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# Building a mobile social address book

Monetizing connections across the entire subscriber base with a simple and social mobile service



Mobile network operators and device manufacturers have invested billions of dollars upgrading their telephony networks, implementing customer loyalty programs and rolling out targeted marketing campaigns. Yet throughout this investment they've neglected perhaps the mobile phone's most critical feature: the address book. It's an unfortunate oversight because no other mobile phone function offers more potential in spurring users to increase revenue-boosting mobile communications.

A new approach to mobile phonebooks – called the *social address book* – is the catalyst for this new wave of revenue generation. The social address book transforms any static mobile phonebook into a social networking platform that dramatically simplifies the way subscribers exchange contact information and connect with one another. When you think about it, our *real* social network contains the people we meet and communicate with every day, not simply a friend list on a Web site. The true foundation of our social network is literally in the palm of our hands: our mobile phonebook. Mobile operators are right in the middle of this real-world network.

The industry's early adopters are implementing social address books to enable subscribers to grow their social networks on the mobile phone. These operators have launched new services that have transformed a standard phone function into the hub of subscribers' every mobile communication. With one click, subscribers can instantaneously expand their social network by exchanging contact information and adding new contacts directly to their social address books without the hassle of typing. These new contacts are also automatically kept up to date when friends change their contact information. The result: mobile operator revenue increases as subscribers make more connections – phone calls, SMS, e-mail, mobile instant messaging, video sharing, etc. – with an enriched social address book.

## THE ULTIMATE RETENTION TOOL: LIFE-LONG CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Mobile operators have been so focused on being first to market with the newest handsets or the latest cool services that they've lost focus on unlocking and increasing the value of the address book, the precious vault of people's life-long connections. If an operator can initiate, manage and store meaningful connections to more of my friends and colleagues, and enable me to reach these people across multiple communication channels, I'm theirs for life. I'll never want to give up that convenience and value. Operators are in the prime position to converge personal information management (PIM) and social networking, as they can facilitate and manage these connections using the most social device in peoples' lives – the mobile phone.

## PAIN IN THE THUMB(S)

The current method of updating a mobile phonebook is tedious at best. Handset phonebooks are proprietary with data formats incompatible across manufacturers' devices. To make matters worse, cross-operator network issues limit the exchanging of contact information.

Then there is the issue of initiating the exchange, which isn't easy for those on the move. For the average subscriber (those still in the non-smartphone world), there is no easy way to enter more than a first name and a mobile number – even for the closest of friends.

Power users with high-end phones can sometimes download contacts from Outlook, but they still have no easy way of adding new people they meet when away from their PC. And keeping these contacts updated as people move around and change their information is a constant challenge. When subscribers have to constantly fuss with the keypad to add and update contacts, they're likely to lose interest, especially for people they only occasionally call or text and never have the opportunity to IM or e-mail. Bottom line, this leads to user frustration and lower mobile usage.

Manually managing a standard mobile address book is tiresome because network operators didn't think they had control over this feature, and therefore, have not spent much time enhancing it. They believed address books were device-specific applications under the control of handset manufacturers. However, unbeknownst to many operators, they have an advantage over handset manufacturers and the social networking services like Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn who are also coming into the picture with their eye on the address book. Everyone is trying to own this pot of gold. Mobile operators are the best positioned to deliver mobile social address books that overcome handset limitations and social networking walled gardens.

While Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn want to keep their users within their walled gardens, mobile subscribers want to gain the maximum "social" benefit as their circles of friends, family, and business colleagues cross many different popular networking brands. Put another way, a mobile social network isn't very social if subscribers can't exchange contact information with whomever they want, whenever they want, or if they have to

go to multiple sources (mobile phonebook, Outlook, LinkedIn, etc.) to obtain access to their "contacts." To capitalise on the social address book's benefits, operators need to make it easier for subscribers to share, add and update contact information.

## CONTACTS ARE KING

Operators are enabling subscribers to sync their mobile phone contacts "to the network," where they can be accessed by other applications or manipulated and sent back down to the handset. However, the root problem still exists: contacts cannot easily be added to the standard phonebook, whether it's people in my closest social circles, or a high-school friend whom I've recently reconnected with on LinkedIn. And even if I get these contacts into the phonebook, how does this information stay up to date?

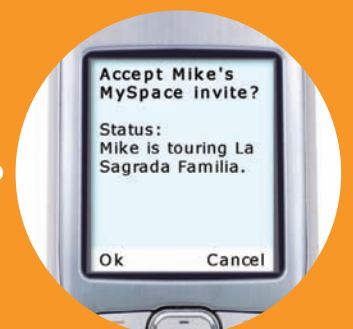
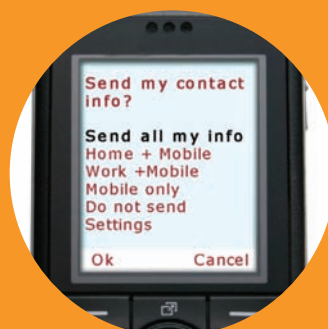
Some operators are moving toward implementing mobile social networking solutions. However, this movement is happening without addressing fundamental subscriber needs and pain points. The phonebook is usually involved in the first series of clicks every subscriber makes when initiating a phone call, SMS, mobile e-mail, or mobile IM chat, and it is therefore the key leverage point for increasing service usage for operators. If operators can offer services to enrich the management and storage of subscribers' lifelong connections, churn will be less of an issue. The technology has evolved to the point where operators can capitalise on the mobile phonebook by simplifying how subscribers build and maintain their life-long connections via social address books. Doing so seeds the mobile social network that operators look toward for future survival.

# CallerXchange™

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MOBILE SOCIAL ADDRESS BOOK



CallerXchange is a person-to-person contact exchange service that connects people and enhances social networks, converting static phonebooks into mobile social address books.



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