

BBC Mobile investigating potential of mobile augmented reality

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Abstract — The BBC recognises that augmented reality presents an exciting opportunity for it to share its content and connect with audiences in a new way. This paper explains the BBC's approach to development of mobile augmented reality services.

I. INTRODUCTION

The BBC is always interested in how it can use technology to reach users and help them access our content in new ways. However our approach does differ from that of a commercial venture.

As a publicly-funded organisation we have a mission to inform, educate and entertain.

The Royal Charter and Agreement sets out six public purposes for us:

- Sustaining citizenship and civil society
- Promoting education and learning
- Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence
- Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities
- Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK
- Delivering to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services

We recognise that new technology – in particular mobile – is a good way to engage younger audiences. We are exploring mobile augmented reality with a view to it being a way to reach new audiences and display our content in new ways.

We see our approach to augmented reality taking two routes.

II. THE BBC AS A PROVIDER OF END TO END SERVICES

Firstly we are considering original ideas for end to end user services which can be built by the BBC or for the BBC by appointed third parties. As yet, we don't have any mobile-specific application of augmented reality but trials and services have been run in other environment.

An example of this last year was in the Audio & Music team. Nearly half a million people who had applied for tickets for a BBC music festival – the One Big Weekend – but were unsuccessful in the ballot were sent a link to a website where they could try out a 'Band In Your Hand' application using their computer and webcam to get an exclusive track played for them by the Fratellis.

III. THE BBC AS A CONTENT PROVIDER TO EXISTING AR SERVICES AND THIRD PARTIES DEVELOPING NEW SERVICES

Secondly, the BBC has a vast wealth of unique content – covering subjects as diverse as news, sport, weather, history, science, entertainment, health and lifestyle – which it could use in partnership with third parties to present it in new ways. This could take the form of new layers of content for existing services such as Layar or by providing content for entirely new propositions.

We understand that enabling the best use of this content involves consistent and accurate metadata and simple-to-use APIs and we are considering the requirements for the systems needed for these in the context of augmented reality.

IV. CONCLUSION

The BBC recognises the ability of augmented reality to help bring to life a diverse range of subjects and content. We are excited about its potential use in our coverage of major events such as the 2012 Olympics.

REFERENCES

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