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& **premium content** that pays

telemedia MAGAZINE

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VAS and the telemedia boom

We take a look at how the VAS is shifting and what it means for telemedia companies



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VALUE-ADDED SERVICES



A2P: Telemedia's hidden boom market

Messaging using good old SMS is set to continue to be boon to telemedia companies, network operators and VAS providers as it looks likely to underpin the burgeoning world of A2P and A2A messaging in the next five years.

Driven by the rise of IoT, the connected home and smart devices, value-added SMS services look to have a healthy future as they are underpinning the messaging between these devices and their user's apps. And it is big business.

Globally some 1.67million A2P (application to person) messages were sent in 2017 – rising to 2.8trillion in 2022 and creating

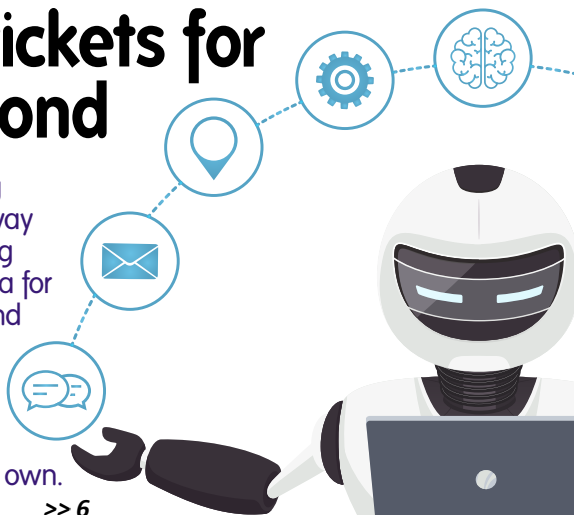
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VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

Hot content tickets for 2019 and beyond

While the rise of A2P messaging based on SMS and Ucas two-way voice services provide a booming value-added services (VAS) arena for telemedia companies to grow and expand, there are also a range of key content types where VAS where the interaction and messaging capabilities of telemedia players comes into its own.

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A2P telemedia

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a \$2.6billion market, believes Mobilesquared – and many telemedia companies are starting to take note of this massive market.

“Soon we will all be directing our lives from smartphones and laptops and SMS is still huge and growing as a result and we will be enabling this,” says Johan van der Lijcke, COO and co-owner of Telserv. “[SMS] is still huge in authorisation. If you want to connect an app to a platform from somewhere in the world they would like to identify you. They can do that with phone number, but they also want to know you are holding it – so they can send a text with a passcode.”

This is becoming standard practice in Europe and the US to authenticate users of everything from Google and YouTube, to making bank transactions and more.

“We are buying blocks of SMS enabled numbers across Europe so that US companies can start to use SMS for authorisation in Europe, which often tends to use WhatsApp,” adds Marco Dunhof, the other co-owner of Telserv.

But the role of these VAS services using telemedia tech goes further. Adoption of Unified Communications Services (Ucas) is growing, with companies that work off app, such as say Uber, looking at how to run messaging and voice to and from those apps to offer the full comms suite to their drivers and customers. This is where telemedia VAS services get interesting.

Two way voice for Ucas requires local terminations for services – so that they end on a local number, explains van der Lijcke. To this end, Telserv is in the process of signing a raft of partnership agreements with Tier One telcos around the world to offer such services. Recently it inked a deal with Telefonica, which will see this happen in LatAm and other Spanish-speaking markets. Others are set to follow



in the coming months.

“Through partnerships with telcos such as Telefonica, this can now be made possible in our offering,” says van der Lijcke.

“This is all part of the massive ‘hidden market’ for SMS,” says Martyn Lambert, SVP, products and technology at Zephyr-Tel. “There is a ballooning of machines talking to each other and talking to apps on people’s smartphones and this all centres around SMS – it is the lowest common denominator that is proven to work and which everyone understands.”

The more connected devices there are and the more people want to control them with apps, the more A2P and even A2A SMS there is going to be. Adding in voice elements as well starts to shift where telemedia has been from a people business to underpinning the next generation of internet services.

THREATS ABOUND

However, there are issues. Mobilesquared’s report highlights two potential threats to the continued growth of the A2P SMS Market. One is the launch of so-called Rich Communications Services (RCS) scheduled for later this year, which could see up to 10% of A2P message

traffic switch from SMS to RCS.

The other threat to growth is the continued security weakness in the SS7 signalling system used by all operators to interconnect mobiles. Fraudsters and hackers are known to be able to access the SS7 network to track, hack or divert calls and messages. In Germany last year, criminals successfully used an overnight SS7 attack to successfully hijack 2FA messages and drain consumer bank accounts.

“The threat of an SS7 attack is well known, but at the end of 2017 only 6% of operators had installed a specialist firewall to protect their consumers from those fraudulent diverts,” says Gavin Patterson, Chief Data Analyst at Mobilesquared. “While we expect that number to double during 2018, the absence of stronger security represents a significant risk to operator income from 2FA messaging.”

“While we think RCS will take about 8-10% of traffic away from the A2P market, and have factored that into our forecasts,” Nick Lane, founder and chief analyst adds. “If enterprises fully adopt RCS and banks and others lose faith in 2FA SMS, then as much as a further 20 per cent of A2P SMS revenues – worth some \$5 billion in 2022 – could be lost

to RCS.”

THE GDPR EFFECT

As seen, A2P messages are a mixture of two-factor authentication services, validation services and marketing services – and each of these will have a different value to the enterprise sending them.

GDPR is already making opt-in messaging more important for many marketers and so these messages can be charged for at a premium over, say, bog standard marketing messages.

Similarly, two-factor authentication messages are also a ‘premium VAS’ SMS service and again can command a higher value than, say, basic A2A command messages.

“The more that technology is used to identify the kinds of messages being sent, the more telcos and services providers can build charges around these messages,” says Mobilesquared’s Lane. “It is about making sure that operators are central to these ecosystem.”

And it is in partnering with telemedia companies such as that between Telserv and Telefonica that this ecosystem is going to be built – building the next generation of telemedia VAS in the process. ■

6 Blockchain VAS projects to change the world

Blockchain is set to revolutionise the world we live in – and that extends to VAS. Here are some projects that could shake things up in 2019 and beyond.

PROVENANCE

Provenance is a blockchain-powered platform designed to increase transparency in business. Brands can increase transparency and build trust using Provenance. Businesses can share the processes behind their products, who makes them and where they're made. Not to mention, brands can use it to share their social and environmental impact.

SOLARCOIN

SolarCoin is a blockchain-based cryptocurrency for producers of solar energy. They give one token (SLR) per megawatt-hour of solar energy. Their goal is to increase the global solar electricity production, and they're hoping that their incentives

will encourage more people to generate solar power. SolarCoin hopes to reduce the cost of the production of electricity. In turn, it should also reduce a solar installation's payback time.

DENTACOIN

Blockchain technology enables Dentacoin to set up a network of dental professionals and patients through the developed software tools. Both parties are incentivized with the same-named cryptocurrency to maintain prevention-oriented care. Patients can carry out a 3-month incentivized challenge through their Dentacare mobile app, that helps them establish oral hygiene habits. Patients who leave trusted reviews and participate in market surveys on the other

Dentacoin tools are also rewarded with the Dentacoin cryptocurrency. The currency is already used as an official means of payment at 71 dental clinics, laboratories, shops within the global Dentacoin network.

BITHOPE

BitHope is Europe's first bitcoin crowdfunding platform for the NGO sector. This Bulgarian non-profit organization only uses cryptocurrency to fund campaigns hosted on their platform. They then convert the Bitcoins into tangible goods for people in need, animal welfare, or the environment.

THE PLASTIC BANK

The Plastic Bank supports

recycling ecosystems through blockchain technology. They stop plastic from entering the oceans by turning them into currency. By exchanging plastic for money, communities are empowered to dispose of their waste through the right recycling channels. Not only does this help save the environment, it also creates valuable opportunities for low-income communities.

GIVETH

Giveth reshapes charitable giving by providing a free, open-source platform where non-profit organizations can establish transparency. All donations are stored on the Ethereum blockchain, enabling donors to check who gets their donations and why. When they don't like how the funds are spent, they have the opportunity to cancel. 🚫





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Hot VAS 2019

<< 1

So what's hot in 2019?

HEALTH APPS

Post-Christmas we all look to join the gym or get into shape by walking, running or cycling, but this year health apps on smart devices offer the ideal way to get this done.

And they offer a healthy boost to telemedia VAS, especially direct carrier billing and messaging. Connecting smart devices to apps allows these services to interact with the user, which as our lead story points out (above) means messaging between the app and the user. This is increasingly done using SMS.

There is also the opportunity to sell add-ons within the app – true value adds – and carrier billing, as we see on page 11, offers the ideal way

to make this happen.

EDUCATION/ FUN-DUCATION

According to research by Ericsson, 31% of consumers soon expect to go to 'mind gyms' to practice thinking, as everyday decision-making becomes increasingly automated. This 'mental obesity' is driving up the market for educational, and fun-educational apps and services, where users get to do puzzles and/or learn from their phones.

Not only do these services need A2P VAS messaging, but again can run carrier billing as a means of paying for what goes on within them.

For example, mobile payment and content company RGK is working with Vodacom in Romania to handle billing for mobile services that include Wellness (a fitness app), LetMeDance (a dancing tutorial), SunnyGames (a game portal) and a fitness service for renowned personal trainer Lazar Angelov. RGK will also provide local customer support to all service subscribers.

"It's a classic win-win for both companies – Vodafone gains greater traction for lucrative premium mobile services, and RGK enjoys the potential for future growth within the Vodafone network," says Roman Taranov, CEO of RGK Mobile.

and gloves that give virtual guidance for practical, everyday tasks such as cooking or carrying out repairs. While this is somewhat off, the delivery of cooking related help via apps is also on the up. Big Oven, Yummly and even Jamie Oliver, all offer free cooking apps.

Where it gets interesting is in how to use those apps to upsell other recipes, link to food retailer and delivery apps and to offer enriched content. All of these offer to deliver VAS opportunities again around billing, messaging and even Ucas two-way voice.

NEXT GENERATION VAS

So what does the future hold for value-added telecom services? 5G is going to open up the world to unprecedented levels of connectivity for devices so there is going to be 'more only bigger' of everything. A2P messaging is likely to be almost limitless in this brave new world, but what sorts of things are we likely to be connecting?

Many consumers see virtual assistants as being able to autonomously order essentials that are needed in the home, as well as handling routine subscription renewals.

According to Ericsson, 39% also want devices to keep closer tabs on the homes carbon emissions and help to reduce environmental impact.

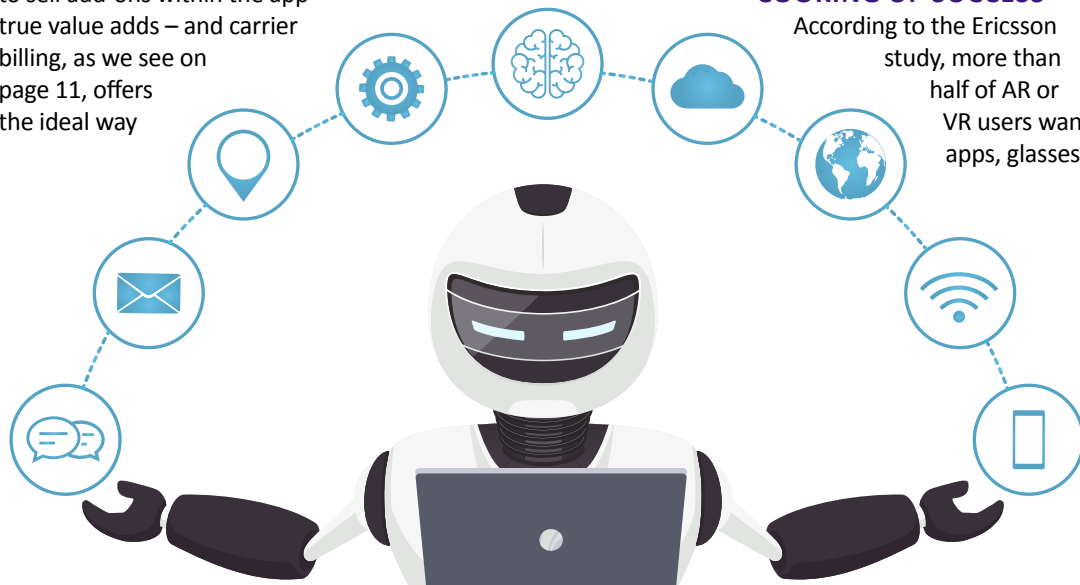
Perhaps most alarming of all, however, is that 48% want online avatars that mimic them so completely that they can effectively be in two places at once.

These services, while amusing addenda to the VAS debate, are achievable with today's technology and it is only a matter of time before we start to see them appear.

And behind them will be the basic SMS and Ucas services pioneered by telcos and telemedia players over the decades. The future looks interesting. 📱

COOKING UP SUCCESS

According to the Ericsson study, more than half of AR or VR users want apps, glasses



Tapping into millennials

As millennials continue to become the dominant force in the retail market, new research by retail and telco technology expert Conversity has revealed that this shift is having a gradual but hugely significant impact on the expectations that consumers have when it comes to their dealings with telcos.

The research – which polled 1,000 consumers from across the UK – found that eight in ten millennials (81%) believe that receiving recommendations for relevant telco products, bundles or contracts is important, but this figure stands at 68% for Generation X and 67% for the baby boomer generation.

Similarly, when it comes to the quality of the

advice given by the telco provider when consumers shop online, 86% of millennials consider this important, falling to 79% for Generation X and 69% for baby boomers.

To meet the challenge posed by this generational shift, organisations need to find a way to empower staff across all sales channels to provide this personalised, high-quality service to their younger customers, without sacrificing the approaches that are successful with older consumers. This is especially pertinent given that 29 per cent of overall respondents said that they would like to have access to technology which helps them compare product features and benefits, with little variation across generations.

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The customer is always right

Even more so when it's a digital customer



Loyalty and engagement are the bedrock of value-added services, so what can businesses do to leverage data and better manage how they interact with consumers? **Adhish Kulkarni** offers some insights

In business and commerce, the fact that the customer is always right – even when he or she is wrong – is axiomatic. In the digital era, this is even more so. With the greater choice and ease of purchase that digitisation affords the consumer, the importance of meeting expectations... increases in importance.

This is in large part why the loyalty 'industry' has undergone a sea change over the past five years. In that time, old models based on static, transactional points-based programs have given way to a set of new, highly engaging approaches to retention that are built for the new generation of demanding, social media-empowered digital natives. 'Engagement' is now a key part of 'Loyalty'

Digitisation has created a new breed of savvy customers who are quick to voice their dissatisfaction when things don't go their way, who are happy to challenge the status quo, and who are quick to change loyalties if their demands are not met.

But if that's the 'problem' for service providers, it's also the opportunity. Digital consumers have a powerful ability to amplify brand messages via social channels. They can become

ambassadors and, as such, relationships with them should be nurtured as they have the potential, if tapped, to provide far more impactful marketing messages than traditional advertising can.

And this (the present) is just the start. The future of digital engagement and loyalty will be underpinned by the acceleration of technology-led change and the continuing rise of this digital consumer. I believe the following key pillars will define how brands will drive customer loyalty in this always-on, ever-connected world:

Intelligent Customer Engagement – The focus on customer engagement has become a priority for any business operating on a digital platform. In the loyalty sphere, this is critical in keeping customers satisfied and maintaining a long term, active relationship with the brand. The digital channel allows businesses to engage customers in real-time at the 'moment of truth', no matter where they are or when, with gamified mechanics to keep them excited, satisfied and engaged.

Deeper insight through analytics – The amount of data available to brands continues to grow at an exponential pace as consumers use digital chan-

nels to interact and transact, thereby leaving digital footprints that provide insight on the entire customer journey from initial awareness through to post-purchase satisfaction. For loyalty programs, this data will form the basis for personalisation, reward relevance and designing superior customer experiences.

More choice through an open partner ecosystem – The walled garden approach of traditional loyalty players is giving way to a more open ecosystem of partners where loyal customers can 'spend' their credits with a host of different partners. The digital channel has opened up the opportunity to integrate with physical and digital partners at a global scale. This trend of openness is here to stay, and will remain a key element for brands to remain relevant and secure ongoing engagement within their loyalty programs.

Catering to always-on and omni-channel – Loyalty programs are having to adapt to an always-on consumer who is channel agnostic, expecting the brand to engage on email, app, Twitter or SMS and all in real-time. This is both a challenge and an opportunity to engage with customers in

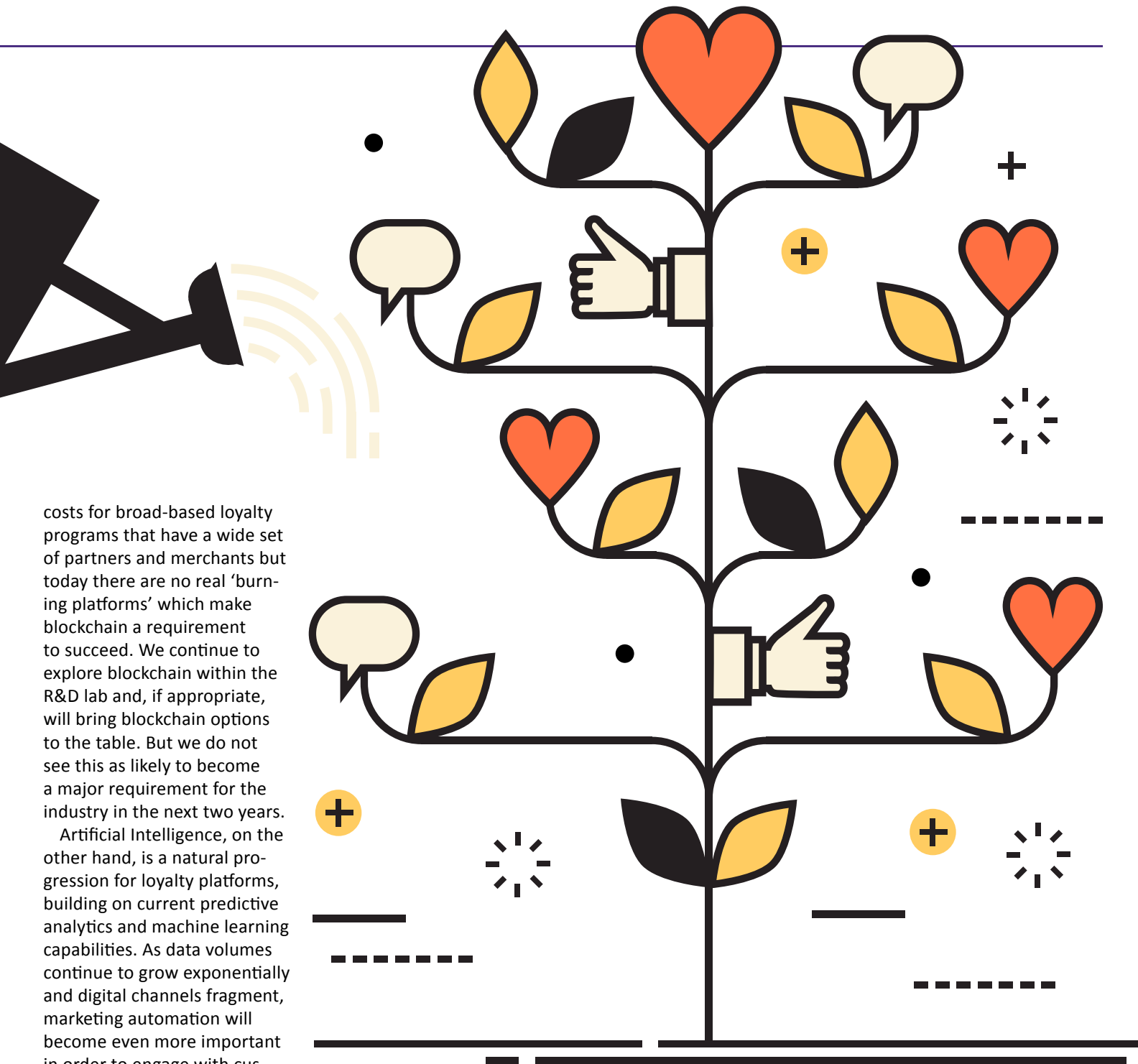
a highly relevant and timely manner. The biggest challenge is to provide a meaningful cross-channel experience at the right level of frequency.

By applying the key pillars listed above, motivated brands can build truly successful relationships with customers, based on a broad portfolio of merchants supported by a simple reward redemption journey. The digital channel offers a powerful opportunity to upgrade traditional communication and engagement approaches to become far more segmented and relevant based on observed customer behaviour and stated customer preferences. As a result, the future of loyalty is very exciting as new channels and technology reduce the friction seen in traditional programs and open up new channels of interaction, transaction and engagement.

BLOCKCHAIN AND AI

No discussion on the future of loyalty would be complete without addressing the hype around blockchain and artificial intelligence.

In my view, blockchain-based solutions are still at an early stage of development. In the future, they may help reduce transaction and operational



costs for broad-based loyalty programs that have a wide set of partners and merchants but today there are no real 'burning platforms' which make blockchain a requirement to succeed. We continue to explore blockchain within the R&D lab and, if appropriate, will bring blockchain options to the table. But we do not see this as likely to become a major requirement for the industry in the next two years.

Artificial Intelligence, on the other hand, is a natural progression for loyalty platforms, building on current predictive analytics and machine learning capabilities. As data volumes continue to grow exponentially and digital channels fragment, marketing automation will become even more important in order to engage with customers during the 'moment of truth' when they interact with the brand (transactions, call centre, website, app etc.). As a result, loyalty programs have to be committed to driving forward on the Artificial Intelligence agenda, incorporating capabilities in their core platform roadmap, and making the output accessible internally and to partners.

The future of loyalty programs in all their likely flavours is exciting as digital engage-

ment becomes the core strategy around which customer interactions, rewards, redemption and optimisation revolves. However, having worked in mobile for almost 20 years, I know that change is constant and happening at a faster rate than ever before.

With that in mind, the strategy I recommend is to be as open as possible in terms of:

- integrating with a broad set

of data sources (gathering information).

- applying the latest intelligence to optimise recommendations.
- ensuring a continuous stream of reward and redemption mechanics.
- operating on a channel-agnostic basis to reach consumers anywhere and anytime.
- building an open set of APIs

that can integrate with an ecosystem of partners. ■

Adhish Kulkarni heads the Customer Value Management and Loyalty Business Unit organization for Evolving Systems, an end-to-end digital engagement software and services provider.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Alexa... tell me about the VAS revolution

With Mobile World Congress 2019 upon us, it is interesting to see just how far the telemedia industry has come – and how far it still has to go.

When voice-enabled devices such as Amazon's Alexa came along, it looked more like a telecoms killer than a king maker, but the need for it – and a growing host of other smart, interconnected devices – to talk to its attendant app is actually a boon to the industry: because it all relies on SMS.

Similarly, the rise of app commerce, mobile banking, digital services and content and more have all driven the use of SMS up as it becomes a de facto two-factor authentication delivery mechanism.

Also, the growing importance of services such as Uber, which

rely on an app, but which have to also allow voice, text and other channels of comms between users and the company are also seeing the kind of services that were once the preserve of the premium rate industry become mainstream staples.

So mainstream, in fact, that even mighty Tier One telcos such as Telefonica and Vodacom are starting to extensively partner with telemedia companies such as Telserv and RGK to be able to create, deliver and bill for the kind of services that consumers want.

What was once a backwater of the telecoms industry – and an industry that, at the start of the smartphone age, looked to be on its last knockings – is now becoming an integral part of the service offerings from telcos and

mainstream brands.

The fact that the likes of Amazon and Google are 'new' to the industry has helped – they come without the baggage of pre- and misconceptions – but consumers too, wanting instant gratification, are also (unknowingly) driving telemedia services mainstream.

So as you wander the halls of MWC, be pleased to be part of such a vibrant industry that underpins much of what you see at the show. 📱

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Paul Skeldon, editor



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Carrier billing comes of age

Mobile payments are taking off and, thanks to PSD2 and changing consumer habits, direct carrier billing (DCB) is starting to become a star performer in Europe and beyond. **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at which commercial sectors it is going to own in 2019



Apart from Brexit, there is little about the EU that gets the pulse racing – least of all something as prosaic as the Second Payment Services Directive (PSD2). And yet, PSD2 is slowly bringing about a revolution in how consumers pay for things.

Finally, charging to the mobile phone bill is entering the mainstream.

There is much detail in PSD2, but the key elements mean that it is possible for consumers to spend up to €50 per transaction – up to a total of €300 per month – using direct carrier billing (DCB). And this has opened up a panoply of new services that it can be used for. So what is DCB being used for across the world?

CONTENT

The rise of Netflix and Spotify have shown the masses that content isn't free. Gone are the days when kids pirate-streamed movies, music and other digital content: now it is something that everyone gets they have to pay for.

But monthly subscriptions aren't the only way to buy content. Increasingly, there is a move towards instant payment for snackable content – a quick, new-age fix of stuff there and then on the phone.

And what better way to pay for that, than using carrier billing? "One of the main advantages behind direct carrier billing is without doubt that it offers a considerable improve-

ment of the user experience," says Roberto Monge, COO, of Spanish payment service provider Telecoming. "The simplicity of the payment process is encouraged by the absence of intermediaries that simplifies the whole procedure and provides a simple and outstanding experience."

Monge continues: "Autonomy is undoubtedly one of the main benefits derived from direct carrier billing. It enables users to carry out payments, whenever and wherever they want, regardless of their credit card disposal. This becomes especially appealing to certain age group collectives, such as teens."

Snacking on top sports clips is a prime example, with PC Connect servicing Belgian carrier Proximus with DCB for 6 million people to pay for clips on the LiveFootballTV app.

Bert Maetens, Carrier Billing Partner Manager at Proximus, comments: "Through carrier billing, we offer our customers the chance to access top-quality content from global brands with maximum speed and ease. In a crowded market, being able to provide top apps and subscription sites, as well as a hassle-free way to pay for them, is crucial."

And even mainstream services such as Amazon Prime Video are open to DCB, with payment company Bango working with the retail behemoth in Brazil, India, Japan, the UK and US.

TICKETING

Another area where DCB is gaining ground is in ticketing – and excellent fit as it allows for not only ease of purchase, but the ticket can be displayed on the phone. German bus company FlixBus already uses DCB for the buying of bus tickets, while many sporting events are experimenting with using it.

This has been applied in a trial for ticketing for Young Frankenstein theatre tickets. The musical comedy, currently playing in the West End at the Garrick Theatre, uses the mobile network operators' marketing channels to drive consumers to a bespoke landing page, that enables customers to purchase up to two theatre tickets effortlessly from their mobile phone.

The service uses Fonix's Carrier Billing product to seamlessly charge the Young Frankenstein tickets straight to the consumer's mobile phone bill, without the need to enter credit card details – and the deal comes hot on the heels of Fonix launching the UK's first carrier billing ticketing deal with the Cowes Floating Bridge.

Paul Hicks, Ticketing and Revenue Consultant on Young Frankenstein, says: "User experience is everything, which is why carrier billing was such a natural choice for Young Frankenstein as it enables customers to purchase tickets with just a couple of clicks."

HEALTH, FITNESS AND EDUCATION

Health, fitness, wellbeing and education are a new world of apps that have started to become increasingly popular with consumers. Many are free, but there are elements that can be paid for – additional content and services, fun add-ons and so on – and again carrier billing is making this happen, especially in markets where card payments aren't so common.

For example, RGK Mobile has formed a partnership with Sunrise Switzerland, allowing sunrise subscribers to purchase RGK content with just two clicks, thanks to DCB.

Through partnerships with popular content providers, along with its own services, RGK Mobile provides fresh, exclusive, high-quality content to subscribers, pre-approved and licensed for the individual markets. For instance, Sunrise subscribers can sign up for Wellness Energy (fitness and lifestyle), Appbox (a game portal), and Let Me Dance (dance tutorials), along with other content, including music, sports, and dating.

Subscription requests go directly to the operator's billing system, where they leverage pre-populated subscriber data. RGK Mobile's aggregated payment system (premium SMS billing) is enabled through integration with Sunrise Switzerland's existing billing system. ■

M-payments: What, where, when and whom

DCB is just part of a burgeoning mobile payments landscape, all of which are starting, finally, to gain some traction worldwide – **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at research that shows where they are getting used, who's using them and why

In 2014, Apple launched its first mobile payment app, followed by Samsung and Android a year later. Here in 2019, mobile payments are starting to gain traction in many territories and in niche markets. By 2022, it's

estimated that the transaction value of payment apps will reach nearly \$14 trillion illustrating the fast-pace of the industry.

Payment apps have been adopted quicker in China than anywhere else, but which countries

are catching up in the market?

Merchant account and card payment fee comparison service Merchant Machine collated the facts and figures behind mobile wallet's to give a landscape of one of the fastest moving technology markets in the world. The research looks at usage across countries, ages and different mobile wallets.

So what did the research find?

Mobile-Savvy Nations

A country is often defined by their attitude towards technology as it often advances them as a society. In the mobile wallet market, these are the places whose residence have adopted Apple, Android and many other payment apps the fastest.

China - WeChat pay and Alipay are the two dominant payment platforms in a country with the highest GDP, making their market share all the more valuable. It's estimated that 47% of phone owners use mobile wallets

Norway - Scandinavian nations are revered for their innovative societies, and their payment methods mirror this opinion. At 42% usage, mobile wallet usage is higher proportionally in Norway than in any other European nation.

United Kingdom - The convenience of mobile wallets could well have contributed to the popularity in the UK with 24% of phone users using payment apps, placing them in 3rd place.

Japan - Much like China, the advancement of the tech industry in Japan has often been mirrored by its inhabitants. This is no different when it comes to the adoption of mobile wallets, with an estimated 1/3 of smartphone owners using digital wallets.

Australia - Our research has found phone users down under are opting for the convenience more than many other international counterparts. With 19% using mobile wallets, they rank 5th above of the likes of USA and Singapore.



Who's Using What?

Mobile payments are used every day by millions of people, but what apps have become the most popular since their introduction? As always, there seems to be an endless competition between Apple and Android, but how is this reflected in the digital wallet industry?

Apple Pay All Day - Following its introduction, 36% of iPhone users had set up Apple Pay on their phone. In 2017, it was estimated that 87 million people used the app worldwide.

Sad for Samsung - Last year, Apple Pay exceeded Samsung Pay's global reach by over double with only 34 million users. Even worse was the figures shown on the graphic that Samsung Pay actually dropped in usage in the first two years of it's introduction by 4%.

WeChat Pay Winners - In terms of mobile payment platforms, it is Chinese company WeChat Pay that leads the way. Their 600 million users outrank many of their competitors combined. Fellow Chinese platform Alipay also performs well, with an estimated 400 million users in 2017.



Ian Wright from Merchant Machine stated that 'It's inevitable that digital wallets are continuing to soar in popularity and this research only furthers this argument. With the well-established customer-base in China and other Asian countries combined with the rising popularity of mobile pay in the US and UK, one can only imagine where this industry is headed.' 📱

Across the Ages

Different age demographics adopt technology at different paces, particularly when it comes to mobile wallets. We've researched the attitudes of different age groups and whether they have or want a payment app on their phone.

Young Guns - The 18-34 bracket unsurprisingly takes top spot when it comes to both interest and usage of mobile wallets. Just under half of smartphone users in this demographic have a mobile wallet, with 32% stating that they are interested by the idea of one.

Post Millennials - Venturing up the age groups one might expect to see a drastic decrease in mobile wallet usage, but it's been found that 44% of 35-44 smartphone users have a mobile wallet, with just under a quarter uninterested by the app.

Older Generations - It appears that generations are becoming more and more tech-savvy every day. Just under 30% of those surveyed between the ages of 55-64 claimed to have a mobile wallet, with a further 27% saying that they are attracted by the prospect of using one.

Next big things

While there are plenty of developed markets where mobile payments are gaining traction, there are many developing markets that are worth keeping an eye on too, where mobile is already an established part of the payment process, where many of the unbanked are being monetised and areas where mobile will soon be the next boom market in payments. So who are the next big things?

South Africa – SA is the leading mobile and technology market in Africa. While Kenya and Nigeria are important nations in the dissemination of mobile payments for the unbanked masses, in SA there is a move to take mobile payments deeper into the value chain. For example, UK mobile payment provider, PM Connect, has secured a large-scale contract with Africa's biggest mobile carrier Vodacom. The partnership with Vodacom, which has a 43% market share in South Africa alone, will see PM Connect expand its roll-out of mobile-payment-enabled sports and entertainment subscription services for international clients - including wrestling giant WWE - to Africa for the first time.

Brazil – Staying in southern latitudes, Brazil is one of the leading markets for mobile in South America, but like South Africa on the other side of the Atlantic, Brazil is the leading market for mobile payments in South America. By way of an example, Bango has expanded the use of its billing integration technology, enabling customers to sign-up for Amazon Prime Video with Vivo (Telefonica) in Brazil. Vivo is Brazil's largest telecom operator with over 96.7 million clients. Bango technology ensures that qualifying customers have the opportunity to subscribe to Amazon Prime Video as part of the customer's mobile, fixed or broadband plan. Vivo is the first mobile operator in Latin America to offer its customers Prime Video as an additional option.

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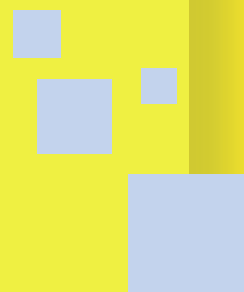
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RCS: who's getting the message?

What are the biggest challenges and opportunities that brands are facing rolling out RCS on a mass scale? Nick Lane takes a look

With 67% of the world's population expected to own a mobile device by 2019, mobile surpasses any other platform for digital advertising. It is, therefore, no surprise that 75% of a brand's marketing budget is currently spent on mobile advertising.

Many brands will soon be turning to Rich Communication Services (RCS) as a better way

to engage with their customers with expectations around the platform gaining significant momentum over the past couple of years.

Combining the power and effectiveness of SMS, the engagement and interaction of over-the-top (OTT) messaging apps such as WhatsApp, and the functionality and richness of an app, RCS seems the perfect marketing approach for brands.

Despite its potential for brands, and the monetary value for the operators is palpable, the uptake of RCS has so far been slow, with a total spend on RCS at just \$181.12 million forecast for 2019.

However, this number is

set to rise to \$18.04 billion by 2023, so why are so few using it and where will the sudden flourish of adoption and implementation come from?

Firstly, operators are notoriously slow to adopt new platforms, with many happy to stick with tried and tested channels such as A2P SMS messaging. Brands are also hesitant as they each wait for someone else to take the lead and show that results from this new platform are both cost-effective and beneficial.

And it's no surprise, with marketing budget widely recognised as always being first in line to go, that brands are inclined to stick with what they know works and brings back

some form of profit.

In addition, mounting Brexit concerns have helped to spread subtle anxiety for many businesses and their future plans, making the implementation and adoption of a mysterious messaging platform even less appealing.

However, recent research presents a clear and simple message: RCS Business Messaging (RBM) is coming; RBM works; and, RBM will work for your brand. The challenge therefore lies with the brands and operators, knowing when to strike, as those who wait too long could find themselves lagging behind and struggling to keep up with this brave new world of enterprise messaging.

So who's using RCS and how is it going?

One of the pioneers of RCS has been Openmarket, which has rolled out trial services for many big name clients. So who has tried it and what was it like?



VIRGIN TRAINS

Virgin Trains is trialling RCS to deliver mobile train tickets to user, with a QR code to be scanned at the terminus. But it goes beyond that – and really shows what RCS can do – in that it shows platform information, coach details, times and more.

The company says: "We're always thinking about our customers' journeys and their next one. Virgin Trains is working with Open-

Market to explore RCS and the evolution of mobile messaging."

SKY

Sky is using RCS to deliver a rich chat interaction with customers setting up repair and installation visits. The service lets the user see a picture and details of the agent who is coming, as well as scheduling info and details of the visit.

The company says: "RCS messaging can offer our customers a simply brilliant way to manage their install and service appointments. Exceeding our customers' expectations and ensuring that we don't send engineers to properties when the customer is not home is of great benefit to both Sky and the customer."

PHILIPS

Philips is using RCS to deliver rich and de-

tailed medical alerts to service representatives when things go wrong – offering insight into the problem and what action needs to be taken. The company says: "RCS messaging from our MRI systems can inform our service representatives with critical information to take corrective action quickly."

REPLYBUY & DETROIT PISTONS

US sports team The Detroit Pistons is working with sponsor ReplyBuy to offer an interactive service to let fans get more out of the team's sporting events, such as details of the fixture, and the ability to click through and buy memorabilia.

The team says: "The Detroit Pistons and ReplyBuy believe RCS messaging can provide a better mobile customer experience by making it easier for fans to attend and engage with their favorite team at sporting events." 📱

INCREASE CONVERSION RATES WITH RCS MESSAGING

RCS delivers richer and more immersive IP-based experiences to fulfil consumers' needs, like customer service updates and reminders, or receiving promotions, discounts and vouchers.

RCS is a secure ecosystem in which messages can be sent without the threat of grey route traffic, defined as a route legal for one country on one end, but illegal on the alternative end, undermining pricing models and disintermediating the mobile operators.

It also provides a pure messaging environment whereby mobile operators remain an integral element of the value chain. The entire value chain showcases its advantages through an uplift in click through rates (CTR), increased

customer satisfaction and conversation rates compared to SMS.

Research has shown that the rise of RCS as an SMS replacement is inevitable. It is therefore a case of when to implement the highly engaging messaging platform rather than if, if the business wishes to survive in an age of distracted mobile users.

Rather than going headfirst into global markets, brands can look to strategically try and test the business messaging in cheaper markets where the damage would be less of a financial impact, should the marketing tactic go wrong for any reason.

This tactic also allows for smaller brands to have a fair attempt at communicating with their customers, without blowing the cash at first go. Recent research has shown



that the global opportunities at hand are perhaps more accessible than it appears, with the option to begin with cheaper markets to gain enough momentum to then explore more expensive regions and developing a global outreach.

For example, rather than an immediate global rollout, brands should look to start with locations like North America where more opportunity lies, given the average spend of \$0.26 per user per month forecast for 2023 opposed to

more expensive markets, like Western Europe, averaging spend of \$1.37 per user per month.

RCS messaging is still a largely undiscovered method of communication between brands and consumers, yet very much up and coming, and extremely relevant. As we'll get to see over the next few years, brands will begin to recognise its potential and adopt the messaging more and more. Without this acceptance and appreciation of RCS, brands risk getting left behind in the ever evolving enterprise messaging revolution. Starting with more affordable regions makes the transition practical while coming to terms with what works for your brand, in order to see a global roll out of RBM through.

Nick Lane is Chief Insight Analyst at MobileSquared

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Affiliate marketing: 4 trends you must follow in 2019

We have witnessed a lot of changes in affiliate marketing during 2018 and it seems that the whole process has matured, with companies approaching the matter much more seriously – and are willing to invest more. Here **Victor T Miller** takes a look at four key trends to shape that investment

If we take into account that together with email marketing, affiliate marketing is one of the largest sources of online income, accounting for more than 16% of all e-commerce orders in the USA and Canada, it is quite clear why it is only going to become more relevant in 2019.

So, which affiliate marketing trends you should focus on in the business year ahead. Here are the four that you really should be focussed on.

THE GROWTH OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer marketing has seen substantial growth in relevance in 2018, as it has been one of the trends to rake in the biggest return on investment. Just to give you a clearer picture, according to recent reports, businesses are receiving \$7.65 on average for each \$1 they spend on influencer marketing.

This sevenfold ROI is not a small thing and it is one of the main reasons why this trend will continue to flourish in 2019, and is sure to be one of the main topics at the upcoming TES confer-

ence in Lisbon.

To explore this topic even further, we need to mention the value of non-influencers seeding the information you want your customers to get. A recent study at Stanford University has shown that randomly seeding regular people, the non-Influencers with information was just as effective as seeding the most optimal ones, the so-called big influencers. Now this might bring the investment costs even further down resulting in far greater ROIs throughout 2019.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIEWS STILL ON THE RISE

There is little that can break a company's reputation as quickly as a bad review, so it is important to focus on obtaining a positive review. Let's be honest, anyone looking to buy is first going to google your product together with the word review, and it is the content of those reviews that is going to get them to actually buy something.

A recent study shows that 67.7% of buyers will read reviews about the products they intend

to buy before committing to a decision, and that trend is only likely to continue. Now this is something that franchise companies can benefit from, as large franchises tend to get far more reviews, and in most cases, the good by far outweighs the bad. So, by simply opting to be a part of a franchise you will be able to benefit from reviews that particular brand gets on the daily level.

AVOIDING SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT AN OPTION

Social media is still one of the greatest tools affiliate marketing has in its arsenal, and this is a trend that shows no stopping in the near future. Of course, you need to choose your platforms carefully, being present at all can be time-consuming and overwhelming and is simply not necessary.

So the first step is to determine which ones your target customer group uses the most and focus on them.

The second important factor is to remember is that, for example, Facebook, has no restrictions

regarding affiliate links, just don't forget to disclose the fact that you're an affiliate, otherwise you could get into some trouble. You can do this easily by writing it at the end of the post. And considering that up to a third of US social media users engage with content and other users up to 10 times a day, there will be no shortage of prospects.

Now Instagram has a whole other range of benefits as a lot of businesses are using it as virtual storefronts, and when they want to buy a product customer still have to click on the company's website link in order to make the purchase.

So it is similar to browsing the shop windows and then entering and getting the item that you want. The better-looking the window is, the more likely you are to enter. So this is why it is essential to invest in social media.

And when it comes to Instagram, video is the way to go. In just a year video views on Instagram are up 80%, so there is no doubt when it comes to trends we can expect in 2019.

SHOW PREVIEW: Affiliate Summit Europe (ASE) Amsterdam



To tap further into the Affiliate market, you could do worse than head over to Affiliate Summit Europe (ASE) taking place in Amsterdam between 12-14 March.

Built around a brand new immersive exhibition hall, featuring new content and formats, including debates, panels, leadership and presentation skill workshops, campfire sessions,

lunch and learns and silent disco talks.

There will also be professional head shot station, relax and refuel zone (including foot massages!) and the show's very own Shakes and Blowdry day on the exhibition floor on 14 March.

The show will also be continuing the much loved Meet Market– Tables sold out in 2018

so be sure to secure your place early – it is a six-hour session of face-to-face networking on Tuesday 12 March.

Merchants with affiliate programs, networks, and service providers will have tables set to meet with affiliates one-to-one.

For more details see
www.affiliatesummit.com/euro

MOBILE STILL THE MAIN ACCESS POINT

Mobile phone affiliate marketing is something you can't afford to overlook. We shouldn't be surprised if mobile makes up to 80% of all online traffic in the upcoming few years, and so the marketing programs need to adjust and be mobile friendly. Mobile affiliate marketing is the process of using offers, tactics and tools tuned specifically for the mobile audience, and it should be one of the main trends to implement in 2019.

Of course the first step is to check the number of purchases that have originated from a mobile device, this will provide you with a clear idea of how much you should be investing. Next, you could try to harness the power of mobile through in-app ads, while not very loved by users they are more than effective, and should be in your arsenal.

Finally, make sure that your web ads and social ads translate well to mobile users and that your site is always mobile friendly, no one will be interested in seeing a distorted image on their small screen. And not to mention that statistics show that 57% of users surfing your website from mobile devices will leave your website if it does not load in less than 3 seconds. So there is no excuse not to invest in this aspect of your marketing efforts.

CONCLUSION

Of course, you also need to follow closely everything that is happening in the industry so that you can make the necessary changes in real time and get the best possible results, thus making 2019 the most productive one so far. 📱

Victor T. Miller is a Sydney-based business & marketing specialist

SHOW PREVIEW: TES Lisbon



More than 2000 affiliate marketers from across the spectrum of user industries are set to gather at TES Affiliate Conferences in Lisbon, Portugal between 1 and 4 March – are you going to be there?

The show brings together professionals from the online entertainment industry, e-commerce, financials, gaming, gambling, dating, forex, binary options, health, nutraceuticals and many others for an intensive three-day networking event.

The TES schedule kicks off with a hospitality day in which everyone can participate. Whether it is competing in a karting grand prix, taking part in a gun shooting event, a casual round of golf, indoor skydiving or other activities. TES constantly aims for new activities in which

delegates have every opportunity to network and meet as many new business associates as possible.

But it's not only fun and games on the first day. More than 100 exhibitors participate in the Meet Market which is a highly charged, 3 hour, networking event where exhibitors & delegates gather for the first time to showcase their products/services and meet up with all the attendees.

The second and third day, the main conference & expo days, feature an intense schedule comprised of specialty seminar tracks, expert-to-expert panels, product presentations, speed presentation sessions and keynote speakers.

For more details see www.theeuropeansummit.com

Young affiliates: nearly a fifth of British children aspire to be social media influencers

Affiliate marketing's future is assured, with a surprising number of kids looking to effectively work in affiliate marketing, albeit as social media influencers and YouTubers.

New research has uncovered that as many as 17% of 11-16 year olds want to be a social media influencer when they grow up, outranking teacher and veterinarian; whilst one in eleven are aiming to become a YouTuber.

'Social media influencer' and 'YouTuber' made the top five professions that British children aged between 11 and 16 are aspiring to go into, with the majority of parents not knowing there was money to be made in being an influencer.

The study was carried out by the team behind global affiliate network www.awin.com and more than 2,000 parents, all of whom had at least one child between the age of 11 and 16, were polled. Statistics compiled by the global affiliate network show that sales tracked through influencers were up 37% on the year before.

The results were at odds with the careers that the parents wanted for their

children; with the top 3 emerging as 'lawyer' (29%), 'doctor' (28%) and 'teacher' (24%).

Of those that had been told by their child what they wanted to be when they grew up, three fifths (60%) said that they knew why they wanted that particular job, and the top answers were 'for money' (26%), 'for fame' (22%) and 'because they would enjoy it' (17%).

Questioned on their knowledge of influencer marketing, it was found that almost half (45%) of parents didn't understand what a social media influencer did – and 58% were unaware that you could make money in that profession.

Statistics compiled by Awin point to the money there is to be made in influencer marketing, and how its use is increasing and will continue to do so. From the network in 2018, £5.75 million was paid in commission to publishers in the influencer space, representing a 30.8% increase on the year before.

Similarly, 856,000 sales were tracked through influencer marketing, which was a

37% increase on the year before, driving a total of £47.8 million in revenue to Awin's advertisers.

Data uncovered was also able to shed light on the spheres that are using influencer marketing the most, as it was found that 99% of advertisers investing in influencer marketing were from the Retail and Shopping sector. Nine of the top ten advertisers investing the most in influencer marketing were from the fashion sector, whilst the remaining one was beauty.

Commenting on the findings of the study Carina Toledo, Influencer Marketing Consultant at www.awin.com, said: "The rise in influencer marketing has been seismic, with our data showing an increase in activity and sales across the board, so it is not all that surprising that social media influencer is a genuine aspiration of many young people. Whilst traditional jobs are still vital to our society, whether we like it or not there is a place in the modern world for more unconventional jobs such as influencers, YouTubers and bloggers."

The importance of mobile marketing in a digital world

Digital Marketing is an ever-evolving industry with new technologies popping up every single day. One of the most relevant changes in the industry is the increasing adaptation rates from mobile devices. Here **Sofia Alves** explains why affiliates and other marketers need to think mobile

A quick look at Google Statistics clearly validates this. In 2018 alone, this rate escalated at a phenomenal rate, surpassing 83%. Even more crucial is the significant rise in smartphone conversions, up by more than 70% in comparison to that of standard desktop conversions.

And this is just referring to the e-commerce sector alone; other sectors show similar, or even more striking numbers. Thus, it is a vital lifeline for any successful digital marketing plan to incorporate mobile marketing and mobile-friendly techniques.

Studies carried out in the US in 2018 show that the average American is spending between 10-12 hours daily on a mobile device. This equates to the average user spending more than 500 hours per year browsing online or talking on their mobile device.

This is a little golden nugget to any established marketer, as it indicates that the mobile space is the ideal target for influencing audiences on a regular basis.

Recent trends within advertising, indicate that the industry is responding to this modern day digital behavior, as future estimations foresee that up to 60% of marketing budgets will be spent on developing apps and mobile advertisements heading into 2020.

Moreover, along with a significant increase in usage of

mobile devices, the sales and marketing trends for mobile devices have never been so transparent. Consumer services such as Amazon, eBay, and many other well-known e-commerce platforms have seen massive increases in online purchases made directly from the users' mobile device.

Large retailers across the globe have recognized this sequence of trends and have followed suit, with the majority of them developing user-friendly portals and websites to cater to this demand. Predictions for the future tend to indicate that over 75% of e-commerce visits will originate from a mobile device.

Experts in the industry believe that companies who integrate a mobile-specific campaign into their marketing plan that guides consumers with ease from product to sale will see a significant increase in revenue.

New studies into the advantages of mobile marketing have proven to be a counter-measure to the overall bricks and mortar downward spiral, at least to a certain degree. New techniques within the mobile orientated industry grant potential consumers the ability to compare while they walk through stores. Corporations, which have integrated mobile marketing campaigns, can leverage this.

Search engine optimization (SEO), search engine advertis-

ing (SEA), and a user-friendly website can give businesses an edge over competitors, catching consumers in a timeframe where they have indicated interest in purchase.

Therefore, it is no secret that the large search engines and marketing companies are altering their algorithms and giving preferential treatment to companies utilizing mobile-friendly websites and mobile applications. More so, many of the leading e-commerce sites are improving their web presence and are adding new forms of automated marketing into their strategies.

Direct marketing into the mobile space is being researched at a never before seen, in-depth level, and studies carried out by leading marketers show that direct SMS marketing messages have a 90% opening rate, and quite outstandingly, 90% of the 98% open the messages within the first three seconds of receiving it. This sanctifies the importance of mobile marketing as it provides concrete proof to any marketer that using direct mobile marketing with push messaging will lead to an additional level of online activity caused by the promoted message. This means that both the message and banner based marketing on mobile needs to be persuasive enough to entice the potential consumer to convert.

The mobile sector is evolving at an unparalleled rate with the technologies behind the engineering of smartphones and tablets getting stronger, smaller, lighter and most importantly, cheaper. This

categorizes mobile devices as the most popular form of communication interaction across all known demographics. This rapid scaling of the mobile world and its accessibility to online consumers offer marketers the perfect platform to spread their message and raise brand awareness.

It is no accident that the affiliate marketing industry remains a booming business and with it comes the necessity to develop checks and balances for mobile marketing.

Strong analytical and fraud protection software is a necessity when using this type of marketing. The competitive landscape of companies currently dedicated to this topic shows both the already established and near future growth potential of such a recent, innovative and dynamic industry.

Marketing in the digital world is now the number one way to effectively reach an engaged consumer base. The strong move towards mobile will only grow and grow and the importance of having a mobile strategy implemented into your digital marketing plan will be the difference between success and failure in the online world. ■

Sofia Alves, Product Marketing Manager at vene.io. vene is a customer centric ad-tech marketing tool, built in Berlin by industry experts. vene mission is to enable digital advertisers to strengthen and secure their businesses in an uncomplicated, secure and profitable way

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GSMA WORLD CONGRESS

On the previous pages of this issue, we have delved into the key telemedia issues for 2019, offering a de facto look at the key technology areas to look out for at Mobile World Congress – and the many other shows – that are on in February and March. Here **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at some of the other areas worth checking out at MWC

The vastness of Mobile World Congress is, frankly, overwhelming. While most people in the telemedia industry will be focussed around Hall 8 and 8.1 – covering the many things outlined in the main features in this issue of Telemedia magazine – there are of course a number of other peripheral technologies to be found in the other halls. Here we take a quick look at some of the other areas where it is worth having a nose, should you have time.

5G EVERYWHERE

The big play at this year's show is 5G – and for good reason. 5G Americas, the industry trade association and voice of 5G and LTE for the Americas, predicts that global mobile connections will total 10 billion by 2023 according to forecasts provided by Ovum. Also, by the end of 2023, global 5G connections are expected to reach 1.3 billion.

Latin America and the Caribbean continues steady growth of LTE connections and is forecast

to reach more than half a billion LTE subscriptions by 2022. Meanwhile, North America's strong leadership in LTE will be replaced with early 5G connections building in 2019 and is forecast to reach 186 million 5G connections by 2023 for a 32% share of market.

"Growth of LTE is unabated, as LTE added 239 million connections worldwide in the third quarter of 2018," says Kristin Paulin, Senior Analyst, Ovum. "Ovum forecasts that LTE will continue to grow well into 2022 and we will see a decline in subscriptions beginning around 2023 due to 5G growth. Regardless, GSM, HSPA and LTE will still be deployed worldwide in 2023."

Worldwide, LTE is forecast to

continue its momentum, reaching 6 billion connections in 2022 at which time LTE market share will stand at 61%.

New LTE deployments and upgrades continue and as of mid-December TeleGeography (GlobalComm) reported 624 LTE commercial networks worldwide, while 282 of those operators have evolved to LTE-Advanced.

LTE continues to exhibit high growth rates in Latin America and will be a key component of 5G deployment and uptake in the region in the coming years. Total LTE subscriptions in the region reached over a quarter billion by the end of third quarter 2018.

"The first 5G trial in the region took place in 2016 and we are expecting the first 5G commercial

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network to start offering services during 2019. However, it will take at least 4 to 5 years before this new technology has a comprehensive footprint in the region, making LTE the most relevant mobile broadband technology during the short term," noted Jose Otero, Director of Latin America and the Caribbean, 5G Americas.

LTE continued its healthy growth with market share increasing from 26% to 37% year-over-year at the end of September 2018.

BLOCKCHAIN BUILD UP

Blockchain is also going to be everywhere at MWC, as it starts

to be used to underpin everything from telecoms network infrastructure, to social networks to food distribution.

Blockchain features decentralization, tamper resistance, and traceability, and builds trust between transaction participants. As such, blockchain generates value when used in enterprise applications in specific industry scenarios. Enterprises in various industries are currently exploring the applications of blockchain, but deploying a blockchain on a cloud is no mean feat. Indeed, developers need to have a thorough understanding of blockchain technologies. Deployment is also time-consuming.

One of the many things being showcased by Huawei. Its Blockchain Service (BCS) for global use on 15 November 2018, after launching it for commercial use in China on October 10th this year.

Now available on the international Huawei Cloud website, the service helps global enterprises and developers create, deploy, and manage blockchain applications quickly and at minimal cost on Huawei Cloud. Its global launch lays the foundations for a distributed global blockchain platform.

Huawei Cloud is now focused on developing its blockchain platform to offer technical support for enterprises that develop blockchain applications and solutions.

Elsewhere, there will be demos of how Blockchain can underpin how everything from VAS to food can be distributed. One example

is French supermarket chain is Auchan, which has adopted Blockchain to underpin its supply chain – with lessons for all businesses on how Blockchain can deliver for any chain of trust.

Having conducted trials of its blockchain tracking solution in Vietnam, Auchan is introducing it in its European markets across France, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

The technology allows the supply chain to record information about the products at each stage of its life and input these into one distributed and open database.

Consumers can then scan a QR code on a product at the point of purchase and access all of the information about the product's journey to them.

The interface takes the form of a B2B application for operations in the logistics chain, a B2C application for consumers and an inventory management tool for authorities to check certificates

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issued by farms.

Meanwhile, Blockchain is also coming into play as a way of decentralising social media. SVPER, a social, instant video-only app for forming new real-life relationships in real time, launched its prototype SVPER app – the first mobile application that rewards you for meeting new people in the real world.

It replaces user profiles, pictures and text messages with instant video invitations designed to encourage users to convert online connections into real-life relationships – all run by Blockchain.

“We believe our app represents the next generation of social media, leveraging blockchain technology to make it easier for people to meet up offline and socialise instantly and safely,” says Jean-Baptiste Fort, co-founder and CEO.

But SVPER is not alone. Junto

is a nonprofit open source social media project designed to move beyond the restrictive norms of existing platforms and inspire authenticity. Its new approach to social media will have no vanity metrics, like buttons, or AI-powered echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs, it claims. It has replaced curated news feeds with the ability to discover information on your own terms. Junto won’t own or sell your information and is completely free from advertisements. Again all run on Blockchain technology.

“Our platform is built on Holochain, which is a biomimicry-inspired framework to build scalable, distributed applications,” explains Eric Yang, Founder of Junto. “As a result, our members own their data. We don’t track or sell information and our platform is more private, secure, and censorship-resistant.”



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CUSTOMER CONTACT

In 2018 it was predicted that voice would soon be dead and that the only sounds heard in contact centres would be keyboards – or chatbots controlling the customer experience (CX). However, this prediction missed one critical factor: the customer. So says Peter Tetlow, Client Solutions Director, Ventrice – and he is right. So keep your MWC eye on some of the things that are going to reshape customer services.

Messaging is going to be a big deal for CX. Some companies have already taken the plunge into messaging, says Tetlow. Most consumers use messaging

apps almost on a daily basis, and so it makes sense to use them to contact companies they interact with; additionally, messenger will enable conversations to flow and companies to engage with their customers proactively.

Meanwhile, natural language bots will grow in popularity, says Tetlow. Many organisations aren’t at this stage yet, but the use of natural language bots will continue to grow in 2019, allowing customers to use voice but in an automated way, that may well be linked to some form of machine learning to predict what the customer may want. This will allow multiple and more complex issues to be resolved quickly. 📱



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