

Blogs

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THE BUZZ

April 02, 2007

Accenture Fuels My Mobile Obsession

Those who know me well know that I have an obsession with handheld devices and smart-phone like gadgets (and cool cases that protect said gadgets from my innate clutz factor and the hefty clutter in my briefcase).

Thanks to my uber-boss at CMP, I am now destined to carry not one but two of these thing-a-ma-jigs because I wouldn't give up my personal one after it was mandated that I should be BlackBerry-reachable 24x7 by the channel gods.

I'm not complaining, mind you, and I WILL BE among the first to buy the way-too-expensive Apple iPhone because I am obsessed, obsessed, I tell you.

Besides, I am a Cingular customer already. So there. Is that three or two? I'm losing count.

Anyway, you already have proof that I am already more inclined than most humans to get off on cool mobile developments, which is why I schlepped over to Accenture last week on a spring day so beautiful that I really wanted to sit outside and test the battery life of both my Treo and my BlackBerry.

But instead, I found myself lingering for almost two hours with some R&D types for the Accenture Technology Labs group.

I'll probably blog about some of the other concepts later, but the one that got me thinking was something that the Accenture Lab research, Dana Le, refers to as the Personal Performance Coach. The prototype application is part of the integrator's Mobile Personal Services Platform initiative, which is building APIs that eventually could be used by mobile carriers or others to create new applications. She calls the concept an electronic "angel on my shoulder."

Most of the things Le showed me could be described as tools to help shape someone's habits, such as a nifty application called Conversation Share, which tracks how much the parties engaged in a discussion are participating. The notion is that some salespeople, for example, often don't realize they are doing too much selling and not enough listening. This service tracks the dialogue using a Bluetooth connection and displays the breakdown in a little pie chart.

It could also be used for location-based reminders, such as giving you a nudge if you go too close to the vending machine once in a day.

There's already at least one service like this called MyFoodPhone. What you do is take a picture of what you're eating with your cell phone camera and then send it in for nutritional analysis. Sort of an electronic version of a food journal, only this one is in living color. Even the act of taking that photo will get you thinking about what's going in your mouth!

The Accenture technology is only available in prototype, which is using to whet customers' interest. It also applies to applications that the integrator is exploring the health care arena, such as Online Health Services that would collect information such as heart rate or other vitals and that could be used by insurance companies or hospitals to prioritize patient care.

"It helps the doctor see the most important patient, not just the patient who happened to walk in the door," said Peter Glaser, another Accenture Labs researcher. Hello, no kidding!

What cool mobile stuff have you seen? Feed my obsession by e-mailing hclancy@cmp.com.