

Online **buzz** research

Consumer Attitudes Towards Mobile Applications

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1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Industry context

Mobile applications such as games, entertainment and productivity software, which consumers download and install onto their handset, have been available for several years. However, consumers have been slow to embrace these applications despite continual predictions that the market is on the verge of taking off.

Consumer disinterest has been largely blamed on compatibility problems (e.g. interoperability issues of Java applications), pricing and the lack of convenient channels which collect applications and facilitate discovery. In turn, this has discouraged many software developers from entering the handset application market, fearing that revenue generated from the sale of their applications will be insufficient to compensate their investment in development.

Today, there are strong signs that consumer interest in mobile applications has finally been ignited. The opening of application stores by the likes of Apple, Blackberry, Nokia, Google and Vodafone have been a primary catalyst for this, providing a one-stop-shop for a host of applications compatible with their respective platforms.

This research aims to provide a better understanding of consumer's attitudes towards discovering, purchasing, downloading, installing and using mobile applications. The findings will help the various industry stakeholders optimise their approach to application development, distribution and retail, enriching their customer's experience and further accelerating growth of the market.

Research scope

- ARCchart and WaveMetrix have analysed the online discussion (buzz) on mobile applications throughout a one month period in November 2008
- The scope of the project is focussed on consumer discussion in the UK
- A tailored categorisation scheme has been elaborated for this project according to the research objectives (see Appendix)
- The online discussion has been collected, classified, analysed by human analysts to ensure a correct interpretation of the buzz
- We have evaluated the online buzz and sentiment towards mobile phone applications in order to develop a view of the major user experiences
- When relevant, the report makes comparisons with data from 2006 taken from previous research on mobile applications done by WaveMetrix and published by Informa. Although the results are comparable, the Informa 2006 study aimed at analysing consumer attitudes towards mobile content, and thus was not exclusively towards applications

Research objectives

- This project will address the following questions:
 1. What do people talk about and like about mobile applications?
 2. How do users rate the value for money of mobile applications?
 3. What is the perception of the usability of applications?
 4. What are the concerns raised concerning mobile applications?
 5. How is compatibility with handsets or operators viewed?
 6. How do consumers discover applications?

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