



dotMobi Looks to Iron Out Mobile Web's Many Wrinkles

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dotMobi is an organization that aims to smooth out the often bumpy process of navigating the Web on a mobile device. Its new DeviceAtlas tool provides data on handsets from early models of data-capable mobile phones to the very latest smart mobile devices so that developers can create so-called device-aware content with the most up-to-date information available.

A big bugaboo standing in the way of making m-commerce a bankable asset is about to be squashed.

Until early this morning, enterprises had to crawl their way through hundreds of handset specs to develop mobile Web sites to fit each. Today they can hit the ground running. [dotMobi](#) has launched a low-to-no cost, comprehensive database of global mobile handset information to assist Web developers in creating "device-aware" content.

"There are many sources for device data, but they are scattered throughout developer forums and embedded into various products. DeviceAtlas is a single, definitive source of device information," Paul Nerger, vice president of advanced services and applications at dotMobi, told TechNewsWorld.

"We want to act as the lubricant to make the mobile Web turn," he said.

Tears From the Edge

Consumers, developers, retailers and carriers may stand to benefit from what dotMobi has to offer.

Consumers have long been disgruntled with the mobile Web experience, which to date has consisted of either squeezing the Net browser onto a 2-inch, pocket-sized screen or searching through a somewhat pathetic selection of pithy m-commerce sites.

"The mobile phone browser has been seen largely as a disabled Internet  browser. We want to make the mobile browser into a power all its own," says Nerger.

"We think enterprise will move from 'dotcom think,' where the mobile Web site is just a scaled down version of the Internet site, to 'mobile com think' where the site is built specifically for mobile, including a one-click feature to dial the phone number from a link," added Nerger.

dotMobi envisions its new developer tool will drive the Web into the mobile realm, as a ton of new mobile Web sites will appear seemingly overnight.

"With the downturn in the economy, organizations need new avenues to try to reach customers, and mobile commerce has already been appealing to that need. The increased economic pressure will turn it up a notch," Philippe Winthrop, research director of wireless and mobility at [Aberdeen Group](#), told TechNewsWorld.

"The old ways are no longer working. Television viewing is down and readership of newspapers and magazines are down. Advertisers are going to aggressively move to the venue that they know most consumers readily have at hand: their mobile phones," adds Winthrop.

Who's on First?

Nokia, Vodafone, Telecom Italia Mobile, Argogroup, Volantis, Zandan and many other mobile operators, handset manufacturers and developers from around the world are working with dotMobi to collate and continually refine information on handset attributes.

"The introduction of DeviceAtlas will help Internet Web developers and content providers build tailored Internet experiences for a range of devices. As Nokia expands from a handset company to offer a range of Internet services -- making these experiences powerful and valuable is very important," said Timo Skytta, Nokia's head of technology management.

The tool provides data on handsets from early models of data-capable mobile phones to the very latest smart mobile devices so that developers can create so-called device aware content with the most up-to-date information available.

"DeviceAtlas is a great tool to help mobile developers create a personalized and valuable mobile Web experience for their users," Peter Thompson of Vodafone Group R&D said.

The Scoop on Scope

dotMobi recognized the need to solve the challenges developers face in creating content for literally thousands of different handset and software combinations," says dotMobi CEO Trey Harvin. "We've worked hard to deliver what is the most comprehensive, accurate intelligence on mobile devices around the world through DeviceAtlas."

DeviceAtlas allows information to be shared with the global development community and to be updated online. The approach simplifies the development process and enables developers to create the best possible experience for users. Along with the free, Web-based version, users can access a local copy of the DeviceAtlas database via an application programming interface (API) for a modest annual fee.

"DeviceAtlas helps developers of all sizes build better mobile Web applications that adapt to -- and are optimized for -- the widest possible range of mobile devices with structured, accurate data. This also means device data will be available for everyone, regardless of company's size, because of the low costs of DeviceAtlas. In fact, access to the Web site version of the database is completely free, and we will provide one free DeviceAtlas Developer Edition license to every member of the [dev-mobi](#) developer forum," added Nerger.

"The initial release of DeviceAtlas only represents the start of an ever-evolving tool for the mobile development community," James Pearce, vice president of technology at dotMobi, said. "The road map for the next few months includes further property vocabularies, a full test suite, the ability of all community members to provide additional data, and compatibility with W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) recommendations."

Cost of Admission

dotMobi DeviceAtlas comes in three editions, defined by the update frequency a user needs. The editions are:

- DeviceAtlas Premium Edition with anytime updates is priced at US\$299 per installed computer per year.
- DeviceAtlas Standard Edition with weekly updates is priced at \$149 per installed computer per year.
- Device Atlas Basic Edition with monthly updates is priced at \$99 per installed computer per year.

Fast-Forward Bloom

"With a plethora of different mobile devices in the market, DeviceAtlas offers developers and [the] entire ecosystem the unique opportunity to successfully boost the development of the mobile Internet for the next future," said Gaetano Liggieri, responsible for .mobi initiative at Telecom Italia.

Move over iPhone, the Web has gone mobile and devices be damned! 

