

Mass Market Mobile Augmented Reality

A Mobile AR Summit Position Paper
by Chetan Damani, Managing Director acrossair
contactus@acrossair.com

A little about acrossair

acrossair is a mobile innovations agency, with a focus on creating mobile augmented reality applications for games, location based services and for global brands. Our flagship product is the acrossair Augmented Reality Browser, which launched at the beginning of 2010 and essentially provides a single environment with rich functionality to access location based services in an Augmented Reality interface.



Introduction

With many new industries the initial energy is to focus on the technology and the potential uses of the technology rather than the user. However this tends to lead to a creation of a bubble which can damage the industry in the eyes of potential investors and consumers, which in turn allows newer companies to benefit from the pains of the early innovators. As a new industry the real value comes from understanding which user/consumer problems and needs will Mobile Augmented Reality solve. Whether this is through making an existing task much easier or providing a new form of entertainment for the consumer.

The User

Mobile AR provides a new type of interface, the question we have to answer is which problems can this new interface help to solve. Below I have created 2 persona's Chris and Rachel, each persona could benefit from Mobile Augmented Reality.

Persona a: Chris

Chris is an extremely socially individual who lives and works in Manhattan, New York as a research analyst for a large financial firm. His job involves a lot of travel and client entertainment at cities around the world. Chris also loves Indy Rock and tries to go to an event at least once a week. Chris regularly uses the online guides such as CNtraveller.com and Tripadvisor to help him plan his day. On his mobile he uses Foursquared and the Timeout application.

Scenarios that Mobile Augmented Reality will help Chris

- 1) Finding restaurants and bars, adding a Mobile Augmented Reality interface in to his applications will help him identify the bars he wants to visit and how far they are, together ratings and reviews left at the bar by the networks Chris is connected to. All this in one view can really only be provided by Mobile Augmented Reality
- 2) Travelling around the world, each country has a very different form of mapping. A common global format that Mobile Augmented Reality provides means it has huge potential in the travel industry.
- 3) Guides to help Chris find events and venues around him quickly, one of the only interfaces to be able to provide this is Mobile Augmented Reality.

Persona b: Rachel

Rachel is a student and is a final year arts student at the University of London, Rachel has decided to take part in an exchange program with the University of Mumbai in India to complete her final year. Being an arts student Rachel wants to take in as many sights whilst she is in Mumbai as new cultures and experiences will help inspire her further get a good grade for her final year project.

Scenarios that Mobile Augmented Reality will help Rachel

- 1) Rachel is in a new city, with no understanding of what is around her or and history of Mumbai. A Mobile Augmented Reality application would allow her to point and click to identify what she sees.
- 2) To help Rachel get a feel of what she is seeing she can look at previous visitor's comments and photos/videos, using a Mobile Augmented Reality view on to social networking platforms.
- 3) In a new city with very different cultural rules, being able to see these rules (if they are provided by the government) and overlaying this information on to places where these rules.

Summary

The above personas are only skimming the surface of what is possible with Mobile Augmented Reality, however by defining these 2 personas' I have tried to demonstrate that Mobile Augmented Reality can be extremely beneficial in some uses where a listings based view or mapping view would not work, everyone in the industry knows what is possible already but it's how we present Mobile Augmented Reality to the rest of the world that is important. The point worth making is that industry momentum should gather further once we move from focusing on the interface and the technology to what can actually be done with this new interface and how it can be applied to real scenarios.

References:

- 1) Economy + Internet trends, presentation created by Mary Meeker, Scott Devitt and Liang Wu of Morgan Stanley for Web 2.0 Summit San Francisco 2009
- 2) Mobile Augmented Reality – Forecasts, Applications & Opportunity appraisal, Juniper Research by Dr Windsor Holden, 2009