]http://www.148apps.com/news/apple-create-mobile-ad-monopoly-iphone/

Interactivity

Edipresse is also exploring different interactivity options with mobile ads; so far, these are some of the most interesting strategies used worldwide:

- SMS (very popular in third world countries, but less popular in Europe)
- "Quick Response" or QR code scanning, with codes in street advertising, in newspapers or even bus stops. Good business results! (particularly in Japan)
- Image recognition

Marc mentioned also some of the advantages of interactive printed ads with a mobile twist:

- Tracking and statistics
- Interactivity
- Direct marketing

Conclusion

All in all, I strongly recommend meetings like this; they are far enough from my day-to-day duties to be an interesting source of new knowledge, without being completely alien at the same time. The networking session afterwards was also a good moment for sharing a drink with interesting folks and getting to know better the current mobile landscape in both sides of the Sarine[14]!

PS: just as a side note, this blog post was written as a Pages[15] document on my iPad, expanding the notes taken during Marc's presentation. The capabilities of this small device for note taking and for a quick writing during the trip back home are nothing short of extraordinary.

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[14]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saane/Sarine
[15]http://www.apple.com/ipad/features/pages.html