



Mobile Social Networking Site Builds Success with Reliable SMS Service

BACKGROUND

A relatively new phenomenon, social networking sites consist of communities of people who share interests and activities through the use of messaging, email, chat, video, file sharing, and blogs. Social sites have become one of the fastest growing segments of the Internet with global membership expected to reach 230 million by end of December 2007, and revenues projected at \$965 million in 2007, growing to \$2.4 billion by 2012, according to the research organization Marketing Charts.

Headquartered in Nicosia, Cyprus and with an office in Athens, Greece, Wadja is an award-winning mobile social network that includes more than 20 country-specific sites. Adding more than 5000 users a day, it is expected to exceed 1 million users by the start of 2008. Wadja is truly global, with registrations from 180 countries. Some of its largest and fastest growing user bases are in African countries where mobile is often the preferred Internet access method thanks to greater penetration than fixed line connections. Over 70 percent of Wadja users visit the site daily.

“Wadja was built from the beginning as a mobile social networking site first, differentiating itself from other well-known fixed-line internet sites”

ALEX CHRISTOFOROU | Managing Director | Wadja

CHALLENGE

Wadja was built from the beginning as a mobile social networking site first, differentiating itself from other well-known fixed-line Internet sites like MySpace, Facebook, and Bebo. Users can access Wadja from any part of the world using any handset equipped with a mobile web browser and mobile Internet connection. As a mobile site, Wadja credits free short message service (SMS) as a key driver in building its user base, which has grown 150 percent in just the past six months solely through viral marketing. “When people come to Wadja, the first thing they do is send an SMS message to a friend,” says Alex Christoforou, managing director of Wadja. “Soon they become involved in the community, building their profile and sharing photos. SMS is the door to a larger room.”

As a critical success factor, Wadja’s SMS service must be reliable and fast to meet user expectations. Wadja struggled with finding an SMS service provider that offered the level of service it needed. “We tried every provider there was—some of them more than once,” says Christoforou. The challenge was that Wadja’s users weren’t confined to one country or region. Messages sent through one provider to the UK might arrive on time, while messages sent to Morocco might never reach their destination. Wadja’s staff would have to spend time troubleshooting the problem. “It distracted us from focusing on our core business,” says Christoforou. “We needed to find a provider that could deliver SMS messages reliably and instantly anywhere in the world.”

SOLUTION

Then Wadja received a call from mBlox, the world's largest mobile transaction network. Following a history of promises and disappointments delivered by other providers, a skeptical yet hopeful Wadja trialed the mBlox service. "Our users gave it a real test," says Christoforou. "There were hundreds of thousands of individual friend-to-friend messages leaving our site continuously to different ends of the world. At the end of the three-week trial it was obvious that mBlox was a superior service."

The SMS service supported by mBlox went live in July 2007. Unlike experiences with other providers, the mBlox solution was effortless to integrate into the Wadja platform. To ensure reliable message delivery to all destinations, mBlox offers a flexible solution that takes the most economical and reliable route at any given time. Messages are typically routed over the mBlox's inexpensive 'Economy' product. If, for any reason, messages are not being delivered to a destination, the Wadja system can automatically switch routing to mBlox's Direct+ service, which offers improved service guarantees. This allows Wadja to optimize its own costs while ensuring its users messages are still delivered as quickly as possible.

Another feature enabled by mBlox is SMS Notification Service, which Wadja recently introduced to its users. Whenever users send an SMS message to one of their Wadja friends, they receive a notice in their profile when that friend has received the message. "mBlox delivers that notification to the user's inbox almost instantaneously, and on a global basis too," says Christoforou.

In addition to SMS notification, Wadja will soon be introducing further value-added services, including a Premium SMS service, powered by mBlox, that will enable users to pay for mobile content or other offerings, such as ring tones, and allowing Wadja to drive higher revenues from its user base. Wadja will also be adding WAP Push (via SMS) functionality, enabling users to add links and making it easier for them to upload content they want to share or even sell. These services also provide added opportunities for advertisers who can promote their own WAP sites on Wadja's person-to-person text messages. "Before, with other providers, we wouldn't even think about building these kinds of applications," says Christoforou. "SMS has been pivotal to Wadja's success." These new services will help drive the growth in new users, will appeal to a broader audience, and will help create an even more compelling and loyalty-driving offering in the future.

"It all begins with SMS. mBlox is our secret weapon that opens the door to many new opportunities for the mobile Internet."

ALEX CHRISTOFOROU | Managing Director | Wadja

BENEFITS

Wadja is currently handling up to 1.5 million SMS messages per month, all routed via mBlox. mBlox has proven extremely dependable, delivering messages to every corner of the globe quickly and cost effectively. "There is never any downtime and the connection never, never gets lost," remarks Christoforou. This reliability has allowed Wadja to focus on its core business issues, growing its user base and enhancing the user experience with new offerings like SMS Notification Service.

The flexible mBlox service makes for simple integration and development, enabling Wadja to better manage the entire SMS flow. "With mBlox supporting Wadja, we'll be able to deliver even more features, more quickly to our users," Says Christoforou.

mBlox has proven to be the right partner for Wadja. "It all begins with SMS," says Christoforou. "mBlox is our secret weapon that opens the door to many new opportunities for the mobile Internet."

Australia
T +61 (0) 2 9360 3917
F +61 (0) 2 9360 3917
sales_australia@mblox.com

France
T +33 (0) 1 70 38 51 50
F +33 (0) 1 70 38 54 12
sales_france@mblox.com

Germany
T +49 (0) 2 11 55 04 92 24
F +49 (0) 2 11 55 04 92 31
sales_germany@mblox.com

Singapore
T +65 62485761
F +65 62485762
sales_apac@mblox.com

Spain
T +34 (0) 91 790 12 12
F +34 (0) 91 790 11 12
sales_spain@mblox.com

Sweden
T +46 (0) 8 791 2700
F +46 (0) 8 791 2790
sales_sweden@mblox.com

United Kingdom
T +44 (0) 20 8432 1260
F +44 (0) 20 8432 1290
sales_uk@mblox.com

USA
T +1 408 617 3700
F +1 408 617 3799
sales_americas@mblox.com

