

Mobile Codes Consortium – MC²

Mission Statement

**Publicis Groupe, Hewlett Packard Laboratories,
Gavitec AG - mobile digit, & Neomedia Technologies**

Executive Summary

A new use of an existing technology emerged 2 years ago in the Far East that could revolutionise and accelerate mobile internet adoption and, to a different extent, messaging and voice across the globe. For this to happen, the various stakeholders in the industry must coordinate over some key decisions.

This document is a mission statement for the mobile industry, to create a consortium for a new mobile marketing ecosystem based around camera phones and 2D barcodes. A market-driven, open-standards approach will allow 2D barcodes to act as a catalyst in mobile internet adoption, mirroring the growth of web adoption over the last ten years.

The vision is already reality

Outside, in a café, a mobile handset camera is pointed at an advertisement, poster, leaflet or beer-mat. In just one click, the user arrives at a webpage designed specifically for that location. No struggle with the compromised navigational systems of mobile websites; no wait – just the instant fulfillment of the user's needs. The spontaneity of the response encourages an internet connection there and then; the internet content is relevant to the precise time and location of the user; the advertiser can track exactly which piece of paper generated the user response – and the mobile handset has enabled a trouble-free and relevant experience of the web that is potentially more useful to website provider and user alike. And of course, the mobile industry benefits from increased usage of the internet over mobile handsets.

This is the reality now – but only in a few special campaigns. With a coordinated approach, it is within reach as a mass phenomenon. It just needs the mobile industry to deliver the technological infrastructure and business framework to enable this new stage of adoption.

Marketing is the key catalyst in adoption, as it was in the growth of the internet

Unlike comparable connectivity technologies such as RFID, which require technology to be available at both ends of the connection, 2D barcodes offer a simple, virtually no-cost method for marketers to allow their customer to connect immediately from symbol to relevant web-page. Coupled with the lower cost of building mobile internet pages that do not require the complex structure of corporate websites, and the ability to bring to paper the full interactivity and accountability of the internet – we believe that marketers will push the 2D barcode to the heart of their marketing.

With marketing departments of organizations offering their web-based incentives to consumers via mobile, consumers will learn quickly to use the 2D barcode as a short-cut to the web.

Marketing rarely embraces digital connectivity tools with enthusiasm, but this is one tool they will welcome for the value it delivers to their customers and the increase in efficiency it offer this multi-billion-dollar business.

The Mobile Code Consortium is necessary

The danger with any developing technology is that conflicting standards, built to protect the interests of competing providers, complicate the technology for the consumer and the marketing organizations who will deliver the growth in mobile content traffic. Marketers and consumers are too impatient with technologies that don't match up – such as variations in 2D barcodes and readers – leaving consumers to fight their way through navigation systems designed for PCs.

MC²: the Initiative to Make a Difference

To enable the simple experience for marketers and consumers, the industry needs standards. The code-reader application needs to be installed and work consistently on most phones. The marketers will then educate their consumers about codes through high-profile campaigns, safe in the knowledge that codes will remain consistent in their look and behaviour, like hyperlinks.

That is where the MC² comes in, to make the standards and the infrastructure for marketers to work with. Since the ecosystem needs companies throughout the mobile landscape to be involved if it is to thrive, the standards had better be open, like web standards.

Now is the time to agree on those standards. And to talk to marketers about how to shape the standards to their needs. Why now? Because the technology is ready, and can only get better – but is already fragmenting. Because we have their attention. The moment must be grasped.

Who Should Join the Mobile Code Consortium?

We are looking for partners to found the MC² with us. Following is why each relevant segment of the mobile industry should get involved – and not get left behind.

Marketing Services and Mobile Marketing providers, Advertising and Media agencies

Adding interactive capabilities to most promotional messages will not only increase the response levels; it will increase measurability, addressing the mythical “which 50% of my advertising budget is working”. Marketers will be able to engage consumers beyond the printed page through their phones, where they can interact, register, explore rich, up-to-date content – or even buy. This might be at the breakfast table, on the train, at the bus stop, or in the restaurant or pub, linking to samples, discounts or purchasing opportunities. All that's needed is the industry's creative flair. Join, and you can tell the technology providers exactly what you need from codes, and be the first to benefit from them.

Network Operators

Mobile data is still too hard, despite everyone's best efforts. SMS doesn't scale in usability beyond a few premium applications such as ringtone downloads. With codes – the hyperlinks that make data and messaging casual – mobile internet growth will accelerate as more connections are made direct from advertisement to web. Marketing will see to that. By adding value to the consumer the industry can increase ARPUs through more and more rewarding internet connections.

Handset Manufacturers

Requiring no new hardware components, the 2D barcode can become the new must-have on the mobile phone: a code reader. Why? Because it opens up the world for consumers to engage the internet more easily than ever before. The better code readers will be tightly integrated with the handset's camera function – making it almost invisible. Only handset designers can make true one-click code-reading happen. This provides another reason to upgrade the handset.

Marketers and Content Providers

Codes will draw consumers to content and products. Once codes link to existing content and services – over web, SMS and dial – we expect to see new levels of consumer response, as your content and advertising reaches new levels of relevance to time and location. But are you ready for 2.0? That is when the ecosystem really takes off, with services developed specially for codes. Suddenly the web and messaging are mobile and social in a new way that permeates the users' everyday physical worlds.

Application and Infrastructure Providers

The ambition is for the software to run in billions of handsets, and for content and services to be provided to users in new, context-sensitive ways. Our experience tells us there is room for innovation in many aspects of the user interaction, and in new mobile code support services. The mobile phone's code reader is the new browser. The service at the end of the code provides the new internet experience. How good are yours?

Consumer groups

Our tests show that consumers welcome this new technology. But the voice of the consumer should help to shape the standard.

The Mission

We, Publicis, HP Labs, Gavitec and Neomedia, invite others to join us on our mission to advance the widespread adoption of mobile codes, through the formation of the MC². We are interested to hear from companies who share our core goals: to create standards to ensure interoperability, to ensure a business framework for profitable growth, and to encourage and educate the market in general.

Contacts

If you would like to participate in the MC² or have any questions, please contact us at info@mobilecodes.org.

Publicis Groupe:	www.publicis.co.uk
Zenith Optimedia:	www.zenithoptimedia.com
Hewlett-Packard Laboratories:	www.hpl.hp.com
Gavitec AG – mobile digit:	www.gavitec.com
Active Print (HP Labs & Gavitec):	www.activeprint.org
Neomedia Technologies (qode):	www.qode.com