

CV

NAME

Gerard Grech

DATE OF BIRTH

October 1972

CAREER

Gerard Grech holds an MBA and an Engineering Acoustics bachelor degree. After an initial spell in the music industry and working as a new media journalist he joined Orange Group in 2001. As Strategy and Business Development Director in Paris and Head of Music and Video in London he launched over ten multi-media services (mobile, IPTV and web) across multiple territories and negotiated over 25 strategic content and technology partnerships with companies including Facebook, Universal, Sony Pictures and Myspace. In 2005 he was instrumental in setting up the EMEA chapter of the Mobile Entertainment Forum and was a board member of DDEX, a standards organisation around the management of digital content metadata, between 2006-8. Grech joined Nokia as Head of Content for Media & Games in June 2009.

MEDIA USE

Nokia E71 optimised for email with the latest media apps: Ovi apps - CNN, France 24, Guardian, Metro. Nokia NetBook: Huffington Post, BBC iPlayer, tea with The Economist podcasts and videos, 2424actu.fr, Mashable blog and Twitter search. Amazon Kindle: New Statesman and various non-fiction about media and politics. Print: Financial Times at the weekend, Wired, Variety and New Media Age. Radio: BBC Radio 1, 3 and 4. TV: Apple TV hooked up to a projector – doesn't own a traditional TV

FAVOURITES

Playing Monopoly, skateboarding with the children, reading, film festivals, music gigs and visiting markets



OPENING THE OVI DOOR

When Finnish mobile giant Nokia launched Ovi Store in May 2009 – the company's response to Apple's App Store – everyone in the mobile space watched with great interest. Eight months down the line, Nokia says Ovi is supported by double the amount of compatible devices from launch, has active users from more than 180 countries, with developers from 65 countries distributing content. There is something for everyone - apps, games, videos, podcasts, productivity tools, web and location-based services – whether you need a city guide of Barcelona or just want to kill time at the bus stop. **Gerard Grech** joined **Nokia** shortly after the Ovi Store launch as Head of Content for Media & Games – here he talks about the why, how and what next

Why has Nokia developed Ovi?

One of the key drivers was the notion of providing ease of access to Nokia customers, a place where they can go on a journey of discovery into the world of mobile content and mobile applications, ring tones, videos, pod-casts, all sorts of things.

We first launched with about 50 compatible devices and now we're introducing devices with embedded Ovi store clients. Our most popular devices in terms of consumption currently are the 5800 and the N97, both touch devices. We've seen month on month growth, so we are heading in the right direction.

Which sectors are most popular?

There are about one billion Nokia devices in the world, so we have a huge geographic spread and also reach. I think there are probably three drivers for using the Ovi Store.

One, companies use it as a way of engaging their customers on a mobile device, i.e. an extension of their core business. Secondly,

companies are using it purely for promotional purposes, it's a way of connecting with customers, but in a very personalised way. Then you have companies that are looking to generate revenue out of this.

Some companies are looking for all three. And we provide that because we provide a billing mechanism, we provide global coverage, we provide a direct route to market, and we also provide ways of analysing the data in real time so that our publishers can make informed decisions as to how to manage their campaigns. And that's the one thing that broadcasters or a film company or content creators will look to with great interest. You have a web interface that you can go into and in real time you can actually see which devices are the most popular and in which countries your content is being downloaded the most.

We have been talking with Nokia over the last couple of years about Nokia video centre and Nokia internet radio. How does Ovi fit into Nokia's media plans?

Ovi Store is the place for customers to go for all sorts of mobile media content. The video content within the store tends to be split into three buckets. You have content creators who are very much at the upstream end of the value chain, so we have film studios who are creating content and uploading it, optimised for mobile. A good example is either specific games, as promotional material to push a film that is being released, or video on demand - clips of the movie that is being released.

The second bucket is where you have your broadcasters. We have a range of broadcasters with their own applications in the store, ranging from TF1 through to the BBC iPlayer - this is providing a direct route to market for broadcasters.

And in the third bucket you have companies that are providing a range of applications that either

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aggregate video content or provide tools for participatory media to take place - YouTube is a good example where you are able to upload content directly via your mobile phone onto the web. And it's up to the publisher what price they want to charge for these applications or services.

Where are you seeing the greatest enthusiasm for material on Ovi?

We have had registrations from over 192 countries. In alphabetical order, the top ten Ovi Store markets are Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Thailand, UK.

In some of those markets, like Spain, Germany, Italy, Russia and the UK, those are all localised stores with localised language operator support and local content, and the interesting thing is the other markets are English-based stores so it proves there is a continued content demand and need for people to get content on their mobile, regardless of the language that is currently available.

In an ideal world, who are the content partners you'd like to have?

We are clearly keen on brands that have high brand equity and high engagement with customers.

Sometimes you find an application where you can't see the need for it, but then customers in certain markets are clearly interested in that kind of application.

Publishing to Ovi System - our intake system - is open to any legitimate publisher who has the rights to their content and they can go global with their content and distribution.

What about China – is Ovi available in China?

Currently we are running a beta with China Mobile and over the course of 2010 we'll be a full commercial service. We are trying to figure out the best content that ►

we can programme for the Chinese to be able to use the Store, and there are certain sets of rules that everyone in that market has to play by.

What do broadcasters and content owners who want to engage in the rollout of Ovi need to do?

They can either provide optimised mobile content for promotional purposes – such as screen savers, themes, VOD content – or the broadcaster can provide an application that is an aggregator of all their programming into one place. We ask them to go to www.publish.ovi.com where they update the content and also the metadata that is associated with that content. It's very fast and it is a very scalable way for a publisher to engage with Ovi.

The challenge for broadcasters is that there are now so many mobile platforms but there are not the resources to go after every one of them. What's the solution?

From a publisher's point of view, you are looking at competitive USPs. One of our selling points is that we provide mobile billing in addition to credit card billing, and clearly we won't just have direct consumer distribution but we will also have distribution for operators, and that has been extremely successful thus far.

The broadcasters know their customers well enough to know roughly which demographic these customers might be in, and there is enough information there to let you know which types of devices are likely to be associated with that particular demographic. Your development strategy should revolve around that. I think the beauty of Nokia is that it has such a range of handsets in the marketplace that any target market is possible. We are not just targeting high-end devices, we are also targeting entry phones in key markets.

There is a huge buzz about all the applications and stores that have sprung up in the last couple of years. Where do you see the Apps

“ There will be applications that allow you to rely on contextual information for decision-making ”



concept going?

Demand is going to increase exponentially in my opinion. And the reason for that is there is a hunger to consume such content on mobile devices. This content is taking these devices to a new level. First you had voice and text, then you had the applications that allow you to connect to social networks. The next level is a platform that connects you to all sorts of content, ranging from video right through to games and ring tones.

Applications allow customers to get to what they want quickly and easily. I would say in future these applications will be even more connected and they will provide you with even more contextual information than perhaps the internet has been able to do so far.

What I mean by that is, based on your location, you will get certain information being made prominent on your device. So for example you may be out looking for a restaurant in your immediate vicinity - there will be applications that allow you to rely on contextual information

for decision-making.

So it's up to publisher to create these sort of things...

This is where you have the intersect between the developer community and the end publisher community or the media community. There needs to be a cross-fertilisation of technology breakthroughs, market needs, customer needs, and we clearly are doing the best we can in making sure that we act as a catalyst in that respect.

For example opening up even more APIs, providing even more tools to publishers to provide new billing mechanisms or new business models, providing new features and functionality to consumers. That's our role. Ovi Store is all driven by the fact that consumers and publishers should find their interest. We are here to fuel that and make it happen. And it will happen over time.

Gerard Grech, thank you. ■

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