

THE SEYBOLD

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

THE LATEST WORD

Location, Location, Location 4

A San Francisco-based company believes that relevant, location-based mobile advertising is finally within reach.

NEWS

Media Bytes 15

New realities are challenging the traditional advertising/editorial wall of separation. Journalists attempt to overcome the "digital din."

Featured Events 16

IN UPCOMING ISSUES:

The future of digital magazine delivery

Reports from Nexpo 2008

Significant new products from Quark and Adobe

Location, Location, Location

By Chuck Lenatti

For almost as long as people have used mobile devices, advertisers and marketers have salivated about serving ads to them based on where they are. Their efforts have been stymied by a cellular infrastructure with spotty service, and until fairly recently, few people had mobile devices capable of transmitting accurate location information. The early attempts at location-based advertising serving

people on the go failed miserably and sunk many companies eager to capture the market.

1020, a San Francisco technology company, believes the planets have finally aligned to make relevant location-based advertising a reality. Last month, the company introduced Placecast, a new way to deliver relevant online advertising based on where users are connecting.

"By understanding where people are and why, we can reach the audience our advertisers are looking for without tracking the users themselves," said Anne Bezancon, CEO and founder of 1020. Placecast does not identify the user, but instead knows where the user connects with a mobile device. "For the first time, we're doing online what advertisers have done offline" with ads in local newspapers, subway cars or at a stadium, Bezancon said.

Just knowing where someone connects doesn't tell you much, however.

Continued from page 14

4

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Continued from page 4

"Positioning is the beginning," Bezancon told The Seybold Report at the AdTech conference in San Francisco.

To make the ad message relevant to the recipient, PlaceAds, Placecast's ad-serving component, recognizes the attributes of where a person connects and uses algorithms to deduce probable demographic information about the person depending on where and when he or she connects, the attributes of the place where they connect and even local weather.

A person attending a basketball game in Madison Square Garden might be assumed to be male and within a certain age range, for example, and would be served with ads that match that demographic and time of day. Someone attending a Madonna concert or a fashion show at the same venue would be served an entirely different type of ad. A person connecting at an airport during the week would be assumed to be a business traveler and get an ad relevant to him while a person connecting on a weekend would be assumed to be traveling for pleasure and would be ser-

veted to differently. It's not right all the time, but it's accurate enough of the time to be significant to advertisers.

Another plus for advertisers is real-time reporting data that's generated when the ad recipient clicks on an address or a phone number.

The service is device agnostic, so it will work with cell phones, PDAs or laptops, and it runs on all networks. Current customers include FedEx Kinkos, CBS and Amtrak. 1024 is targeting national advertisers with a strong local presence, such as national hotel chains like Hyatt.

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